

ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
ACCORDING TO *IKDAM* 1914-1918

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire according to the news of *Ikdam* during the period from 1914 to 1918. The social, economic, religious, political, cultural and educational lives of the Armenians will be examined in the light of the news of *Ikdam* during the World War I. In this thesis the effects of nationalism on the Armenians and the reasons of the emergence of the Armenian nationalism will be pointed out too. Because Armenian nationalism that started in the last quarter of the 19th century and continued until the 20th century caused problems between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians. By the light of the *Ikdam*'s news, the way towards the relocation process, also the relocation process itself and its results will be explained as well.

Key word: *Ikdam*, *Armenians*, *Relocation*.

ÖZ

İK DAM'A GÖRE OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA ERMENİLER 1914-1918

Güneş Erođlu, Münevver

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

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Bu çalışma Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler 1914-1918 arasında *İkdam*'ın haberlerine dayanarak verecektir. Birinci Dünya Savaş'ı sırasında Ermeniler'in sosyal, ekonomik, dini, politik, kültürel ve eğitim hayatları yine *İkdam*'ın haberlerine dayandırılarak verilecektir. Ermeniler'in Milliyetçilik hareketlerinden nasıl etkilendiđi ve Ermeniler arasında bu hareketin doğmasına neden olan etkenler de verilecektir. Milliyetçiliđin Ermeniler üzerindeki etkisi ve 19. yüzyıl'ın son çeyreğinde ve 20. yüzyılda 1918'e kadar olan dönemde Ermeniler ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu arasındaki çekişmelerde anlatılacaktır. *İkdam*'ın haberleri ışığında yerdeđiştirme işlemine giden yol, yerdeđiştirme işlemi ve sonuçları da anlatılmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar kelime: *İkdam*, Ermeniler, Tehcir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. History of Turkish Press and the General Situation of the Empire and *İkdam*

The first Turkish books were begun to be printed in 1729, the first printed Turkish book was *Kitab-ı Lügat-ı Vankulu*. Up to that time, some books and newspapers were printed in the Ottoman Empire in foreign languages. The minorities and the foreigners in the Empire printed books in their own languages. For instance, the Armenians began to use press from the 16th century onwards. Some books were printed earlier than the first newspaper named *Bulletin des Nouvelles* in French that was printed in 1795 by the French consulate. Apart from this, *Gazette Française de Constantinople* (1796), *Spectatuer Oriental* (1821), *Le Smyrneen* (1824), *Le Courier de Smyrnee* and *Le Moniteur Ottoman* were printed in the empire. Then first Turkish newspaper was printed in 1831 upon Mahmut II' request. This newspaper called *Takvim-i Vekayi* was a semi-official newspaper. In addition to these foreign and Turkish newspapers there were published other newspapers as well.¹

With the proclamation of 'Tanzimat-ı Hayriyye' in the Ottoman Empire, social, political and economic relations increased between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Students were sent to Europe which in the following year laid the foundation of the

¹ M. Nuri İnuğur, *Basın ve Yayın Tarihi*, 3rd ed., (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1993), pp. 151-171.

Ottoman intelligentsia since these young men returned with the Western ideas like democracy, freedom and nationalism. Westernization and modernization were two ideologies of the time and reflected itself first in the newly published newspapers. However, this was an easy job in an autocratic state because newspaper would inform ordinary people about every kind of developments in the empire. The rulers were not late in taking measures against the newspapers. Censor was the first and most applied measure and this was always in force. For example, during the reign of Abdülhamid II there was censorship and freedom of speech and writing was abolished. Although these measure, the idealists established societies to fight against the despotic rule and to find solutions to prevent the dissolution of the empire.²

Meanwhile, the European countries were interfering in the Ottoman internal affairs. Economy and economic reserves were under their controls. Furthermore, capitulations were in force. The Ottoman Empire was in a bad position and situation was worsening as time went on.³The situation of the newspapers of the time was explained by Servet İskit as: “It was like in economic, politic or every field, the newspapers were not creative but an importer. In them nothing was new or different, only the writings of the Europeans were imitated. It only pleased intelligentsia in their efforts not the others.”⁴

The first Turkish read newspaper was *Takvim-i Vekayi* printed in 1831 and it was an official newspaper. The second Turkish newspaper was *Ceride-i Havadis*, which was begun to be printed in 1840. It was a semi-official newspaper. The first private newspaper was *Tercüman-ı Ahval* owned by Agah Efendi began to be printed in 1860.

² Mim Kemal Öke, *Ermeni Sorunu*, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1996), pp. 78-96; Salahi R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1993), pp. 139-160.

³ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-65.

Following this the number of private and institutional newspapers increased. For instance in 1863 *Ceride-i Askeriyye*, in 1865 *Takvim-i Ticaret*, in 1866 *Ayine-i Vatan*, in 1867 *Muhbir* etc. were started to be printed. There were also Turkish newspapers that were printed abroad by the people who escaped from strict government of Abdülaziz and later from Abdülhamit II. Most of the journalists escaped to Europe. For example, *Meşveret* was printed by Ali Rıza Bey in Paris in 1895; *Mizan* was printed in Egypt by Murat Bey in 1897. In London, *Hürriyet* was printed in 1896 by Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa. In 1899; *İntikam* was begun to be printed in Geneva. *Arnavutluk* was printed in 1902 in Italy and also the others.⁵

Turkish newspapers appeared one after another in the former territories of the Empire in the Balkans. Such were *Varna Postası* in 1877, *Sebat* in 1896, *Hayret* in 1895, *Rağbet* in 1896, *Seda* in 1897 etc.

Although the first printing order was introduced in 1864 as “Rules and Regulations of Press” [Matbuat Nizamnamesi], censorship about the context of the newspapers was first put into force by Grand Vezir Mahmut Nedim Paşa in 1877. Although there was no restriction on the press before 1878, the press was not free to mention about every event. Abdülhamid’s strict policy was felt on the press too. People who criticized the state and the authority of the sultan were taken under custody. Political opinions could not be declared freely, in fact people and the way of informing people were under the control of censorship. But, the journalists were able to deliver

⁴ Server R. İskit, *Türkiye’de Neşriyat Hareketleri Tarihine Bir Bakış*, (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1939), p. 55.

⁵ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Türk Gazeteciliği Tarih ve Her Yönüyle Basın*, (Ankara: Güven Matbaası, 1976), pp. 160-163.

their message to the readers via their literary articles and newspapers served for the development of literature.⁶

From 1831 to 1881 many newspapers were printed but their numbers decreased in the following period. However, some newspapers continued to be printed since they were written in popular languages and their circulation increased in the second half of the 19th century. Meanwhile although there was a technical improvement, the newspapers could not be improved because censorship limited their subjects.⁷ There were other newspapers printed in the provinces in the second half of the 19th century. Provincial press was established since *Takvim-i Vekayi* could not be printed in sufficient numbers and in an effective way to be sent to the provinces. The first provincial newspaper was printed by the governor Mithat Paşa in Danube on 3 April 1865. Then others were established in other provinces, for example *Ankara*, *Aydın*, *Bosna*, *Diyarbakir*, *Envar-ı Şarkıyye* (in Erzurum), *Furat* (in Halep), *Girid*, *Hüdavendigâr* (in Bursa) etc. These newspapers were printed in Turkish and in local languages and in a way helped to spread and improve journalism all over the Empire and contributed to the improvement in cultural life. These newspapers were like schools in their regions because they included social, economic, cultural news in their context.⁸ Developing journalism with its contribution to the social, cultural and political life in the empire laid the foundation of political societies, which aimed to establish constitutional government in the empire. These societies were New Ottomans Society, Union and Progress Society and Ottoman Freedom Society. These societies were able to force Abdülhamid II. To

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Nesimi Yazıcı, "Tanzimat Dönemi Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme", in *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslar arası Sempozyumu Ankara: 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu

proclaim Constitution [Kanun-i Esasi] and open Assembly [Meclis-i Mebusan] and Senate [Meclis-i Ayan] again on 24 July 1908.

With the proclamation of constitutional regime, expected freedom came so did the freedom of press. In accordance with the freedom of speech and thought, everybody has right to write about their ideas and thoughts. One and half a month after the Constitutional regime proclaimed, more than 200 newspapers and magazines began to be printed. But many of them lived very short.⁹ All newspapers, old and new began to write about political affairs. Literary writings were also attached to newspapers.¹⁰ Newspapers represented different political views due to their authors. For instance, *İştirak* by Socialist Hilmi, *Volkan* by Dervish Vahdettin, *İleri* by Celal Nuri, *Sevet-i Funun* by Ahmet İhsan etc.

Like in a turmoil period, Constitutionalists could not take the control of the country since the government authority was very weak soon after Constitutional regime proclaimed. All of the newspapers took action against the government. Minorities tried to benefit from this turmoil and they began to threat the state with their activities. One and half a month later from the proclamation of the Constitution, the Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP) established the government. One of the measures that this new government took was the abolition of the freedom of press since there was strong opposition to them.

Basımevi, 1994), pp. 72-74. In this article all the newspapers and magazines which were printed in the 19th century could be found as when they were printed with which name.

⁹ Şapolyo, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹⁰ İskit, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

Meanwhile, the author of *Serbesti* newspaper, Hasan Fehmi; the chief author of *Sada-i Millet*, Ahmet Samim; one of the journalists of *Mizan* newspaper, Zeki Bey and the founder of *İştirak* newspaper, Hüseyin Hilmi were shot.¹¹

During the Constitutional period, there appeared new scientific magazines. Among the scientific, literary and political magazines, there were *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* [*Literature Faculty Magazine*], *İlahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* [*Theology Faculty Magazine*], *İslam Mecmuası* [*Islamic magazine*], *Terbiye Mecmuası* [*Education magazine*] and *Şehbal*. These magazines played an important role in educating people. *Yeni Mecmua* [*New Magazine*] for example, was one of the most important of them. It took its financial support from headquarter of the CUP. Its authors were Ziya Gökalp, Refik Halit, Yakub Kadri, Halide Edip, Yusuf Akçura, Yusuf Ziya, Orhan Seyfi etc. They were important figures of social disciplines and arts of the time. *Yeni Mecmua* [*New Magazine*] operated like a Turkology institution because many articles and news were published about the Turkish culture and national existence.¹²

Intelligentsia before the Tanzimat period was affected by the Iranian and Arabic culture. In their language and their writings this effect can be seen clearly. With the proclamation of Tanzimat, the Western culture became dominant in some circles in the empire. Translations were made and western way of life began to be adapted by the intelligentsia in many fields. The intelligentsia turned their faces to the West and ignored the Turkish culture for a while. During the constitutional period however, with the establishment of magazines like *Genç Kalemler* in Salonica and *Yeni Mecmua* [*New magazine*] in İstanbul were began to be printed in 1917, the intelligentsia returned to the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Turkish culture and national consciousness arose. Ziya Gökalp formulated this as emergence of Turkism [Türkçülük]. After Pan-Islamism and Pan-Ottomanism, Turkish Nationalism emerged.¹³ Unlike the previous periods, the newspapers were improved during the second Constitutional period. They were rearranged in size and maps and cartoons were added to the columns. News from the empire was given under the title Şuun-ı Dahiliye and news from abroad were given under the title Şuun-ı Hariciyye. Under the title of Siyasiyyat, political news was written. There were also articles about the arts and social disciplines in the newspapers. Most important authors grew up during this period. There were a lot of historical articles and many novelists like Halid Edip Adivar, Halid Ziya, and Mahmut Yesari joined the Turkish literature.

İkdam begun to be printed on 5 July 1894 at a time when there was strict censorship.¹⁴ The founder of *İkdam* was Ahmet Cevdet. Before founding *İkdam*, he wrote in several newspapers before, such as in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* and *Sabah*. *İkdam* survived up to 1961. It was closed on 31 April 1961 and never printed after that time.

İkdam was one of the most important newspapers of its time. Besides *İkdam*, *Tercüman-ı*

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

¹⁴ There are several Master theses about *İkdam*. These were: Hülya Yazıcı, *İkdam Üzerinde Bir Çalışma - İnceleme ve Seçilmiş Metinler- (1915-1920)*, (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1996), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Devrim Çalışkan (Yıldız), *İkdam Gazetesi Üzerinde Bir Çalışma - İnceleme ve Seçilmiş Metinler- (1920)*, (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1996), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Müzeyyen Buttanrı, *İkdam Gazetesi Üzerinde Bibliyografik bir İnceleme (1894-1900)*, (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1997), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Ali Osman Karakaya, *İkdam Üzerine Bir Araştırma - İnceleme ve Seçilmiş Metinler- (1923)*, (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1998), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Hatice Selma Fide Yiğit, *İkdam Gazetesi Üzerine Bir Çalışma: İnceleme ve Seçilmiş Metinler 1917*, (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1999), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Selahattin Çitçi, *İkdam Gazetesinin Sistematik İndeksi (1894-1904)*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 2000), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis); Sezai Balcı, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde İkdam Gazetesi (1908-1909)*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 2000), (Unprinted M. A. Thesis). These theses were about the *İkdam* newspaper itself. *İkdam* was examined via the news' titles and without interpretation of these news, news were written in an order according to their published dates. After that, some of the news, which were about literature, were transcribed from Ottoman Turkish to Turkish. Because these thesis were for the Department of Turkish Literature. *İkdam*, for the first time is used to

Hakikat, *Sabah* and *Vakit* were the important newspapers of the time. *İkdam* like these newspapers given above was a newspaper of idea and news. *İkdam* did not criticize Abdülhamid's despotism and the political events of the time.¹⁵ Thus, the political news was very few. In *İkdam*, there were three important figures, which were writing about historical subjects. They were historian Ahmet Refik who was writing the historical events as novels that created interest among people to love historical readings and also, Ali Reşad Bey who wrote historical articles and his articles were important for political history and Müverrih Abdurrahman Şeref. Cevat Rüştü wrote articles about agriculture. *İkdam*'s writings aimed to inform people in every field. The articles were educative and useful. There were also news about the World of Islam, about the Sultan and the Porte. The first page of *İkdam* was devoted to the Sultan and the Ottoman Seal in anniversaries of accession of the sultan to the throne.

Although it's neutral policy towards the authority, *İkdam* was suppressed for short times. First time, it was suppressed because of typesetting mistake when word of Mösyö was printed in a wrong way at the beginning of the Great Governor [Cenab-ı Padişahileri]. As the second time it was not printed about five days from 28 February to 4 April 1897 because of the Turkish-Greek war in 1897. As the third time, it was suppressed on 31 August 1903 because the words of Happy Night [Leyle-i Mes'ude] was written like Black Night [Leyle-i Mesude], in a writing which was about Abdülhamid's accession to the throne. Thus *İkdam* could not be published until 10 September 1903.

examine political events in my thesis under the title of *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire According to İkdam, 1914-1918*.

¹⁵ Şapolyo, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

İkdam continued to be printed with *Tecüman-ı Hakikat* and *Sabah* in the second Constitutional period, too. The authors of *İkdam* were: Babanzade İsmail Hakkı, Abdullah Zühdü, Ahmet Rasim, and Hüseyin Cahit at that time. *İkdam* continued to be printed in the hard days soon after the beginning of the Constitutional period. *Sabah* and *Tercüman* were seen as free but *İkdam* began a strict opposition against the CUP. Ali Kemal in *İkdam* wrote such articles. *Tanin* was on the side of the CUP. Its author was Hüseyin Cahid Bey. *İkdam* was on the side of Freedom and Union Party [Hürriyet and İtilaf Fırkası] which was founded on 21 November 1911 by İsmail Hakkı Paşa, Dr. Dogavaryan, Mustafa Sabri, Muşir Fuad Paşa, Damat Ferit Paşa and Rıza Tevfik in İstanbul. The policy of the Freedom and Union Party was to establish multi-party system, liberal and representative constitution and to save Assembly [Meclis-i Mebusan] from monopoly of the CUP.

After the Armistice was signed, these hard days were written in poems and in the articles of İstanbul newspapers. In *İkdam*, the writers like Yakub Kadri, Falih Rıfki wrote about their experiences. Apart from this, *İkdam* supported the National struggle. At that time, *İkdam* sent journalist to Ankara. The Entente Powers was put the censorship into force and because of the opposition reflected in the articles many journalists were sent to exile to Malta. The Entente Powers protected the newspapers, which did not support National Struggle. During the Constitutional period the circulation of the newspapers increased. For instance, *İkdam* sold 50.000 in a few days.¹⁶

İkdam was printed on 5 July 1894 and it served for the improvement of nationalist thought in the country. *İkdam* named itself as a Turkish newspaper and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

accepted this as second title for itself. Akçura said that *İkdam* was in a consciousness of Turkism from its first issue.¹⁷

İkdam was not printed only with this name, but its name was changed for several times. Up to 1910 it was printed as *İkdam*. From first April 1910 onwards, it was printed under the name of *Yeni İkdam* with issue number 1. As we learn from the National Library Catalogues, from on first April 1912 onwards it began to be printed as *İktiham* with a different owner under the control of Ahmet Macit. This was because of the decision of Ministry of War. With this name, it was printed from the issue number 1 to 166. On July 1912, it was again printed under the name of *İkdam* and was issued with its last number 5558. The issue numbers from 1 to 11353 were printed in Ottoman Turkish. From 1 December 1928 to 31 December 1928 the newspaper was printed in Latin alphabet (11354-11384). Between the dates 1 January 1929 and 6 February 1930 *Burhaneddin Ali and Esat Mahmut printed İkdam*. After this date it was not printed up to 1939. After Ahmet Cevdet's death in 1935, Ali Naci Tarcan under the name of *İkdam Halk Gazetesi* reprinted it. It was printed from 12 January to 13 August 1939 with the issue number 210. The issues 139 were printed from 14 August to 31 December under the names *İkdam* and later *Sabah Postası* with chief author Ebüzziyade Velid. Under the directorship of Ethem İzzet Benice from 1 January to 31 December 1940, it was begun to be printed under the name of *İkdam, Sabah Postası, Günlük Siyasi Halk Gazetesi* (issue numbers: 140-502). It was printed with names *İkdam, Günlük Siyasi Halk Gazetesi* (1 January 1941- 31 December 1942, issue numbers: 503-1225) and *İkdam, Gece Postası* (1 January 1943-5 February 1943 issue numbers: 1226-1262). From 6

¹⁷ Günay G. Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkcülük (1931-1946)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 62-63.

February 1953 onwards, it was called as *Gece Postası* and continued to be printed up to 31 April 1961 and after that time it was never printed.

İkdam was a pictured newspaper and printed as big size as 36.5 x 56.5 cm. At the first page of *İkdam*, on the top and in the middle there was the name *IKDAM* in big letters. On the left side, it was written as: “Its owner and the chief author is Ahmet Cevdet”. Under it, “It is printed everyday in the mornings; politic, scientific, financial Turkish newspaper. Its address is: Sublime Porte Street, “*İkdam*” building, in İstanbul, in its special building. Telephone number is İstanbul 1797, telegram address is: İstanbul, *İkdam*. Its price is 40 para.” On the right side of the page it was written as: “It is started to be printed in 1312 year, Muharrem. Our pages are open to the Muslims and to all Ottoman people. The subscriber’s requirement: For the province, for a year its price is 340, for the six months its price is 180 and for the three months it is 95 Kuruş. For the foreign countries its price is as in the following: For a year its price is 420, for the six months is 220 and for the three months is 120 Kuruş. One newspaper is 40 Para”. The issue number of the newspaper is on the left side. In the middle, issue date was given in Rumi, Hijri and Georgian calendars. On the right, printing year of newspaper was given. Each page has six columns.¹⁸

The number of pages of *İkdam* was changed between the periods 1914 and 1918. From the beginning of 1914 the number of the pages up to the issue number 6309,

¹⁸ “Sahib-i imtiyazı ve Ser muharriri Ahmet Cevdet.” Under it, “Hergün sabahları neşr olunur, siyasi, ilmi, iktisadi Türk Gazetesidir. Mahal-i idaresi: İstanbul’da Bab-ı Ali Caddesi’nde “*İkdam*” yurdu. Daire-i mahsusa. Telefon numarası: İstanbul 1797, Telgraf adresi: İstanbul *İkdam*. Nüshası 40 Paradır.” On the right of the title, “1312 senesi Muharremi garrasında tesis edilmiştir. Ümmet-i İslamiyye, millet-i Osmaniyye için müfid-i asara sayfalarımız açıktır. Derc olunmayan evrak iade olunmaz. Abone şeraiti: Vilayet için seneliği 340, altı aylığı 180, üç aylığı 95 guruştur. Memalik-i ecnebiyye için seneliği 420, altı aylığı 220, üç aylığı 120 guruştur. Nüshası 40 paradır.” Under these, on the left side there is number of the newspaper. In the middle, there are the dates in Rumi, Hicri and Miladi calendars and day. On the right side, there is printing year of newspaper. Every page has six columns.

İkdam was a six pages newspaper. In the first page, there was news about important events of the day. There was an article without name. Sometimes, at the bottom of last column of the first page, there was news from the empire named “*Şuun-ı Dahiliyye*”. News about the foreign countries was given under the title of “*Şuun-ı Hariciyye*”. On the second page, at the bottom of whole page, there was a novel mostly written by Ahmet Refik. In the third page, didactic articles or life story of a famous man is given. Various news about economy, society, finance, health, agriculture, cultural life in the empire and in the foreign countries took place on the third and fourth pages as well. On the fifth and sixth pages, there were advertisements and announcements. One can find advertisements of every thing. Most of them were about medical affairs and language lessons of French and German etc. The announcements were also very interesting since some of them were about finding a husband or a wife.

From the 6309th issue published on 15 September 1914, *İkdam* began to be printed in two pages because of war and shortage of paper. In the first page there was an unsigned article on the most important event of the day. There were news from the fronts of Germany, Austria-Hungary, about the activities and messages and explanations of German and Austrian statesmen. During this period usually news were about the war. On the second page, there took news of *şuun-ı dahiliyye*(internal) and of *hariciyye*(external). Latest news such as from the front lines were written on the second page. Moreover, daily life of the Ottoman people, agricultural, cultural, economic, and financial news also took part in *İkdam*. Sometimes news drawn from foreign newspapers such as from *The Times* was also given place in *İkdam*. In the fifth and sixth columns of the second page advertisements and announcements were given. Sometimes, the news of

the subjects discussed and accepted decisions in the Assembly [Meclisi Mebusan] and the Senate [Meclisi Ayan] were mentioned too.

1.2. Armenians in the Ottoman Empire Before the World War I

It is not known when the Armenians came to Eastern Anatolia and Southern Caucasus but they were first mentioned in the sources in the 6th and the 7th B.C. When we look at the Armenian history, it can be seen that they did not live in a certain area and could not establish a single state. They lived under the rule of different states for several centuries and these regions became battleground for the other states. This area was on the path of invaders, especially from those coming from the North and a halting place during the conquests and migrations. For this reason, under these conditions the Armenians could not establish a permanent administration in this area and could not have a unified, national and powerful Armenia.¹⁹

The Armenians were generally under the rule of different nations until they became the subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians and the Turks first came into contact after the war of Malazgirt in 1071 when the Seljukids began to penetrate Anatolia. The Armenians lived both under the rule of the Great Seljukids and Anatolian Seljukids. They enjoyed freedom under the Turkish authority. The Ottoman and the Armenian relations dated back to the beginning of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. The first Ottoman ruler, Osman Bey, permitted the Armenians to be organized as a separate community and then the first Armenian religious center established in Kütahya. When Bursa was conquered and made the capital of the Ottomans, the Armenians moved their religious center from Kütahya to Bursa. After the conquest of İstanbul, the religious leader of the Armenians, Howakim, was brought to İstanbul from Bursa in 1461 and the Armenian

Patriarchate was established with a royal decree.²⁰ In the time of conquest of İstanbul, there were already three Armenian Patriarchates. They were in Jerusalem, in Etchmiadzin and in Sis (Kozan).

The Armenians lived in a security and comfort in the Ottoman Empire. In time of Mehmet the Conqueror and Yavuz Selim, the Armenians were given decrees. With these royal decrees, the Armenian community's security and their religious freedom have been provided. With these decrees Süryani, Kıpti and Habesh patriarchies joined to the İstanbul Gregorian Patriarchate and their relations with the state were secured.²¹

In the context of the millet system, the Armenians began to be ruled by their religious leader. This formed the basis of developments, which opened the way for obtaining and preserving the national identity under the church or under the mechanism of the millet system. The Armenians, who could live their religion in a freedom, continued to perform their culture and to speak their language freely. Before the Turkish press, the Armenians set up their press in İstanbul in 1567 and the writings in Armenian began to be printed earlier than the printed started in Turkish in the Ottoman Empire.²²

1.2.1. Social and Economic Life of the Armenians Before the World War I

As an independent body in its internal affairs, the Armenian millet was formed by five classes in the Ottoman Empire. The first class consisted of the rich and the influential men serving in the government and in the civil service. The second class consisted of merchants, financiers, and industrialists living in İstanbul and in the other cities in Anatolia. The third one was peasantry that scattered all over the Empire. The

¹⁹ Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 2nd ed., (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1987), pp. 86-89.

²⁰ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

²¹ Yavuz Ercan, "Ermeniler ve Ermeni Sorunu" in *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Ermeni Sorunu*, ed., Hasan Celal Güzel, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2001), pp. 82-84.

fourth one was the mountaineer and the last one was, the priesthood and clergy.²³ While the Armenians living in the villages engaged in agriculture, the ones living in the cities engaged in commerce, working as goldsmith, moneylender and constructor.²⁴ The Armenians used the privileges that were given them for the improvement of their comfort and they accepted the Ottoman administration, life-style and culture. Therefore, they won the Ottomans' trust and were called as Loyal Nation [Millet-i Sadıka]. They both improved their situation financially and served in the governmental service.²⁵ There was not any problem between the Ottomans and the Armenians up to the 19th century. The relations continued with respect and trust for a long time.²⁶ Armenians played an important role in the economic life of the Empire. The first and the most prosperous class in the Armenian millet were the notables that were called as Amiras. The Amiras were like Phanariots of Greek. The first two classes mentioned above consisted of Amiras. Amiras were moneychangers, goldsmiths, merchants and entrepreneurs; because of their wealth, they had responsibility in Armenian community and also in the Ottoman Empire.

From the sixteenth century onwards, they had an important place in the Empire. For instance, Duzian family held the position of sugar intendment of the mint like a dynastic privilege until 1880.²⁷ The Balian were the most important architect builders; they monopolized this position from 1750 to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They built numerous palaces, mosques, public buildings, and garrisons in İstanbul. And

²² Bernard Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu*, Transl. by Metin Kıratlı, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayinevi, 1970), p. 51.

²³ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

²⁴ Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayları*, (Ankara: Sistem Ofset Ltd., 1990), p. 15.

²⁵ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. VIII, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayinevi, 1983), p.127.

²⁶ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

many of these building are still standing.²⁸ The Noradounghian was in charge of the supply of bread to the Ottoman Army while the Arpiarian family was given the directorship of the silver mines.²⁹ In the 19th century, the Armenians had an important position in the economic life of the Ottoman Empire. According to the Ottoman census of 1850, the number of Armenian merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers in the capital was estimated about 35.979 people together with 32.999 apprentices.³⁰ Because of European competition, there was a decline of Ottoman handcrafts, which ruined members of the millets, but mostly the Muslims. With the founding of modern factories, however, they showed much more enterprise and skill until the World War I. Some of the Armenians managed various factories that were belonged to the state in the 19th century. For instance, Ohannes Dadian began to work in the government powder-mill in 1813.³¹

Armenians were bankers and investors in the Empire. Their capital was indispensable for the functioning of the Ottoman financial institutions. In the iltizam system, they played a dual role since they provided capital as moneylenders and bankers and sold the commodities as merchants. The Armenian merchants directed transit trade with Persia and apart from İstanbul, there were Armenian traders in Bursa, Sivas, and Tokat too. They played an important role in trade and their monopoly in trade could not be broken until the 19th century. They played an important role in the functioning of the Ottoman financial system as they had given their money in a high rate of interest.³²

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁹ Nejat Göyünç, "Turkish-Armenian Cultural Relations" in *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed., Türkkaya Ataöv, (Ankara: The Turkish Historical Society, 2001), p. 51.

³⁰ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

The Armenians and other non-Muslim elements played important role in the finance. For example, according to a list there were 40 non-Muslim bankers in İstanbul in 1912. 12 of these bankers were Armenians. 5 stockbrokers over 34 in the capital, were Armenians and there was any Turkish stockbroker. There were 90 bankers in Asiatic Turkey and 27 of them were Armenians. This was similar in industry. For example, Armenians dominated silk industry. They had also an important place in foreign trade. In 1906, 28 of the large importers of textiles were Armenians in İstanbul. 6 of the firms among the 28 large firms that were importing Russian goods to İstanbul belonged to the Armenians in 1910. Almost all traders in Eastern Anatolia that were carrying out trade with Russia were Armenians.³³ Armenians like other minorities continued their economic activities freely and could find small private banks. Some of these banks even became important in the second half of the 19th century. These banks were also able to serve as agents or employees of European banks, insurance companies, and broker houses and as other institutions.³⁴

The Amira class was influential over the Patriarch. The patriarch was both spiritual and temporal leader of all the Armenians living in the Empire and the Patriarchate was the center of Armenian community in İstanbul. With the accession of the Amiras, Patriarch lost his absolute power. From the seventeenth century onwards, Amiras took the absolute power from the Patriarch slowly. In the nineteenth century, Amiras began to appoint their own candidate to the patriarchal throne and dismissed the patriarch at their will. Amiras could control the patriarchate, guide the control of money

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

³⁴ Charles Isawi, "The Transformation of the Economic Position of the Millets in the Nineteenth Century" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of A Plural Society*, vol. I., ed., Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publisher, Inc., 1982), p. 272.

institutions, and dealt with the people who challenged their authority within the millet. They had also an important role in the cultural revival of the Armenian people. They also held important position in journalism, translation activities and diplomatic realm.

Armenians were also dominant in Ottoman economy either in the urban or in the rural. In larger towns and cities, the Armenians worked as shopkeepers, revenue collectors, contractors, brokers, artisans, goldsmiths, businessmen, bankers, printers, health, industrialists, and as import and export merchants. Armenians like Greek and Jews played a role as intermediaries between the Ottomans and the foreigners. The increasing role and influence of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire coincided with the rising influence of the great powers in internal administrative and economic affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians used capitulations that were granted to the Great Powers to gain initiative in the commerce through commercial privileges in the 18th and 19th centuries.³⁵

There was an economic difficulty in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries. Armenians, with the other minorities, tried to get around these obstacles by acquiring *berat*(warrant) from a foreign power and became the proteges of Russia and Britain. They became the legal agents of these foreign powers. This enabled them, first, to pay lower customs duties than the unprotected ones, and to avoid from the arbitrary taxes levied by local authorities. *Berats* were firstly given to embassy interpreters recruited from the millets. These *berats* later turned to become the protection matter for trade.³⁶ In short, they secured enough support to strengthen their special position in the empire's economy. European businessmen, in the 19th century, improved their

³⁵ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

³⁶ Isawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

commercial relations with the Armenians and made their influence felt in commerce, banking, and shipping. With the increasing power and influence of the European capitalists in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire, the power of the Armenians improved too.

While much information can be given about the Amiras in the sources, there is little information about the activities of the peasantry and the mountaineers, who consisted of the third and the fourth classes of the Armenian community. In spite of lack of information, we know that there were Armenians living in the villages of Eastern Anatolia and engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry and were forming regional cottage industries and small trade. The Armenians living in countryside were on parity with their Turkish neighbors. Both of them lived in poverty, suffered from the exactions of the hungry tax collectors and were looked down by city dwellers. However, Armenian peasants were in an advantageous position unlike their Muslim neighbors. First of all, they were exempt from military service in return for nominal tax. This was an advantage because through the end of the Ottoman Empire, military service was about ten years and mortality rate was very high. Second of all, especially from the 19th century onwards, foreigners more interested with the Armenians not with the Muslims. Foreign intervention was also for the Armenian peasants.³⁷

Because of the Armenian willingness to serve for the Ottoman Empire and their readiness to adapt Turkish culture, their intelligence, hard work, and lack of aspirations for independence before 1877, they were employed in all levels of the civil service, with prospects and were promoted to the highest posts. The Ottoman Empire with the decree of reforms in 1856, the Sublime Porte was also opened to them. During the reign of

Mahmut II they were permitted to wear imperial monogram on their headgear which was a sign of trust to them by the state. During the reign of Abdülmecit, some of the Armenians were employed in the highest levels of the state such in the government, administration and diplomacy. Some of them became senior civil servants, governors, general inspectors and even viziers. Almost every grand *vizier* and foreign minister had an Armenian advisor from 1850 to 1876. For example, Hamamcean and Seferean advised Ali Paşa, and Sahak Abro advised Fuat Pasha, etc. In 1868, Krikor Agaton, an Armenian was appointed as Minister of Public Works, which was seen for the first time in the empire. Twenty-nine Armenians achieved the highest governmental ranks of Pasha. There were twenty-two governmental ministers. They held foreign affairs, finance, trade, and posts minister. They came to head of some governmental departments and task had a variety of functions including agriculture, census, and economic development. 33 Armenian representatives were elected to the Parliament in 1876. There were seven Armenian ambassadors, eleven consul generals and consuls in Ottoman diplomatic service. In academic community, there were eleven Armenian university professors in the 19th century. Therefore, Armenians enjoyed a favored status in the governmental service in the 19th century.³⁸ The Ottoman Empire did not prevent their social improvements.³⁹

In the last decades of the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th century, in spite of Armenian's insurgence, the Ottoman Empire continued to employ the Armenians in the state service. Craftsmen, artisans, and merchants could access to the various services in the palace easily. During the Abdülhamit II's reign, the role of the

³⁷ Süslü, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³⁸ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.

Armenian experts in the administration of privy treasure was important. In 1875, Konstant Efendi, a Gregorian Armenian was appointed as governor to a division of Herzegovina. Artim Dadian Paşa, for a long time, served as an under-secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Abdülhamit also appointed Ilyas Efendi to serve in the civic guard. He was the director of archives in the ministry of foreign affairs in the Ottoman Empire. In 1879 there were 76 high ranking Armenian officials in the Ottoman service, 13 judges in the capital, 6 professors at public colleges, 4 provincial functionaries, 4 secretaries and attaches and 5 consuls.⁴⁰

1.2.2. Religious and Political Life of the Armenians Before the World

War I

One of the groups in the Armenian community was numerous priesthood and high clergy, who were most influential men in the Armenian community. Armenian Church and the head of it, Patriarch had an important place in the Armenian way of life. The first Armenian Church was established in Etchmiadzin. But when the secular authority changed its place, the church followed it, so the Armenian Church changed their places several time. Namely, there were three churches; in Etchmiadzin in Caucasian region, in Sis (Kozan) in Cilicia and in İstanbul. Armenians were subject to the Gregorian church and Gregorian sect, and their church first was established in Etchmiadzin. Armenians, in the Ottoman Empire were given permission to be a separate community and their spiritual center was taken from Kütahya to Bursa, after the conquest of İstanbul. Mehmet II fostered the development of an Armenian ecclesiastical center in İstanbul. They had an ecclesiastical center in Etchmiadzin, and in Sis, but they

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.

were out of the Ottoman borders. After this development, many Armenians were brought from other parts of Anatolia to İstanbul and were settled there.⁴¹

Until the acceptance of the Catholic and Protestant Armenians as different millets by the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian Patriarch in İstanbul was the only highest authority of the Armenians. The patriarch was the leader of the spiritual and temporal affairs. He had his own prison and tribunal and could trial members of his community in all cases but except for public security and crime. He could decide for punishment, exile and a culprit of the community members. He collected taxes, conducted legal and retributive trials, married couples, gave spiritual and civil decisions. He was also responsible for education, charitable and religious institutions.⁴² Armenians like the other non-Muslim communities could do their religious activities without any prevention. Their religious institutions were completely free. Because of the emergence of various centers of loyalties in the 19th century, the Catholic and Protestants missionaries undermined the authority of the Patriarchate and threatened the integrity of the Armenian community. This process prevented the improvement of a single Gregorian Armenian identity.⁴³ The bloody clashes broke out in the Armenian community. These clashes were provoked by the Gregorian Armenian Patriarchate of İstanbul. For example, he refused to baptize the Catholic Armenians, seized their estates, and confiscated them. These religious struggles among the Armenian community

⁴¹ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler 1914-1918*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 2001), p. 3.

⁴² Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴³ Süslü, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

damaged the unity of them. After a long time of struggles, Armenian Catholics were recognized as a community, millet by the Ottoman government, in 1830.⁴⁴

Catholics: Emergence of the Catholic Armenians based on the Catholic propaganda, dated back to the beginning of the relationship between France and the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century. In 1604, a treaty was signed between the Ottoman Empire and France, which gave France the right to protect the Catholic community. But this treaty opened the way for the Catholic missionaries to come into the Ottoman territories. Under the powerful protection of the French government, Catholic missionaries were first sent to the Ottoman territories in 1662 and Catholic missions had a score of success in İstanbul. After this, gradually they spread all over Anatolia and converted many Gregorian Armenians to Catholicism. Apart from İstanbul and Anatolia, missionaries went to Egypt, Jerusalem, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine.⁴⁵ Because of these converts, Armenian leaders headed by their Patriarch asked the Ottoman government to prevent these conversions, but the Ottoman government did not reply in affirmative since this would be interference to the internal affairs of the communities. For a long time, these clashes continued between these sects.⁴⁶

France with her support to Catholic Armenians wanted to expend her influence over the Ottoman territories. With this policy, she obtained many privileges from the Ottoman Empire for her own and her co-religionists. The privileges brought about an increase in conversions to Catholic sect. Armenian Catholic religious order helped his people in cultural resurgence and in westernization of them. For the Armenian revival,

⁴⁴ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁴⁵ Davut Kılıç, “İstanbul Ermeni Patrikhanesi’nin Bağımsızlık Hareketlerine Yönelişi (1850-1896)” in *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Ermeni Sorunu*, ed., Hasan Celal Güzel, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2001), p. 57.

Mekhitar of Sivas (1676-1749) established an Armenian Catholic Church order. The Mekhitarist Fathers revived Armenian language, cultivated Armenian literature, spread western ideas through translations, published scholarly or popular journals, established many schools and laid the foundation of modern Armenian historiography.⁴⁷

Protestants: Another threat that Gregorian Armenians met was missionary activities of Protestants and this caused the dissolution of Armenian community. These missionaries were American and British and they began to penetrate into the territories of the Ottoman Empire with the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Prevented by the Ottoman government from entering into relations with the Muslim population, they (mostly American missionaries) wanted to convert the Christians, especially Armenians. Actually, the American missionaries became more successful. The first branch of American board of Commissionaires for foreign mission started its activities in 1820 and continued in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Firstly, they encountered small Armenian merchants in Jerusalem and the relations between the Armenians and the American merchant communities began to prepare the ground for the Protestant Missionary activities. These American Missionaries wanted to learn the situations of the non-Muslims in the Empire and made an investigation for this purpose. According to these missionaries, the material and spiritual conditions of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire were terrible and reforms had to be done for these people. Ottoman officials would not be an obstacle for these reforms.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁴⁷ Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, "Introduction" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of A Plural Society*, vol. I., ed., Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publisher, Inc., 1982), p. 21.

⁴⁸ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Anadolu'daki Amerika: Kendi Belgeleriyle 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları*, 3rd ed., (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2000), pp. 25-31.

These missionary activities served for the American economic interests and these commercial relations helped missionary activities done easily. They wanted to create Protestant communities under the protection of America and this would serve for interests of Americans in the Ottoman territories. Americans opened many schools for missionary activities. In order to convert from their sects to Protestantism, the missionaries established many schools and hospitals. The American Missionaries founded the printing press in Malta in 1822 as a main supporter of their activities. Books and magazines were printed.⁴⁹ The American Missionaries were active in Anatolia mainly in the periods from 1840 to 1870.⁵⁰ To be successful in their Protestant activities, America supported them. At the end of the 19th century, the number of the American missionaries was 176 and there were 869 local supporters to help them.⁵¹ The missionaries also organized theological seminars for women in İstanbul and most of the students of them were Armenians. In addition, these trained women went to Anatolia. The Protestant missionaries increased their activities for religious and sectarian purposes and converted many Armenians to Protestant sect. This caused great tension in the community. Like the Catholic Armenians, the Patriarch of İstanbul followed the same policy of persecution against the Protestant Armenians. For example, in 1837, the parents of all Armenian students in the Protestant schools were ordered by Gregorian patriarch Step'an to withdraw their children from these schools. Two years later, Step'an issued a patriarchal circular and with this forbade the Armenians to participate in

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55. The activities of the American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire from 1820 up to 1900 could be found in Kocabaşoğlu's book. It is an important source for the American Missionaries in the Empire and their activities to convert the Armenians or the other Christians in the Empire to Protestant sect. There is a detailed information about the established schools by the American missionaries in Anatolia and their students in this book.

Protestant activities. Thus, many artisans were driven out of their trades and expelled from their houses.⁵² In 1846, the Armenian Gregorian Patriarch excommunicated the Armenians whom become Protestants. In spite of Russian and Armenian Gregorian Patriarch's objections, with English and American advice, Ottoman government recognized the Protestants as a separate religious sect and millet in 1850.⁵³ Thus the unity of the Armenian community dissolved. Nevertheless, the conflict among the different communities of Armenians gradually was decreased by the Armenian patriarch of İstanbul as a unifying factor through the nationalist ideology.

To protect themselves and their protégés, these missionaries in the Ottoman Empire began to ask to the great powers to help themselves and this resulted with diplomatic incidents. They served for imperialist purposes in Turkey. Missionaries knew that they could stay in the empire alleging that the non-Muslim are oppressed and presented the Ottoman governors as monster. This policy found support in the West and Turkish enmity emerged there. Turks were surrounded by this policy and were introduced to the world as murderers of Christians.⁵⁴ In fact, missionary activities were religious channels for France, Britain and America to create areas of influence in the Ottoman Empire and this served for their economic and political expansionist and imperialist policies. Thus, to extend their areas of interest in the Ottoman Empire, all of these powers became protector of one of these Armenian sects. Austria and France became the protector of the Catholics and Britain protected the Protestants and Russia protected the Orthodox. Thus, Armenians were divided by the great powers for their

⁵¹ Quoted in Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, 4th ed., (Ankara: Bilgi Yayinevi, 1988), p. 59, from Bliss, p. 313.

⁵² Quoted from Artinon, p. 42 in Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 216. About the persecution that was made against the Protestant Armenians more detailed information could be found in Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-217.

own interests. Russia's aim was to reach to the warm waters of the Mediterranean and cut off the British route to India by using Gregorian Armenians. Britain used the protestant and Gregorian Armenians to preserve the safety of road of India by restricting French influence. France used Catholic Armenians for her own enmity among the Armenian sects. They also used Armenians to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁵

Educational establishments of the missionaries influenced mainly the Armenians, whom began to study their own history and literature and learnt about human rights and the principles of nationality.⁵⁶ For these purposes, missionary activities served for the cultural revival of the Armenians and not directly but indirectly served for the rise of Armenian nationalism. The Armenian Patriarchate's authority was damaged seriously by missionary activities that were supported by the great powers. This was an important factor in the decrease of the Patriarchate's authority in the Armenian community.

The political and religious authority of Armenian community can not be separated from one another since Patriarch was both the spiritual and temporal leader of his community. Within the millet system of the Ottoman Empire, the church preserved its power without any challenge up to the 19th century. As it is mentioned before, Amiras first challenged the authority of patriarch and later took the control of Patriarchate. However, this did not become an important obstacle for the development of the Patriarch's power within his community. With the Tanzimat reforms, patriarch's authority was undermined, too. The process of democratization and socialization in the

⁵³ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁵⁴ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁵⁵ Süslü, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

Ottoman Empire began with the Gülhane edict in 1839. The reform edict of 1856 was accepted to prevent the intervention of the great powers in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman intellectuals adapted modernization and westernization to prevent the collapse of the Empire. They also wanted to create an Ottoman nationality, which will cover all the nations in the Ottoman territories. They wanted to integrate all ethnic and religious elements into the system; however, their unification policy could not stop Ottoman minorities' rebellious activities though Gülhane edict provided security for the lives, honor of the Christian and Jewish subjects, and granted them equality before law.

The second step for the reforms was the Reform edict accepted in 1856. With this edict all subject from any millet would have right to be appointed to the public positions, to be elected to provincial and to sub-provincial assemblies, to attend public and military schools and to join military. In 1869 Ottoman citizenship law was accepted. But, although these reforms, the Ottomans could not realize the unity of the Empire as the non-Muslim subjects realized these reforms as a step for their planned national independence. Besides, Patriarch's authority was depending on a national council that was consisted of Armenian aristocracy. There was a tension among the Armenian community, which became obvious with these reforms, Armenian people opposed the previous council, and wanted 14 members over 30 be from different occupations in 1844. In 1847 two councils were established, one was for spiritual affairs, and the other was for temporal affairs.

Due to the reform movement, Armenians prepared a constitution "Rules and Regulations of Armenian Nation" [Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi]. According to this constitution, an elective general national assembly would govern the Armenian millet

internally. This assembly was set up on 24 May 1860. The patriarch of İstanbul would be its chief executive officer. The candidates for the post of patriarch would have to be bishops and they should be in the age of 35 or over, and should secure the confidence of the Porte. The General National Assembly formed by the Armenian bishops of the Ottoman Empire would elect the patriarch. Both councils of the community would have the right to submit their own candidates at first. Although the spiritual council would be the candidate of all bishops in order of preference, the temporal council would only submit the names of its first five favorites. One candidate would be elected by the general assembly with absolute majority; the chosen candidate does not have to be from the list of the temporal council and the Sultan should confirm this election. A secretariat was to serve for the business of the Patriarchate.

The general national assembly consisted of 140 members, 20 of whom would be clergymen, elected from among the priest in Istanbul, 40 of whom were to be elected from provincial general assembly of each diocese, 80 of whom were to be elected from the guild organizations in İstanbul. The members of the spiritual and temporal councils could attend the meetings of the general assembly, but they could not vote if they are not elected as deputies. General assembly would appoint the chief functionaries of the community and the members of the spiritual and temporal councils. The assembly would be met once in two years with summon of the Patriarch upon the request of majority of members and with the ascent of two councils and with the acceptance of the Porte as well. The fundamental principals of the Armenian constitution would be immutable.

The spiritual council would be composed of fourteen clergymen at the 30 years of age or over, and they should be in holy service for five years. They could be elected by ballot of the spiritual assembly and their names would be submitted to the Porte for

approval. Its members would be changed in every two years. Its duties were to superintend the spiritual affairs of the community, to maintain the doctrines of the Armenian Church and exercise authority over the Armenian clergy. This council would refer questions to the general spiritual assembly, which consisted of all the bishops, and general national assembly would appeal to the supreme Catholics at Etchmiadzin. The general spiritual assembly would be consisted of all the bishops, preachers and chief priest of İstanbul, and be elected by the spiritual council by ballot.

The temporal council would be composed of twenty laymen, whom should well know the Ottoman law and national affairs. They would be elected by ballot by the general national assembly and should take the approval of the Porte. They were responsible for the temporal and civil affairs of the community. The council should bring all the cases to their respective commissions and the members of this council would be changed in every two years.

There were four commissions that were dealing with public instruction, national property, justice and monasteries. Under the commissions, there were four communities dealing with finance, bequests, hospitals, and church affairs. The council could not act against the recommendations of these commissions that they delivered to this council. After the establishment of Armenian parties, they could also offer candidates for the general elections held in the Ottoman Empire. The Rules and the Regulations of the Armenian community confirmed on 17 March 1863. With this, Armenian millet reorganized and enabled the election of most of the members of the general national assembly. Cemal Pasha said that the Rules and Regulations of the Armenians were given to the Armenian millet as a reward for their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire not because

of their demand or pressure over them.⁵⁷ With this constitution, the Patriarch was brought under the control of the elected representatives of people. With this constitution, the General National Assembly would choose the Patriarch of Jerusalem, too. This constitution of the Armenian nation brought about that the authority that was shared by the Patriarch and his followers would not be absolute, but all of the Armenian community would enjoy different authority.⁵⁸

These developments were seen as a serious threat to Armenian Gregorian Church. In a way, Armenian community was accepting other religious sects in other words some of the authority of the Armenian Church was passed from the Patriarch to Armenian people. Thus Armenian Patriarch became only a religious leader. In order to preserve his secular powers, he used nationalism, which was the strongest movement of the 19th century. In other words, the religious struggles among the Armenian people from different sects and the religious conservatism were replaced by national aspirations. This national assembly became the political Armenian institution that represented the political claims and aims of the Armenian community. Patriarch began to involve in the activities that brought national revival. That is, the Church played an important role for the emergence of national feelings of the Armenian people.

1.2.3. Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians Before the World

War I

Like the other non-Muslim communities, Armenians continued to use their language freely. They used Armenian names and their language and conducted their culture freely. In language, literature, music, and almost every branch of the arts, Turks

⁵⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-208.

⁵⁸ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

and Armenians closely effected each other. For instance, most of the Armenians used Turkish in their daily life. Even one of their writers wrote his book in Turkish to be read by the Ottoman Armenians easily (Vartan Paşa, Akabi Hikayesi).⁵⁹ From 1840 onwards, 40 of 100 Armenian magazines were published with Armenian letters but with Turkish text.⁶⁰ Armenians also were influenced by Turkish culture. In cultural realm, the relations between the Turks and the Armenians were intense and peaceful. The Armenians scattered all over the Ottoman territories and got influenced by Turkish life and literature.

From the 17th century onwards up to 1840, there were more than 400 Armenian minstrels and we can see Turkish minstrels' influences in them. Such as Koroğlu, Aşık Garip, etc. Some of the minstrels of Armenian were Mirzacan, Mesihi, Sarkis Efendi, Derviş Hemptar, etc.⁶¹ In this line, there were close relations between Armenian and Turkish brotherhood and they helped each other, if they separated, they and their works easily damaged.⁶²

Most of the İstanbul Armenians used Turkish as their mother language and printed some of their newspapers and periodicals in Turkish with Turkish names. For instance, *Rehber* (1912-1913) in Kayseri, *Envar-ı Şarkıyye* (1867-1877) in Erzurum, *Hüdavendigâr* (1869) in Bursa.⁶³

Armenians also contributed to the Turkish music. The most famous ones were Bimen Şen (1872-1943), Nikogos Ağa (1836-1885), Kemani Tatyos (1858-1927),

⁵⁹ Göyünç, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁶⁰ Quoted from Edmund Schütz in Göyünç, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Much more information could be found in Göyünç's article in the book, *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Levon Hanciyan (1857-1949), Artaki Candan (1885-1948).⁶⁴ In addition, Armenian Church and classical music were effected by Turkish musicology.

Armenians also began to involve in theatrical activities from 1810 onwards and they made representations in the houses of rich Armenians or in schools. The first theatre Colledas Şark theatre was opened in 1861, in Beyoğlu in İstanbul. At the same time, a theatre building was constructed in İzmir.⁶⁵ Agap Vartoviyan founded the first regular Turkish language theatre in Istanbul in 1870 and many of Armenian works followed one another.⁶⁶ Armenians performed their opera also in İstanbul in the 18th century. The Ottoman Palace supported these activities and in 1843 a part of the Valide Sultan Palace was turned a theatre and they performed opera there.⁶⁷

Armenians were very important in the field of architecture too. Especially, Balyan family was famous and this family constructed many buildings and palaces such as Dolma Bahçe Palace.

They began to use press from 1567 onwards. This was 160 years before the establishment of Turkish press. Armenian printing press developed in Turkey without any prevention. In İstanbul, Armenian books were published in 17th century. Although XIV.Louis in Marsilya abolished an Armenian printing press, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire had no difficulty in this way and there was printing liberty in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁸ Apart from İstanbul, there were Armenian printing presses in İzmir (1759), Van (1759), Muş (1869) and other countryside cities of the Ottoman Empire. In 1908,

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-37.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁶ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁶⁷ Göyünç, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

there were 38 Armenian printing presses all over the country.⁶⁹ First Armenian newspaper was printed in 1839, in İzmir, called as Şafak twenty-five years after the Armenian press became active. In the 19th century, no less than 14 Armenian newspapers were published in the Empire. According to Dadian, there was no censorship for Armenian press. Everybody could publish newspaper up to the beginning of secessionist movements by the Armenians. However, this freedom of press gradually curtailed and later was abolished.⁷⁰ In 1910, 5 Armenian newspapers and 7 magazines were published in İstanbul.⁷¹

Although education was under the control of the Patriarch, from the 19^h century onwards, the Armenian children could go to secular schools as well as the religious ones. In 1846, there was development in the Ottoman education system. It was for the primary and secondary school system, which was a step to university under the ministry of education. Free and compulsory primary education was started in 1869. The millet schools supported this development. Armenians like the other non-Muslim group sent their children to Europe and Russia to get education. In Europe the Armenians especially went to Venice where there was a haven of Armenians for education since the 16th century and to Paris. Most of these young Armenians were introduced with the notion of democracy that was so prevalent in the 1840s and returned İstanbul with full of French Revolutionary ideas. Largely these young men responsible for the improvement of movement for reform within the administration of the Armenian Church and notion that was organized under the Ottoman Millet system.⁷² Besides, education was important for

⁶⁹ Y. G. Çark, *Türk Devleti Hizmetinde Ermeniler 1453-1953*, (İstanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1953), p. 248.

⁷⁰ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁷¹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁷² Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

Armenians since they could get necessary education to find a job in the state institutions. Armenians, in the second half of the 19th century, were in all parts of governmental occupations. In this respect, Muslims were far behind them, because there were not many Turkish children who were sent to Europe for education.

Armenians were in a very advantageous position in the Empire. According to the information from Gürün who had taken from Marcel Leart, in the 19th century they had 803 schools, 2.088 teachers, and 81.226 students in these schools.⁷³ By 1914, there were about 800 Armenian schools and more than 81.000 pupils.⁷⁴ According to Sonyel, the Armenians that followed the missionary schools were in majority. There were 675 American, 500 French Catholic, and 178 British missionary schools, and more than 100.000 students attending them, such as, Robert College (in 1863). These educational establishments influenced mainly the Armenians, whom began to study their own history and literature, learned about human rights and principles of nationality.⁷⁵

1.2.4. Millet System

Millets were religious organizations that people in the Ottoman Empire were divided and defined on religious basis. Individuals with their beliefs determined their nationality in the empire. Millet system based on not ethnicity but on religious basis.⁷⁶ In fact, millets were autonomous bodies including only religion but also culture, economic and social life. Each millet ruled by its highest ecclesiastical dignitary. This dignitary was responsible for the administration of the millet. That is, he was an intermediary between

⁷³ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁷⁴ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 152. There is a detailed information about the established schools by the missionaries in Anatolia and their students up to 1900. According to Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, in 1900, there were 400 missionary schools in Anatolia and the pupils were about 17.500. Kocabaşoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁷⁵ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁷⁶ Cevdet Küçük, *Osmanlı Diplomasisi'nde Ermeni Meselesinin Ortaya Çıkışı, 1878-1897*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1984), pp. 210-211.

millet and the government. Apart from his religious authority, he controlled schools and administrated certain branches of civil law. With the support of government, he enforced discipline to his people. Because of taking some special functions by ecclesiastical leader, this gave millets a religious character. In millets, there was a social mobility. People, if they want, move up and down.⁷⁷ Ottomans did not want to destroy the socio-economic position of these communities; her only claim was on political way. Millet system succeeded in keeping different communities apart but only provided social order in a heterogeneous state. As free in their language, religion, cultural, economic and internal affairs, these communities survived in the Ottoman system with their national identity. Ottomans did not try to make a homogeneous community. In the Ottoman Empire, many people lived together and they were in peace. The Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire as Gregorian community and lived under the leadership of their religious leader. Later, Armenians also accepted the Catholic and Protestant sects and they divided three sects. This division was used by the Great powers for their own goals. These states took the protection of one of these sects. Russia was the protector of the Gregorian, England was the protector of the Protestants and the Gregorian and France was the Catholics.⁷⁸

1.3. Armenian Question

Before looking at the Armenian question, the factors, contributed the rise of the Armenian Nationalism, will be explained. One of this was the nationalist movement, which emerged with the French revolution in 1789, and it became incubus to the multi-national empires. Nationalism first spread over Europe and then came to the Ottoman Empire. While the nationalism movement was a combining factor for the Western nations,

⁷⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

it caused the collapse of the multi-national empires like Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. First non-Muslims were affected from the nationalist movements, in the Ottoman Empire. The nationalism affected easily the multi-national empires, which have different social-cultural-political formation. The non-Muslims thought that the Ottoman formation system was insufficient and they wanted to establish their own national states. The nationalism first started in cultural field and this woke up the national feelings caused the political desires. Nations wanted to set up their own states, well then. They could reach their desires only if the Ottoman Empire collapses. Nations understood that they could not set up their own states without support of the Great Powers. As taking the protection of the Great Powers, the most important step taken on the way of independency. First, they wanted to make reforms in favor of themselves, took autonomy and then gain independency. The Armenians followed this way too. Nationalism was the main reason for the Armenian question. The Armenians like Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians wanted an independent state. The Armenians' first step towards the nationalism was in cultural field by awakening the national feelings. Then, they brought this to political field with the support of the Church, missionaries and the Great Powers.

1.3.1. The Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century;

Eastern Question

When we look at the 19th century, the influence of the Great powers increased over the Ottoman Empire. From the Karlowitz Treaty in 1699 onwards, some projects began to be applied on the Ottoman Empire. The leaders of these projects were England and Russia. Russia always wanted to reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean. This

⁷⁸ Feroz Ahmad, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu" in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler*, ed., Marian Kent, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p. 24.

dream could be real only using the Ottoman lands. For this purpose, Russia provoked the Balkan Nations with the effect of nationalism idea of the French Revolution. At first Greece and then the others gained their independence. However, these Balkan nations turned away from Russia after gaining their independency. After these unsuccessful attempts, Russia began to make plans for the minorities living in Anatolia. For this purpose, the most suitable nation was the Armenians.

Before looking at the Armenian nationalist movement, we should look at the English, French, German and Austria-Hungarian's policies over the Ottoman Empire. England who could reach the Asian colonies through the Ottoman territories, wanted to protect the Ottoman unity against Russia. This policy of England continued up to Gladstone the English Prime minister and chairperson of Liberty Party came to the administration in 1880. Meanwhile, England was taking privileges from the Ottomans and in 1835, with Balta Limanı Treaty took the protectorate of the Protestants in the Empire.

France was for along time in silence because of the internal problems and even protected the Ottomans against Russia for a time. The Ottoman-French close relations started during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent and this continued during the administration of Napoleon as well. France was away from the situation up to 1878 Berlin Treaty, from then she entered close relations with Russia and England and "Entente Cordiale" was created. After this time, France was on the side the Great powers to divide the Ottoman Empire. France was the protector of the Catholics in the Empire. Austria-Hungary followed the policy of taking the territories that were lost to the Ottomans and sometimes cooperated with Russia against the Ottomans. Germany came into arena with the Versailles Treaty in 1870 and established close relations with the

Ottomans and later in order to take a part when the Ottoman Empire participated, she established in close relation with Russia, England and France.

The Ottoman Empire was the sick man of Europe and she could not do anything against those who intervened in her internal affairs. Ottomans had to trust the European powers' promise for the protection of its unity. Up to the last quarter of the 19th century, the Ottomans did not come face to face with an Armenian question and coped with the rebellions broke out in the Balkans by Pan-Slavist policy of Russia. However, while provoking the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Russia took the rights of the Caucasian Armenians and suppressed their national struggles.

There was not a serious problem between the Ottomans and the Armenians prior to the last quarter of the 19th century. But towards the end of the 19th century, the Great Powers began to provoke the Armenian Community as one of their policy towards the Ottoman Empire and began to use the Armenians for their own purposes. This policy of European powers is called as Eastern Question. Eastern Question mainly means that the European powers wanted participation of the Ottoman Empire using the protection of Christians' rights as a pretext. These powers wanted to establish an effective policy over 'sick man of Europe'. For this, the Great powers did not want the collapse of Ottoman Empire but wanted to keep it weak since they could not make an agreement to divide the Empire. All of them pursued a different goal over the Empire. The policy of preserving integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire was in power up to 1914. England wanted the Ottoman integrity because Ottoman Empire was a barrier against Russian expansionism. Some of these powers wanted reforms in the Ottoman Empire to bring it in European level but some others believed that she should die.

The Armenian question was one part of Eastern Question, used by the Great Powers and brought the case in position by the wish of reforms on the behalf of the Armenians. It was a classic situation that these powers' wish of privilege and independency for the Ottoman Christians. Russia, with 1774 Küçük Kainarca Treaty, had the right to comment on Ottoman Orthodox Christians. The nationalist ideas which originated from 1789 French Revolution, were introduced to the Ottoman Christians by the European Powers. As result of this, first, the Serbians won independence in 1804 with the intervention of Russia. In 1821, The Greeks had their independency. Then with the Paris Treaty in 1856, both more privileges were given to the Balkan Christians and it was promised to make reforms for the non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. With this treaty, the foreign powers began intervene the Ottoman internal affairs much more than before. The Balkan Christians such as Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro had their independency and Bulgaria had wider privileges with the 1878 Berlin Treaty. Now it was the turn of Anatolian Christians, well then.⁷⁹

Up to the 19th century, the Armenians were largely not affected by the nationalism in the Balkans. There were reasons why they were not affected at the beginning. They could not have homogeneous majority in a region in the Ottoman Empire. That is, the Balkan nations wanted to have independency in the regions where they were the majority. However, the Armenians did not have a place in Anatolia that was called as Armenian land. The relatively economic well being of the urban Armenians shared a common culture and language with the Muslim Turks and they did not want to separate from the Ottomans. Many Armenians integrated into the Ottoman

⁷⁹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-125.

ruling class from 1850 onwards. In short, the fact that large numbers of the advocated urban Armenians had reason to be satisfied with the status quo.⁸⁰

1.3.2. Factors Behind the Rise of the Armenian Nationalism

There were reasons about the emergence of the Armenian nationalism. These were mainly church, missionary activities, the efforts of intelligentsia and the encouragements of the Great Powers. I will explain these reasons that helped the emergence of the Armenian nationalism.

a. Church: There were several reasons in the rise and spread of Armenian nationalism. One of the most important of these was the ‘church’, which was supported by the Great Powers. Church was seen as the starting point. In the Ottoman Millet System, the Patriarch was the only highest authority of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire and made necessary orders and played a role as an intermediary between the Ottomans and the Armenians. However, actually church had struggles among itself. Although the Gregorian Armenians were the majority in the empire, the numbers of Catholic and Protestants Armenians increased through the efforts of missionaries.

The Patriarch’s authority was over the Gregorian Armenians. As I mentioned before, missionaries caused the Armenians’ acceptance of the Catholic and Protestant sects, so Patriarch’s authority was over the Armenians was undermined. Another reason for this was the process of democratization and secularization, which began with Tanzimat reforms. Gradually, authority was taken from the Amiras and the church. Only the aristocracy did not constitute the national council, but also two assemblies were

⁸⁰ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106.

constituted in 1847, one of them was spiritual and the other was temporal. After this, the authority was participated by the all Armenians.

The Rules and Regulations of the Armenian Millet was published in 1863 after the Reform Edict, which was accepted by the Ottoman Empire to decrease the European powers' intervention, was put into practice. With these rules and regulations, a new page was opened for the social and political establishments of the Armenians. The Armenians, became a tool for the great powers to be used for their political, social, financial and cultural interests in the Empire. This situation was on behalf of the imperialist powers because they wanted to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottomans and wanted to protect their benefits in the Ottoman territories. With these rules and regulations, Armenians had many rights and they used them not to improve themselves but as a step towards the independency. They trusted Russia and Europe believing that they would help them to establish an autonomous or an independent state.⁸¹

While the Patriarchate was becoming only a religious leader, it began to involve in the activities that provided the national revival. With the using nationalist ideology, the church tried to eliminate the threat of losing the authority in both secular and religious affairs.⁸² At the same time, the Armenian Patriarch wanted to bring together the divided Armenian community under an ideal and with a great desire, apart from his religious leadership in order not to lose the secular authority; he wanted to use the nationalist ideology. Armenian Patriarch saw the imperialist states' promise of establishment of, at least, an autonomous Armenian state as a good opportunity.

⁸¹ Kılıç, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁸² Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109.

However under these conditions, both they and the Ottomans became the tools of the great powers.⁸³ In the Ottoman Empire, they wanted to own a part of territory and create an Armenian nation.⁸⁴

Armenian Church became the leader of Armenian nationalism. Actually, there could not be an Armenian nation without Armenian Church. İstanbul Patriarchate sent orders to the Anatolian churches with a claim of independency. In these orders, “It is wanted that the difference of sects should be abandoned for national independency. If there is a division, this will harm the Armenian question. In addition, nationalism should be a major lesson in schools; there should be close relations with the consuls. They should know the Armenian problems, so Europe will hear our problems and they will help us. We have to show that we want reforms and security. You should act the European travelers in good manner, so it will increase their sympathy for you.”⁸⁵ About this subject, Gürün quoted Pastirmacıyan’s words as in the following: “The Armenian Church has been the body where the soul of the Armenian people, revived by the church, lived, while waiting for the day of its resurrection.”⁸⁶ Gürün says that for this subject, “Actually, one should not talk about the Armenian nation, Armenian state or from Armenian history but about the Armenian Church, the Armenian Church state. The Armenian Church needs to strength to preserve its existence. The thought of Armenian state was not born by Armenian nation but by Armenian Church.”⁸⁷

Church had most of its support from the Great Powers. Russia gave her support by transferring the İstanbul Patriarch’ power to Etchmiadzin and Russia thought that she

⁸³ Kılıç, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁸⁴ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-110.

⁸⁵ Kılıç, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁸⁶ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

could spread nationalism by the way of Etchmiadzin easily because Etchmiadzin was the tool of Pan-slavist policies of Russia. In addition, Russia was successful in her this project.

b. Missionaries: Missionary activities played an important role in the emergence of the nationalism and its diffusion among the Armenians. The English also used missionaries to establish relations with the Armenians. Missionaries dealt with the religious, cultural and health problems of the Armenians who were their target and they opened churches, schools and hospitals to attract the Armenians to their church. According to Öke, even these missionaries paid salaries to the members of the committees.⁸⁸ These missionaries were very effective for the Armenian goals. “Earl explained the brought ideas of missionaries to the Middle East like this: Missionaries were a serious problem for the Sultan. With teaching foreign languages, they propagated division and brought the western ideas to the country and this prevented the improvement of the Turkish nationalism. The democratic institutions of the west displayed as ideals and this weakened the autocratic authority of the Sultan.”⁸⁹ In educational institutions, the Armenian youths were introduced the French revolutionary ideas of nationalism, Armenian geography, Armenian literature and mythologized Armenian history.⁹⁰ In this way, Armenian youths gained national consciousness. Besides this, they depicted the non-Muslim minorities as oppressed people, and so, they cultivated the Turkish enmity among the Armenians. Faroz Ahmad says that the missionary schools were means to introduce the modern thought especially nationalist

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁸⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

ideas to the non-Muslims.⁹¹ Apart from schools, the consulates were also effective for spreading the nationalism among the Armenians. The consulates gave books, magazines and newspapers in which the separatist ideas had taken place.⁹² Armenian nationalism was woken up by the efforts of states that used the church and the Armenians for their own goals.

c. Armenian Intelligentsia: The intelligentsia in Caucasian region was effective for developing the Armenian nationalism. The first generation of the Caucasian Intelligentsia was grown up in the networks of the Armenian schools, which were opened at the beginning of the 19th century. These youths, which were educated in different branches, were affected from the socialist ideas and to the end of the 19th century; most of them became the members of the revolutionary organizations. They turned their eyes into the Ottoman territories for the salvation of the oppressed Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and for the organization of the revolutionary movements in these lands.

Another factor for the emergence of the Armenian nationalism was the Armenian youths who went to European states especially France for education and then returned İstanbul. The encouragement of the Great Powers was also an important factor behind the emergence of the Armenian Nationalism. England, Russia and France were the main supporters of the Armenians at that period.

1.3. 3. Organizations

For the nationalism, the first step was taken and nationalism spread among the Armenians. It was the turning point to take concrete steps to materialize the Armenian

⁹¹ Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁹² Kocabaşoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-45.

goals then. In order to achieve their goal, which was to establish an independent Armenian state, some communities were founded at first in Turkey and later abroad. These communities established, at first, as charitable organizations.⁹³ In the Empire, the first community was established in 1860 under the name “Armenian Philanthropists Community.” This community played an important role in the rebellion at Zeytun, in 1862.⁹⁴ Between the years 1870-80, the communities like *Araratlı* in Van, *School Lovers* in Muş, and *Nationalist Women* in Erzurum were established. These communities were social communities in appearance. Besides them, revolutionary societies were established as well. These were *Karahaç* in Van, in 1878; *Defenders of Motherland* in Erzurum in 1881. The latter was a short-lived society. As a revolutionary political party, the first one was “Armenekan Party”. The aim of establishing this party was to have the rights of governing the Armenians themselves by revolutionary way.⁹⁵

Among the revolutionary societies, one of the most important one was Revolutionary Hintchak and the other one was Tashnaksutiun. The Hintchak society was established in Geneva by Avetis Nazarbekian and by his friends in 1877. It based on Marxist-Socialist principles. At first, they were to start action in Turkey in a region, called as Armenia. The main goal of the society was to set up an independent Armenian state within the borders of Ottoman state and then unite with Iranian and Russian Armenians and establish the Great Armenia. The Hintchak committee determined the way to establish Turkish Armenia like this: “The only way of achieving our immediate goal is to start, a revolution that is using force to upset order in Turkish Armenia, forcing

⁹³ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁹⁴ Ercan, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁹⁵ Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168.

the people to start war against the Ottoman government with a general revolution. The methods were;

1- Propaganda: using press, publications and oral means.

2- Terror: Using this as a punishment against Turkish administration and as a weapon for protecting the revolutionary organization.

3- Raider regiments organization: Military units kept ready to fight against government forces.

4- It should be considered that the most suitable time for the general revolution is the declaration of war by any state against to Turkey.⁹⁶

Hintchakists advocated the Russian protection idea. Hintchakist program was both nationalist and communist. It was based on class struggle against economic exploitation and then a national state was set up. However, the Russian as well as by the upper and middle class Armenians in Turkey did not support the Hintchakists' economic and social policies. However, they also had supporters in Turkey, Russia and Iran. They could not get results from their actions in Turkey. Because of this, it was accepted that the Hintchakists could not have support from Europe. Among the committee members, division begun and in 1898 the separated ones established New Hintchak Party. The other one survived as Revolutionary Hintchak Party.⁹⁷

Christopher Mikaelian and his friends established the Dashnaksutiun Revolutionary Party in Tiflis in 1890. The Dashnaksutiun like the Hintchak Party accepted terrorism as a way of action. Whereas, Hintchaks supported the idea of establishing Armenia under the protection of Russia while the Dashnaks at least at the

⁹⁶ Uras, *op. cit.*, pp. 435-436.

⁹⁷ Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

beginning wanted an independent Armenia. As terrorist committees, Hintchak accepted Kumkapı incident in 1890, Sasun rebellion in 1894, Sublime Porte incident and Zeytun rebellion in 1895. Dashnaks accepted raid of Ottoman Bank in 1896, Sasun rebellion in 1904 and Yıldız assassination in 1905.⁹⁸

There are reasons why the both parties accepted terrorism as a way of action. First of all, because of the individual or collective terrorist actions the Muslims could escape from the places, which were called as Armenia, so the region would be left entirely to the Armenians. Interestingly, the Armenians were never in majority in these regions. They had not a region in which they were majority like the Bulgarians or the other Balkan nations which had their own natural frontiers and then the Armenians did not struggle for a certain place. The Armenians lived all over the Empire and they formed small communities. Second of all is that the committees knew that they could not establish independent state without the intervention and approval of the Great Powers. They could only take the attention of them by terrorist actions.⁹⁹ An Armenian as in the following explained this situation: “One of the Armenian revolutionaries said that the Hintchak bandits are ready to kill the Turks and the Kurds and fire their villages. In this situation the Muslims will attack to the Armenians and so the European powers will intervene the situation for humanity.”¹⁰⁰

1.3. 4. Armenian Revolts and the Reforms

The Armenians took the Russian support to make rebellions. The İstanbul Patriarch Nerses tried to take the supports of the other states and said that “we are ready to do necessary things to establish even an autonomous, if we could not establish an

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-174.

⁹⁹ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

independent Armenian state in the east of Turkey". Even, he said to English ambassador that if it is necessary to take the attention of great powers, we could make rebellions. The Patriarch was supported by the leaders of the Russian Armenians and applied to Tsar to get help to the Ottoman Armenians.

At that time, the Armenians were divided among themselves. Some of them said that the European powers' support is necessary to reach their goals. The others resisted this and said that the European powers will use the Armenian question on the behalf of themselves. Russia helped the Armenians and the Armenians served as spies for Russia during the Crimean War. Russia persuaded the Armenians to act badly to the Turks. Patriarch both promised the Ottomans to be loyal forever, on the other hand turned to Russia for her support. Russia was not interested in the Armenian independency but to cause struggles in the Ottoman Empire, the Russians helped the Armenians. Russia did not want an independent Armenian state because she feared that this would encourage her Armenians.¹⁰¹

The idea of making reforms for the Armenians first came into being by Russia in San Stefano Treaty. Because, the Armenian Patriarch made a negotiation with Grand Duke Nicholas before signing of the treaty and informed his desires. During 1877-78 Russia-Ottoman war, Russia got the help of the Armenians. To take response of their services, the Armenians under leadership of Patriarch Nerses and İzmirlıan came together in Armenian assembly and to request from Tsar not to give back the region that was invaded in Eastern Anatolia to the Ottoman Empire. Beside to and unite this region up to Euphrates with Ararat when an Armenian state would be established. If this fails,

¹⁰⁰ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

¹⁰¹ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-208.

he wanted in this area some reforms to be implemented for the Armenians. If the occupied territories were evacuated, it would be necessary to take guarantee from the Sublime Porte for the reforms and during the process of reforms; the Russian forces would not withdraw from the area until the reforms are implemented. The third desire of him was accepted which was “Making reforms for the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire. Russia would not withdraw up to the reforms were implemented.” For this reason, the 16th article was added to the agreement. According to this, the Ottoman state would make the reforms in the provinces where the Armenians were living in majority, without losing time. These reforms would be on behalf of the region. In addition, the Ottoman Empire made contract that the Armenians would be protected against the Muslims. It is clear that the Russians realized their aspirations, dating from the Crimean War, to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and to set up their power especially in Eastern Anatolia.¹⁰² This article was not materialized because with Berlin Treaty, another agreement was made and it would not be processed.

Making reforms was brought into attention first in the article 16 of San Stefano Treaty when England brought the Armenian question to Berlin Congress in 1878 so she could take a part in this subject. Because England feared that Russia controls if Eastern Anatolia like the Balkans would, this would be an obstacle on the trade road of England to India. That is England feared the Balkanization of the Eastern provinces of Turkey by Russia.¹⁰³ With the Berlin Treaty, the Armenians had taken a great advantage because the Armenian Question entered to the international political system.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Uras, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁰³ Karal, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁴ Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1997), p. 522.

The 16th article of San Stefano feared England for Balkanizing the Eastern provinces of Turkey by Russia since Russia would extend her influence towards İskenderun and Mesopotamia and would occupy the Ottoman territories. After this, the Berlin Congress met and Berlin Treaty was signed. Armenians applied to the Berlin Congress with a desire of independency and wanted support from them. They threatened to leave themselves to the hands of Russia if they did not support themselves. Although they could not have what they want, they succeeded in adding the article 61 to the Berlin Treaty. According to this: “The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and the Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Great Powers, who will superintend their application”.¹⁰⁵

As result of this, the Armenian Question came into international platform first, and the reforms for Armenians had been under the guarantee of the signers of the treaty. The Armenians realized that they could not reach their aims without support of England. From this time on, England would have an important place in the Armenian question.¹⁰⁶ This article would carry the Armenians to autonomy even if not to independency. England like Russia did not interest in Armenian independency, but England wanted to use Armenians as a buffer zone on the trade road of India. Meanwhile, the Zeytun Armenians rebelled. The 1877-78 Russia-Ottoman war found as an opportunity by the Armenians. While the Ottomans tried to suppress the rebellion, the British government threatened the Ottoman government with armed intervention. These kinds of threats

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 526-531.

¹⁰⁶ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

were repeated at several times. With Russian intrigues, Armenians continued this kind of actions. After these, the Armenian extremists established a number of revolutionary and terrorist organizations both in the Ottoman Empire and abroad.¹⁰⁷

The Armenians understood that, the necessary reforms and their desires would not be made without England. For England, the acceptance of Armenian question had an important place for her profits. England would both prevent Russia to be only power in this region and also take away Russia from her colonies in Far East, while Russia was engaging with the Ottoman state by the way of reforms. Russia' goal was to annex Anatolia quickly by taking advantage of winning a war. Berlin Conference made it clear that it could not be possible. Russia had taken a back step for the reforms. As she knew that, this would encourage the Armenians in her own territories. This made easier for England to be the only power in this subject.¹⁰⁸ Owing to the economic reasons, the Ottoman government was not in a position to fulfil its promise. As the reforms demanded the expenditure of vast sums of money and resources this caused a bankrupt in the Ottoman Empire, then practically bleeding to death because of the capitulations and the public debt.¹⁰⁹

Following the signature of the treaty, Russia began to spread the rumors that the Ottoman government would not make the promised reforms with propaganda. The English ambassador Sir Henry Layard warned the Ottoman government. He said that public order should be provided in the East, reforms should not be waited and there are intrigues to start rebellions by the Armenians abroad. Russia on the one hand was encouraging Armenians for rebellions and migration, on the other hand she did not want

¹⁰⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-289.

¹⁰⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-121.

an independent Armenia. Because, the struggling Armenians in the Ottoman Empire would be more advantageous for Russia. At this situation, Patriarchate played an important role for provocation of the Armenians. The Patriarch said that if it is necessary to take the attention of Western powers, we will make rebellions and the struggle among the Armenians would end if only an Armenian governor appointed to the Eastern provinces.¹¹⁰ However, as it is understood from the English documents, England did not want this. Because the Armenians' situation is bad at this region but also the situation of the Muslims was the same. The non-Muslims had a chance to apply to the consuls for their complaints, but the Muslims did not have a chance. Because of this and due not to make easier the Russian intrigues in this region, England did not want an Armenian governor.¹¹¹

Meanwhile, the Ottoman government could not stay without any action. The Grand Vizier Hayrettin Pasha sent commissions to the Eastern provinces in February 1879 to ascertain the non-Muslim's complaints and to make an investigation about situation of the region. It was decided that an Armenian member would join each of these commissions. To start a reform, police and gendarmerie units were necessary. But this could not be materialized because of insufficiency of economic situation. The year 1879 ended without making an action for the reforms but only negotiations were made.¹¹² From 1880 to 87, there were negotiations between England and the Ottoman government, but there could not have a result to put into effect these reforms.¹¹³ For example, a diplomatic note was given on June 1880 and it was asked the Ottoman State

¹⁰⁹ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

¹¹⁰ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 148-153.

what had been done about the article 61 of Berlin Treaty the Ottoman state would be responsible for these delays. The Ottoman answer to this note was as “Rules and Regulations have been prepared for all of Anatolian cities, an investigation is carried out in Eastern provinces and works are done. In the towns, the directors of schools would be chosen from the people who make the majority of population, the vice-director would be chosen from minority and committees would be founded with 4-6 members. These committees would govern the *bucaks*, which have their own gendarmeries and gendarmerie units would be established in provinces. Itinerant’s courts would be founded for trials, the governmental services would be opened to non- Muslims etc.”¹¹⁴ From 1880 to 95, and the attempts for Armenian reforms brought no result. The English efforts without a supporter were without result.

The Armenian committees, which want to take the European powers’ attention to themselves, started to act for their own goals. For this purpose, the first action was taken by the Armenian people’s provocation in Erzurum and Kumkapı in İstanbul in 1890. Two communities were living together friendly, were brought face to face. This event was showed by the west as a massacre. With this, the Armenians achieved their goal that was to take the European’s attention and European powers increased their pressure over the Ottoman government to make the reforms for the Armenians. As a result of these pressures, the insurgents were forgiven and the government accepted a general exemption. Some terrorist actions were made until the Sasun revolt of 1894. These actions were made in Amasya, Merzifon, Ankara, Çorum, Tokat, Yozgat and Diyarbakır. The insurgents hanged pankarts against Abdülhamit II and they rebelled in

¹¹³ For more information about the subject look at *Ibid.*, pp. 149-163.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Yozgat in 1893. England, France and Russia made another attempt for the reforms after the first Sasun revolt in 1894.¹¹⁵

The Armenian committees were preparing for a widespread revolt to take the European attention to them. They had this chance with a rebellion in Sasun and in Siirt in 1894. This revolt was started by the provocation of Hintchaks against the Muslims and Muslims responded to this action. This rebellion was suppressed by the Hamidian units (these were taken from local tribes by Abdülhamit II.) and this event created a great reflection in the West and a strong campaign was started against the Turks.¹¹⁶ The reform negotiations again were brought to international platform after this rebellion. England took the leadership and asked the Ottoman government to implement the Berlin Treaty's obligations and also tried to this to be accepted by the European powers. The main desire of England was to establish courts, gendarmerie and finance offices under the administration of local Christians and these would be under the governorship of European powers, actually herself.¹¹⁷

Germany wanted to establish good relations with the Ottoman Empire because of economic and politic profits in the East so she did not support the English project. But France supported England in this project to not leave her alone against Russia. French, Russian and English ambassadors of İstanbul came together on April 1895 and started their work to ascertain the main reform subjects which would be done in Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Sivas, Harput and Diyarbakır, according to article 61 of the Berlin Treaty. After approved by Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary, the agreement text was given to

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-195.

¹¹⁶ Ercüment Kuran, "Ermeni Meselesinin Milletler Arası Boyutu" in *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Ermeni Sorunu*, ed., Hasan Celal Güzel, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2001), pp. 107-108.

¹¹⁷ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

Sublime Porte on May 1895. This text restricted the governmental, financial and judicial authority of the Ottoman Empire and gave privileges to the Armenians. The Ottoman answer delayed for this text since the Sultan did not forget how the Balkan Christians used the given privileges to their advantage and how this brought the foreign intervention in the Ottoman affairs. Therefore, he could not accept the project, which would make the Eastern Anatolia like the Balkans.¹¹⁸

The Armenians, who could not take what they want by Sasun rebellion, they wanted to make another event and on 30 September 1895 they made a demonstration against the Sublime Porte. This event was resulted with death of many Muslims and of many Armenians in the Ottoman capital. On June 1896, another rebellion was taken place at Zeytun, where the Armenian insurgents killed all their Turkish captives. This was followed by numerous incidents all over Anatolia. Following the rebellion in Van, in 1896, the Armenian extremists raided Ottoman Bank on 26 August 1896, which was planned by the Hintchakists.¹¹⁹ Because of this rebellion, many Muslims and Armenians were killed. Following this rebellion European powers again took action and called the Ottoman government to make the reforms for the Armenians. The negotiations came to end with the signature of Reform Rules and Regulations on 22 October 1895. Some of the articles of reforms were like this: A vice-governor was to be appointed to each governor. In the places where the Christians are in majority, a Christian vice-governor would be appointed for the post of each governorships and *mutasarrıflık*. In the six provinces, the officials would be appointed according to the percentage of the population. That is, the Christians would be in administration of six provinces.

¹¹⁸ Kuran, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹¹⁹ Küçük, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162; Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

Like the other reforms, this remained on paper. These extended reforms could not satisfy the Armenian insurgents. The Sultan did not announce the reform text formally on the pretext that this would bring about reflection of the Muslims. However, because of the increasing attempt of Great powers, on 11 November 1896, it was published in a formal newspaper. In addition, it was announced that these reforms would not only apply to six provinces but also all of the provinces. However the reform acts were not implemented when the Turko-Greek war started.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, Russia was in silence not to encourage her Armenians in Caucasus and because of some kinds of reasons, other European powers were also in silence. The west was busy with Macedonia and the Balkans and so the Armenian question and reforms were not touched for along time. For instance, the incidents in Adana of 1909 did not create a great reflection in the West since it happened at the same time with the March 31st event. Meanwhile, Europe was interested in dethroning Abdülhamit II and the accession of the Young Turks to the government. In 1910, a rebellion started in Albania and the war of Bingazi began between Italy and the Ottoman Empire in 1911. Then in 1912, the Balkan war started, too. The Armenian reform subject was brought to international forum again following the Balkan wars. On 9 November 1912, when the Ottoman army was defeated in the First Balkan War, Russia had taken an advantage of this and sent a report to the Ottoman government. In this report, Russia offered the Ottoman government to make the reforms in the Eastern Anatolia for the Armenians. If it would be unsuccessful, Russian army will be ready to occupy the region. But, the main purpose of Russia was to annex this region to her own territories. However, there

¹²⁰ Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225.

could not be established an independent Armenian state in Russia since the Russian foreign minister explained their desire of “an Armenian state without Armenians.”¹²¹

Sublime Porte applied to England on 24 April 1913 and asked England to send English officials to help carrying out their new reforms in the provinces where the Armenians are in majority. The Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP) wanted to solve the Armenian question and wanted experts from England. Soon after, Grand *vizier* Mahmut Şevket requested more English officials for the South and for the West of Anatolia. These experts would control the gendarmerie, the system of justice, agriculture and forests, public works and the Department of Interior's work. With this attempt, the Ottomans explained this move as an effort to convince England that the Turks are sincere and efficient in reform. Turkey wanted to show her wish to make reform in these areas and to win English consent to Turkish ownership of the Aegean Islands. The CUP wanted to find a durable solution for the Armenian Question that would satisfy both the Armenians and the Ottoman Empire. Apart from this, Turkey's main concern was to keep Russia and England at odds on the Armenian Question says Davison, with this especially Russia would be kept away.¹²² In 1907, Russia and England made an agreement to bring an end to their struggle over the Far East. They would act together. Well then, England was ready to divide the Ottoman Empire and accepted to give the straits to Russia. The British viewed the proposal with favor but at once wanted to inform Russia not to fear if the English officers appeared without explanation on the Russian frontier. At first Russia accepted this request but later Russia did not want the English experts in the Turkish provinces that are close to the frontier of Caucasus and so

¹²¹ Kuran, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

the English refused the Ottoman request. Russia informed that it was ready to occupy Eastern Anatolia if this region is not given the shape that Russia wanted. After this, the negotiations started among the ambassadors of England, France and Russia in İstanbul. Germany wanted a Turkish delegate to be ready in discussions, but Russia rejected this offer. Sazanov said that Armenians would have no confidence in the reform and the discussion would end without result. In fact, this gave Russia to take a free hand in the Armenian Question.¹²³

In this reform movement, Germany also took part. Germany wanted the Turkish sovereignty and territorial integrity be upheld, but accepted the division of the empire to influence the regions and so she took part on the side of the Great powers when the Ottoman Empire was to be put into pieces. Germany was in advantageous position economically in the Ottoman territories and made many investments. Because of meeting of Great Powers' ambassadors, a project was come into place on 30 June 1913. According to this, with it a creation of one province out of six Armenian provinces (Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Harput, Sivas) and this is to be called as Armenian province. It would be under a general governor to be approved by the Great Powers and the Sultan. As a governor, the Sultan would appoint an Ottoman Christian or a European governor for five years. This general governor would have extensive authority over administration, financial and judicial subjects. This project would bring about an autonomous Armenian state in the Eastern Anatolia.¹²⁴ The Ottoman government with the encouragement of Germany refused this project. Germany wanted to take a

¹²² Roderic H. Davison, "The Armenian Crisis, 1912-1914" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. LIII, No. 3, (April 1948), pp. 493-494.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 495-496.

¹²⁴ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

guarantee for her own part when the Ottoman Empire is divided and wanted Russia to take away from Anatolia and the places where Berlin-Baghdad railway is to be laid on.¹²⁵

1.3. 5. Committees and the Young Turks

Before the First World War, the Armenian revolutionary committees, Hintchakists and Dashnakists decided to cooperate with the Young Turks, with the hope that, in return for any assistance they might render in overthrowing the existing regime. They would obtain such a measure of decentralization as would go far to establish one or two purely Armenian provinces. Armenian delegates participated to the first Young Turk Congress in 1902. Supporters of Prens Sabahattin and Ahmet Rıza participated in the Congress. Prens Sabahattin claimed that to be successful for revolution the intervention of the Great Powers is necessary. But Ahmet Rıza and his supporters did not accept this opinion because they thought that this idea would cause division of the country. The Armenians as expected supported the Prens Sabahattin's opinions. Prens Sabahattin's program was decentralization. In this program, the regions of country are divided to local administrations, finance and juridical departments. This program would open the ways for the autonomy and then independency for the Armenians. Most of the Armenians supported this program. The Armenians also participated the second Young Turk Congress in 1907 and followed a reconciliation way and they announced that they accept the political and financial independency of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, they would not make terrorist actions and would make their military service.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Kuran, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

¹²⁶ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

The Hintchakists and the Dashnakists hoped that by supporting the 1908 revolution, they would go far to establish one or two Armenian provinces in return for their assistance to overthrow the existing regime. Like the other nations in the Empire, the Armenians rejoiced enthusiastically the restoration of the constitution. They expressed the desire to combine in working for the welfare of the Empire, in loyalty to the Sultan. So, the Hintchakists and Dashnakists would give up revolutionary ideas and would devote themselves for the welfare and progress of the country and cooperate with the Young Turks. However, this rapprochement was short lived. Armenians were divided into two groups in socio-economic lines: The Dashnakists who supported Unionists, spoke for petty bourgeois of Anatolian Armenians. The Patriarch spoke for wealthy class (Amiras) and Clerks. While the Dashnakists were cooperating with the Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP), the Hintchakists and the Reformist Hintchakists did not want to cooperate with the CUP and wanted the Russian protection, and declared that Russian protection can be preferred to the Caliph. These groups did not want to dissolve their political organizations. In fact, Dashnakists insisted on maintaining their revolutionary organization and did not want to act as secret groups and pursue their program. They wanted local autonomy even independence but the CUP wanted to bring together all religious and ethnic groups in the Ottoman union. The CUP pursued Ottomanism. As representative of wealthy class, Patriarch, opposed Dashnakists program and did not want in Eastern Anatolia an independent Armenia because Armenian bourgeoisie's interest could be satisfied within cosmopolitan empire as long as it was a dependent part of European economy. In 1909, Adana incidents took place

but Dashnakists still supported the CUP and promised to fight against to the reactionaries.¹²⁷

While promising for support to the CUP, the Armenians made secret congresses and declared not to support the CUP. They determined to use conflict to begin an attack on the Ottoman State. For them the most suitable time was the time when the Ottoman Empire engaged in war. When Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1914, Armenians took side of the Entente powers. They helped the Russians, formed volunteer groups and rebelled against to the Ottoman Empire in many places.

While the Armenians were living without any serious problem in the Ottoman Empire, this situation began to change from 19th century onwards. This caused by the nationalism that became effective via the French Revolution, the efforts of the Armenian Church, activities of the missionaries, Armenian intelligentsia and the Great Powers. The tension between the Ottomans and the Armenians increased especially in the last quarter of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire had to deal with the organized Armenian insurgents, which arose with the intervention of the Great Powers. The reform movements for the Armenians began to process at that period but it was never implemented.

¹²⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-297.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE FROM 1914 TO 1918 ACCORDING TO *IKDAM* AND REFORMS

2.1. Social and Economic Life of the Armenians

The Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire consisted of five broad classes. In this chapter, the life of the Armenians will be explained as it was reflected in Turkish read newspaper called *Ikdam* Newspaper in the periods from 1914 to 1918. Actually, there was not so much news about the classes of the Armenians and their activities in *Ikdam*.

Turkish-Armenian relations were established on mutual trust, respect and sympathy. The Ottoman Empire recognized their rights, liberties, and religion. Although there were Armenian Revolutionary committees which wanted to establish their own states in Eastern Anatolia and were cooperating with the enemy during the First World War, the Ottoman government had to take the decision of relocation of these harmful Armenians in 1915. There were other Armenians, whom were exempt from the relocation in İstanbul and were trying to help the Muslim refugees who were coming from the lost territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. *Ikdam* pointed this situation in the issue 6233 dated 28 June 1914. According to the *Ikdam*'s news: "Our Armenian citizens collected money for the Turkish immigrants from Selanik and they

provided food for them.”¹²⁸ In the time of war, except for rebellious and separatist Armenians, Ottoman Armenians whose relations were good with the Empire and did not cooperate with the enemy against the Ottoman Empire, were ready to help the Ottoman army. *Ikdam* tried to show this loyal Armenians in its issue dated 1 January 1917 as “Armenian Catholic Anot orphanage’s orphans sent 5 liras to the Tobacco society for our Dobruca and Galiçya ghazis.”¹²⁹

The Ottoman government also dealt with the Armenians whenever they met any difficulty in their life. For example, in a visit to Gemlik in June 1914, Talat Bey closely interested in the conditions of the Armenians in this area. In his visit to the Armenian priest in Gemlik, Talat Bey asked questions about the situations of the Armenians. The news was given in *Ikdam* as: “Talat Bey visited Armenian priest in Gemlik during his visit and asked some questions about the situations of Armenians living there. He also asked about the number of Armenians houses in Gemlik. The priest answered the question that there are 80 houses. Talat Bey explained that, the economic situations of the Gemlik Armenians are well. In this visit the Armenians of the area showed their love to Talat Bey.”¹³⁰ In the other day *Ikdam* wrote about the Patriarch’s visit as “Armenian Partiarh had visited Talat Bey and thanked for his goodness for the Armenians in his travel to Gemlik.”¹³¹

As it was explained in the first chapter, the Armenians were active in financial life of the Ottoman Empire. They could establish their private banks and in order to improve their economic activities they established communities. With these societies,

¹²⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6233, 28 June 1914.

¹²⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 7144, 1 December 1917.

¹³⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6215, 10 June 1914.

¹³¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6237, 2 July 1914.

they wanted to improve their industrialist and financial interests in the Empire. Even in 1914, before the First World War began, they wanted to establish a bank in Eastern Provinces [Vilayat-ı Şarkıyye]. For the establishment of this bank, 5 million liras were accumulated in the Caucasian region and a teacher in Petersburg, Dadamisan, came to İstanbul to make a negotiation with Armenian traders living in İstanbul.¹³² *İkdam* wrote on 8 April 1914 about founding a society by the Armenian industrialists as “To improve the Armenian industry and encourage their private interests, the Armenian industrialists established a society in İstanbul. Many industrialists would join to this society from İstanbul and countryside.”¹³³

It was informed that the Armenians cooperated with the Greeks and followed their activities against the Ottoman Empire. As a reaction to the atrocities and extermination policies that the Armenians followed the Christian states in the Balkans, the Ottomans followed a boycott firstly against the Greeks and then in a lesser extent to the Armenians in 1914.¹³⁴

İkdam as a socio-economic newspaper gave the news about this boycott, which was done to protest the Armenians in 1914. According to the news on 9 March 1914, which was taken from the Armenian newspapers, “In İstanbul, there was a boycott against the Greek and Armenian traders thus they would not take their products that they wanted previously from Europe.”¹³⁵ There was another news about this event as “the Armenian Patriarch visited the Minister of Justice and he informed the situations of the Armenian traders especially in the countryside and complained about the Muslims’s

¹³² *İkdam*, no: 6257, 13 April 1914.

¹³³ *İkdam*, no: 6152, 8 April 1914.

¹³⁴ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

¹³⁵ *İkdam*, no: 6122, 9 March 1914.

boycott of the Armenians.”¹³⁶ *Ikdam* also wrote about the complaints of Armenian traders to the Patriarch, because as it is known, the Armenian Patriarch was the intermediary between the government and his nation, which continued still at the beginning of the 20th century. This complaint was given in *Ikdam*'s issue 6174 dated 30 April 1914 as: “Armenian merchants and traders complained about this situation and their bad positions to the Patriarch.”¹³⁷ There was another news in *Ikdam*, which was an answer to the claims of *Azadamarad*, an Armenian newspaper that was printed at that time. *Azadamarad* accused *Ikdam* as not giving any reaction against the boycott, which was done to the Armenians. *Ikdam* as a response denied this critic and declared that it was an impartial newspaper and asserted that the only true and trustworthy news is given in *Ikdam*.¹³⁸ Like all of the other people in the Empire, Armenians were also influenced by the economic difficulties in the Ottoman Empire. Because of European competition, there was a decline in the handcrafts, which ruined many members of the millets, but mostly the Muslims. With the founding of modern factories, however, they showed much more enterprise and skill until the First World War.

2.2. Cultural and Educational Life of the Armenians

Nothing changed for the Armenians during the war years. They lived their daily life as it was before. In time of my study from 1914 to 1918, there was news in *Ikdam* about the cultural life of the Armenians. Even immediately before the start of the World War I, Armenians continued their activities in every field of life. There was the news of an Armenian theatre to be established by some Armenian youths in *Ikdam* on 20 June

¹³⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6125, 12 March 1914.

¹³⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6174, 30 April 1914.

¹³⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6125, 12 March 1914.

1914. “In 1914, in Üsküdar, Armenian youths founded a firm with 4000 lira to establish a theatre.”¹³⁹

Armenians continued to print their newspapers during the war periods from 1914 to 1918. There were announcements of Armenian newspapers in *İkdam* in 1918. For instance, Jağuvran newspaper began to be printed from 3 November 1918 onwards.¹⁴⁰ There was other news in *İkdam*, which was an announcement for a new Armenian newspaper that would be published on 20 November 1918. This announcement was given as “Arnaraman newspaper in Armenian began to be printed from tomorrow onwards.”¹⁴¹

In the 19th century, Armenian educational system improved too. The Ottoman governments made some regulations in the educational life of the Empire. With this, the Armenians could send their children to the military and the secular schools apart from the religious ones. They improved themselves in this way and sent their children to the European countries and Russia for education. These youths returned to the country with a different motion and they had taken an important part in the nationalist movement of the Armenians. There was the news in *İkdam* about the Armenian students who went foreign countries for education. These students gave information about the Armenians and their situation in those countries to the Patriarch. The news in *İkdam* was about the visit of Patriarch to Romania. An Armenian student visited the Patriarch there and informed him about the situations of the Armenians in Romania. “An Armenian student, who was in Romania, had visited the Patriarch and had given information about the

¹³⁹ *İkdam*, no: 6225, 20 June 1914.

¹⁴⁰ *İkdam*, no: 7804, 3 November 1918.

¹⁴¹ *İkdam*, no: 7821, 20 November 1918. There were the names of Armenian newspapers in the number of 7823, on 22 November 1918 in *İkdam*.

Romanian Armenians.”¹⁴² By 1914, there were about 800 Armenian schools and more than 81.000 pupils.¹⁴³

Apart from sending their children to the foreign countries, in every part of the Empire, the Armenians could establish schools. According to *İkdam*'s news in May 1914, an Armenian school would be constructed in Konya permission was taken from the government for this school. For the Armenians, this school would serve to the Ottoman Empire's improvement. “Permission is taken from the government to found a school in Konya, in the name of Sohalyan. The building will be constructed to glorify the country.”¹⁴⁴ The construction of these schools was important for the Armenians. For the beginning of the construction of the school in Kumkapı, in İstanbul, the former Armenian Patriarch was ready there. The news about the construction of an Armenian school was given in *İkdam* on 10 May 1914 as: “With reconstruction decision, reconstruction of Kumkapı Armenian school was started yesterday with a ceremony, in that previous Armenian Patriarch was also ready.”¹⁴⁵ There were also efforts to establish Armenian kindergartens for the Armenian little children. For this, Armenians made efforts and for this they were ready to give money. According to the news of *İkdam* on 27 May 1914, an Armenian gave money for the construction of an Armenian kindergarten school. The news was like that: “To construct an Armenian kindergarten, an Armenian gave 500 liras.”¹⁴⁶

Armenian Patriarch still controlled the Armenian schools and made necessary things for their improvements. There were sport activities in these Armenian schools for

¹⁴² *İkdam*, no: 6162, 18 April 1914.

¹⁴³ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁴ *İkdam*, no: 6183, 9 May 1914.

¹⁴⁵ *İkdam*, no: 6184, 10 May 1914.

the improvement of the children so Patriarch explained the necessity of the sports in the schools. He wanted to bring this subject to the Parliament for discussion. According to the news of *Ikdam* on 4 July 1914: “Armenian Patriarch said that sport is necessary in Armenian schools and this subject will be discussed in Assembly.”¹⁴⁷ Armenian Patriarch did not want the Armenian teachers to be recruited for military service. According to the news of *Ikdam* on 22 May 1914: “Armenian Patriarch would tell his complaint about recruitment of teachers to army.”¹⁴⁸ Armenian Patriarch did not confirm also the given salaries to the Armenian teachers in Church schools. According to the news of *Ikdam* on 27 April 1914: “...Patriarch deliver his wishes to Minister of Finance for the improvement of the situations of teachers who belonged to the Church schools.”¹⁴⁹

2.3. Religious and Political Life of the Armenians

One of the largest groups in the Armenian community was the priesthood and clergy. The leader of this group was the Patriarch of İstanbul who had the authority and e was the most influential man of the Armenian community especially up to the second half of the 20th century. Although his authority was taken in some part by the Rules and Regulation of the Armenian community in the second half of the 19th century, the Patriarch continued to be the leader of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire until 1918.

As the Armenian Patriarch was an intermediary between his nation and the Ottoman government, he could bring the problems of his community to the

¹⁴⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6201, 27 May 1914.

¹⁴⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6239, 4 July 1914.

¹⁴⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6196, 22 May 1914.

¹⁴⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 6171, 27 April 1914.

governmental offices and the Ottoman government would do the necessary things. In a news in *Ikdam* in the issue 6199 on 25 May 1914 as “Armenian Patriarch had come to Sadrazam and said that the fields, that are belonged to Jerusalem monastery in Yedikule, are going to be sold by supervision of wakfs. Sadrazam said that this subject will come to Senate [Meclis-i Vükela]. Also he gave information about the suite of an official or not are being taken to the army. He said that victims of Tokat fire should be given necessary aid and complained about the boycott for the Christians of countryside, Sadrazam said that for these subjects the necessary things would be done.”¹⁵⁰ The Ottoman Empire gave importance to all problems of the Armenians and did not neglect them. Armenian Patriarch gave a written note to Ministry of Justice and this will be discussed in the Senate [Meclis-i Vükela].¹⁵¹

With the Rules and Regulations of the Armenians in 1863, apart from the Patriarch’s general assembly, two assemblies were established. They would follow the way that was defined by the general assembly. In *Ikdam* on 3 May 1914, there was the news about the Armenian assemblies and the intention to be followed on the path of the Patriarchate’s assembly’s way. “The Patriarch would be the guard of the constitution and he would bring all questions to assembly. The General Assembly of the Armenian Patriarchate [Ermeni Patrikhanesi Meclisi Umumisi] met and announced about the rules of these assemblies. To protect the Rules and Regulations of the Patriarchate, they decided to apply on legal ways. They also decided to move on the way that was determined by the assembly of Muhtelit.”¹⁵²

In case of emergency, Patriarch had the responsibility to act by himself. The

¹⁵⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6199, 25 May 1914.

¹⁵¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6162, 18 April 1914.

Patriarch could be dismissed by the general assembly after ballot. About this, there was news in *Ikdam* on 10 May 1914, in which it is mentioned that the Armenian assembly decided that the Patriarch should resign. Also, there was an interview of an Armenian deputy to an Armenian newspaper, *Azadamarad*, this Armenian deputy talked against the Patriarch and the Patriarch himself also complained the Armenian Assembly. This news is given as: “The General Assembly of the Armenian Patriarch wanted the resignation of Patriarch. In an interview of *Azadamarad* newspaper, one of the Armenian deputies talked against the Patriarch, for this Patriarch complained to the Assembly. To investigate this, a commission would be established. After the Patriarch gave his resignation, the Armenian clubs and societies requested him to take back his resignation but Patriarch did not accept this.”¹⁵³

As it was explained in the first chapter, under the Armenian General Assembly, there were two other assemblies. One was the spiritual and the other was the temporal council. When the Armenian parties were set up, they could have candidates for the elections of the temporal council in every two years. For the 1914 elections, it was decided to enter the Armenian parties to the temporal assembly elections. Three Armenian parties’ names for the elections of 1914 were given in *Ikdam*. These parties were Dashnaksutiun, Hintchak and Ramgavar parties. The Dashnak and Hintchak were the revolutionary committees of the Armenians before and during the war. Information was given about the Dashnak and the Hintchak before, so I will give some information about the Ramgavar Party now. The Ramgavar was more moderate than the other two. Its aim was to maintain the powers and prerogatives of the Armenian Patriarchate until

¹⁵² *Ikdam*, no: 6177, 3 May 1914.

¹⁵³ *Ikdam*, no: 6184, 10 May 1914.

the claims of Armenians in the six provinces of Eastern Anatolia are recognized. The Dashnaks who had anti-clerical tendencies opposed its policy.¹⁵⁴ Patriarch decided that some Armenian parties could have take part in the elections but the others could not have. *Ikdam* gave the names of the parties that could have candidates in the elections as: “For the temporal council a few people should be taken from Hintchak and Ramgavar parties. From the Dashnaksutiun Party no one should be taken into.”¹⁵⁵

After the proclamation of constitution in 1876, the Ottoman Government set up a General Assembly. In this assembly, non-Muslim communities of the Empire had taken place, so had the Armenians. That assembly was abolished after two years but in 1908 with second constitution, it became effective again. After this time Armenians with other non-Muslims also took part in general elections of 1914 in the Ottoman Empire. For the elections of 1914 the Armenians should identify their candidates. For this election both Armenian patriarchate’s candidates and Armenian parties’ candidates could have taken place and could give their list. *Ikdam* gave importance to the elections and almost every day there was news in *Ikdam* about the 1914 elections. At first Armenian parties came together and took some decisions for this election. According to the news of *Ikdam*:

- 1) “Armenian Parties will not have candidates
- 2) Patriarchate will have 16 candidates
- 3) There will be candidates from outside of İstanbul
- 4) They could resist against the candidates of Patriarchate and give their candidates’ names ”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

¹⁵⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 6140, 27 April 1914.

¹⁵⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6118, 5 March 1914.

The list of the Armenian parties' candidates was wanted from the Patriarch as he was the main representative of the Armenian nation for the government. In *Ikdam*'s the 6117th issue dated 4 March 1914, it was given the number of the Armenian candidates in the cities. "Patriarch Zevan Efendi wanted the Armenian parties to define their candidates and the CUP secretary had come and wanted from the Patriarch to give the lists to the government. Patriarch said that if the Armenian parties give their lists of candidates, we will accept but if not, we will give the names of our candidates. The numbers of Armenian candidates in some cities were like this: Erzurum (2), Bitlis (2), Van (2), Kayseri (1), Ergani (1), Maraş (1), Kozan (1), İzmit (1), ve İstanbul (1)."¹⁵⁷

Ikdam gave the names of the parties which one could take part in the elections on 13 March 1914. The Armenian parties: Dashnaks, Hintchaks and Ramgavar also could have candidates. For instance in 1914 elections from Dashnaks 6, Hintchaks and Ramgavar 2 candidates could have taken part in the elections.¹⁵⁸ There was other news about the Dashnaksutiun Party that could have taken part in the elections. The candidates of the Armenian parties, as it is seen in *Ikdam* mostly in Eastern Anatolia. Apart from the Revolutionary Armenian parties' candidates in the elections, impartial candidates also could have taken part. In *Ikdam* it was given from where the impartial candidates could be as: "Dashnaksutiun would be in the elections and in Muş, Van and Erzurum impartial candidates should be chosen for the party."¹⁵⁹ Armenians could make discussions in the Parliament [Meclis-i Mebusan] for the community's problems. "Armenian deputies met in the Parliament [Meclis-i Mebusan] flat and they talked about how they would act about the Armenian matters. They accepted the idea that Armenians

¹⁵⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6117, 4 March 1914.

¹⁵⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6124, 11 March 1914.

will be in action about the necessary things for the Ottoman Empire. The necessary proposals would be made for the reforms in Eastern Provinces and the proposal of some changes about the recruitment of Armenians to army will be offered.”¹⁶⁰ About 1914 elections more information about the candidates of Patriarch, lay parties and their struggles about this subject is seen in *Ikdam*.

There was news in *Ikdam* whom could have candidates in the elections. The list of these impartial Armenian candidates also would be given to the government by the Armenian community was defined by the government and how many candidates could have taken part by the Armenians in this election was given to the Patriarchate. The relations between the Armenian parties and the government were getting worse but this tension tried to be overcome between government and them. The news was like that: “The Armenian Parties were trying to continue the relations between the government and themselves in a good way. The tension between the government and the Armenian nation is a mistake. But this could be overcome. There would be 16 candidates from the Armenian nation and 2 of them from İstanbul.”¹⁶¹

The İstanbul Patriarchate took the names of their own candidates from these parties both from İstanbul and from the countryside. If the names of Parties’ candidates were not brought to the Patriarch in a defined time, the Patriarchate would choose its own impartial candidates and could give the list of candidates to the government. On 14 March 1914 there was this news in *Ikdam* about this subject. It was “The candidates of countryside were not brought to Patriarch, so if it was not brought up to evening of 14

¹⁵⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 6126, 13 March 1914.

¹⁶⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6192, 18 May 1914.

¹⁶¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6121, 8 March 1914.

March 1914, the Patriarch would give the list of his impartial candidates.”¹⁶² Patriarch gave the list of candidates for election to the government in the defined date. All of the names of candidates were given. On 15 March 1914 dated news of *İkdam*, in the defined date the Patriarch gave the list to Talat Bey. Armenian Patriarch visited Talat Bey and gave the list of candidates. With this it was defined who would be the candidates of İzmit and Muş.¹⁶³

The numbers of candidates were determined according to the population of the city. If the population in the cities was less, these nations could not have any candidates. The percentage of population was the defining factor. As we see in *İkdam*, İzmit population and its candidate’ numbers were given according to city’s population. This news was taken from an Armenian newspaper ‘Jamanak’. According to this news on 27 March 1914 in *İkdam*, “According to previous census in İzmit 165 000 people were living. For this population only 3 deputies could be chosen and so no Armenian deputy could be chosen.”¹⁶⁴

The number of candidates for the elections that would be given by each Armenian party was decided among the Armenian parties and after that each of them defined their candidates and gave their names to the Patriarchate. *İkdam* gave the number of Armenian Parties’ candidates in some cities in Anatolia on 17 March 1914 as:“At the end, Armenian parties agreed among themselves and informed their candidates. The Dashnak Party would have 3 candidates in Van, 2 in Erzurum and Muş. The Hintchack Party would have a candidate from Bitlis and Ramgaver Party would

¹⁶² *İkdam*, no: 6127, 14 March 1914.

¹⁶³ *İkdam*, no: 6128, 15 March 1914.

¹⁶⁴ *İkdam*, no: 6140, 27 March 1914, the main text is given in appendix A.

have a candidate from Kayseri.”¹⁶⁵ The candidates of Armenians in some cities would be the same in this election; sometimes the candidate could be changed. For instance, in *Ikdam* which cities candidates were to be changed was given in the 6135th issue as: “Bitlis and Erzurum deputies were different from the previous ones.”¹⁶⁶ There were resigns from some Armenian parties because of Party’s attitudes. For instance, as we understood from *Ikdam* published on 27 March 1914 “The important men of Dasnaksutiun Party were resigned; Artin Şehikyan and Agsoni Efendi.”¹⁶⁷

There were differences and struggles between the Armenian Parties and the Armenian Patriarchate. The struggle arose in every opportunity. The members of one of the Armenian parties would not give their vote to the Patriarch’s candidate. İstanbul Armenian Patriarchate could not take the parties under its control. The news in *Ikdam* on 1 April 1914 shows this clearly: “In Van, the members of Dashnaksutiun party did not give their votes to the Patriarchate’s candidate. This situation was criticized by the Armenian newspapers.”¹⁶⁸ There was news in *Ikdam* about the threat towards the Armenian Patriarchate during the elections. It is seen that there was a competition among the Armenian parties and Patriarchate, too. In the news this is shown as “Because of elections, a threat letter had been sent to Patriarchate. But in an Armenian newspaper, *Azadamarad*, it was written that this news was denied by the Patriarchate.”¹⁶⁹

The relations between Patriarch and the government continued closely and for the elections in Eastern Anatolia, Patriarch gave information to the government. There was the news about Patriarch Zevan Efendi’s visit to government. In these visits,

¹⁶⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 6130, 17 March 1914.

¹⁶⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6135, 22 March 1914.

¹⁶⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6140, 27 March 1914.

¹⁶⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6145, 1 April 1914.

Patriarch submitted his desires from government and also gave the necessary information. "...He informed the government about the elections in Eastern Anatolia."¹⁷⁰ Apart from the competition between Armenian parties and Patriarchate, there were struggles and competitions among the Armenian parties during the elections of 1914. Every party wanted its own candidate be elected and they did everything even quarrel among themselves to make their own candidates be chosen. As it is understood from *Ikdam*, the struggles were among the Armenians parties and there was not struggle between the Armenians and the Turks. As it is seen in *Ikdam*, this struggle was given like this "As it was understood from a letter, which was sent to Van Armenian Church, a disagreement was seen among the Armenian parties. The members of Dashnaksutiun party worked for their own candidates are chosen and they did not want the Patriarchate's candidates. The members of Dashnaksutiun Party attacked to the members of Hintchack and Ramgavar parties."¹⁷¹

The Ottoman government tried to establish peace in the election regions and for this, the necessary precautions were taken. For instance, in time of Kurdish rebellion in Bitlis in 1914, government made the necessary things to provide peace in that region. According to it "The government would take the necessary precautions for the elections to be made in peace in Bitlis."¹⁷²

After the elections of 1914, Armenian parties objected the results of the elections. About this subject, *Ikdam* gave the news on 19 May 1914. "Vartekis and Boyaciyan Efendiler were chosen as deputies in the elections, who were the candidates

¹⁶⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 6157, 13 April 1914.

¹⁷⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6160, 16 April 1914.

¹⁷¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6174, 30 April 1914.

¹⁷² *Ikdam*, no: 6181, 7 May 1914.

of Patriarchate. But Dashnaksutiun Party objected this result and informed Talat Bey. Talat Bey said that we could not do anything for the elections after this time.”¹⁷³ The objections continued by Dashnaksutiun Party. The other news about the objections was given in *Ikdam* as: “Pastirmacıyan, who was the candidate of Dashnaksutiun Party, was not elected in Erzurum. Instead, Vartekis Efendi was chosen but Dashnaksutiun Party wanted Vartekis Efendi to resign.”¹⁷⁴

In time of elections, some candidates were changed although they were elected. For instance, according to news of *Ikdam*, “Madanyan Efendi and Vartekis Efendi were chosen as deputies from Erzurum but it was informed with a telegram to the Patriarchate that Boyacıyan Efendi would be on the place of Madanyan Efendi.”¹⁷⁵ The Parties could take part in the provincial elections according to the news of *Ikdam* on 30 May 1914: “In the 1914 elections most of the candidates of Patriarchate were not elected so the General Assembly asked the Patriarchate would have candidate for the provincial elections.”¹⁷⁶

Although Etchmiadzin Catholics was out of the borders of the Ottoman Empire, its effect over the Ottoman Armenians was absolute due to the Russian efforts. The influence of the Etchmiadzin Catholics over the Ottoman Armenians was especially so effective in 1914. This influence could be seen in *Ikdam*'s news on 27 March 1914. In 1914, Etchmiadzin Catholics gave a notification and said that “Armenians who are coming from Russia to Turkey have to have their identity cards, this was because of some events that happened at those times.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ *Ikdam*, no: 6193, 19 May 1914.

¹⁷⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 6195, 21 May 1914.

¹⁷⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 6184, 10 May 1914.

¹⁷⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6204, 30 May 1914.

2.4. Reforms

The negotiations continued for Armenian reforms in 1914. Meanwhile, Russia had realized that she had to take the support of Germany. Germany, which was encouraged by Russia, tried to convince the Ottoman government to accept that project. Germany would not oppose the Russian requests to take her own part when the Ottoman territories were divided. Negotiations continued in the summer of 1913. At this period, the Great Powers' interventions increased, Armenian Patriarchate and the other Armenian committees continued to invite Europe for support. At last, in the proposal, which was given by Russia to the Ottoman Empire, agreement was provided with some changes on 8 February 1914. Although the Ottoman Empire tried not to accept the sovereignty of the Armenians in some provinces, Armenian sovereignty was accepted with this treaty. Nevertheless, this treaty was never implemented. According to the agreement:

- a. Two general inspectors would be appointed for the two sides of Eastern Anatolia. These inspectors would be offered by the Great powers and the Ottoman Empire would be informed about whom was appointed.
- b. These inspectors would check their own region's administration, judicial, police and gendarmerie.
- c. The struggles for the fields would be carried out under the control of them.
- d. Law, rules and regulations and formal announcements would be announced in local languages. If the general inspector thinks it is necessary, everybody could speak his own language in the courts and the governmental offices.

¹⁷⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6140, 27 March 1914.

Court decrees would be in Turkish, but it is necessary, it would be translated to local languages.

- e. Everybody would be a soldier in his or her regions.
- f. Under the control of inspectors, general census would be made.
- g. The Armenian would join the Hamidian units. Those who would be elected to the provincial assemblies, gendarmerie and police would be non-Muslims in fifty percent.¹⁷⁸

In an interview with İstanbul Patriarch Zevan Efendi in *İkdam*, he made an evaluation about the reforms for the Armenians and explained his wish of making them and show his desire if these reforms are made. And he explained that he would help the government to materialize these reforms. He also mentioned of his thought about taking the Armenians to the military service and said that: A project was prepared for the reforms in Eastern provinces in this year. Eastern Anatolia is important for the Ottomans, so necessary measures should be taken for this. Patriarchate is ready to give help for these reforms. The Armenians are ready for their military service. But, military service is not like in the foreign states, for this the applications will be made to the assembly to give necessary orders.¹⁷⁹ There was also an explanation of İstanbul Patriarch Zevan Efendi for the Armenians not to escape from the military service in *İkdam*: “Armenian Patriarchate in his announcement said that the Armenians should not escape from military service and make their obligations, with making their military service, they will serve both themselves and their country. The Armenians run away from

¹⁷⁸ Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248.

¹⁷⁹ *İkdam*, no: 6198, 24 May 1914.

military service only for trade but by making military service, they could serve, too.”¹⁸⁰

During the war, many Armenians escaped from army and joined the bandits.

There was other news in *Ikdam* about this subject and the Armenian deputies made applications for making the reforms in Eastern Anatolia: The Armenian deputies met in Parliament [Meclis-i Mebusan] and talked about their proposal for reforms that would be done in the Eastern provinces.¹⁸¹ There was news about Bogos Nubar Pasha, who was one of the leaders of the Armenian nationalist movement in *Ikdam*. It is given as: “On March 1914, Bogos Nubar Pasha returned İstanbul from Europe where he went to make applications in Europe for making reforms for the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire and he explained that the Ottomans promised to make reforms in Eastern Anatolia.”¹⁸²

The news about how these reforms made in these areas are given in *Ikdam* as well. According to the news the Armenians could join the general provincial assemblies, the members would be % 50 Christians and the Great Powers would be interested in the reforms in this region.¹⁸³ There was explanation of previous Patriarch, Ormanyan Efendi, in *Ikdam*. He wanted from government to make the promised reforms in Paris and Berlin Treaties. This news is as: “Our aim is to provide necessary conditions for the Armenians to live in security and comfort. For this, the government has to make the promised reforms in 1854 Paris and in 1878 Berlin Treaties.”¹⁸⁴ Other news about the reforms in *Ikdam* was the explanations of Patriarch Zevan Efendi and chairperson of the Armenian General Assembly. This news is given as: “The chairperson of Armenian

¹⁸⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6252, 8 April 1914.

¹⁸¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6192, 18 May 1914.

¹⁸² *Ikdam*, no: 6130, 17 March 1914.

¹⁸³ *Ikdam*, no: 6136, 23 March 1914.

General Assembly said that the Armenians, an important subject of the Empire, could achieve the country's comfort and prosperity with the reforms that would be made in Eastern Provinces. Patriarch Zevan Efendi said that the government accepted to make reforms in Eastern Provinces. To perform these, people have to help the government. For this reason, Patriarchate will encourage the Armenians in countryside."¹⁸⁵ There was the news of Armenian newspapers about this subject in *Ikdam*. "The Armenian newspapers wrote that Patriarch invited the Armenians for alliance."¹⁸⁶ Patriarchate informed that to help the Ottoman Empire's reform efforts, two Armenians will be appointed. "The Armenian Patriarchate will appoint two officers to help the investigators who will make the reforms in Eastern Provinces."¹⁸⁷ For the salary of these officers, it was applied to Egypt Armenian community."¹⁸⁸ These were the other news in *Ikdam*.

Among the articles of 1914 agreement between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the article about making the military service in their own regions caused the Armenian rebellions in this region during the World War I and massacre of the Muslims by these Armenians.¹⁸⁹ With this treaty, the Armenian question, which had an international position with the article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, became a Russian-Ottoman question again. The other five European powers had left Russia free in this region. This was due to the partition of the Ottoman territories among themselves. This region would be under the control of Russia, any more.¹⁹⁰ With this agreement, every member gained

¹⁸⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 6156, 12 April 1914.

¹⁸⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 6166, 22 April 1914.

¹⁸⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6231, 26 June 1914.

¹⁸⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6163, 19 April 1914.

¹⁸⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6260, 26 July 1914.

¹⁸⁹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-31; Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-125; Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-250.

something in one way. Turkey had a reform plan with minimum foreign control and so she saved from immediate partition. Armenians gained something that they promised to do more than on paper. Russia lost the control of Turkey's Armenians but she appeased her Armenians and minimized the danger of revolt. England and Germany could not gain control of Anatolia for reforms. These states also understood that there would be no partition of Turkey, because no one ready for this.¹⁹¹ When the Ottoman Empire entered the World War I on 1 November 1914, this treaty which done with Russia was not implemented.

With this treaty, the Ottomans planned to bring peace to this region, but this could not be achieved because Russia provoked the Kurds in this region and encouraged to revolt against the Ottomans and the Armenians. Under the leadership of Sheikh Sait Molla the Kurds rebelled in Bitlis. The 8 February 1914 agreement was painful for the Ottoman government, but it had to be implemented. With this, there would be peace in the Eastern provinces. But Russia would never give permission to peace in the area since it wanted to establish Russian protectorate in the region and wanted to weaken the sympathy of Europe towards the Armenians. For this, she provoked the Kurdish Beys and influential sheikhs against the government. Therefore, Sheikh Sait Molla rebelled against the government. The government was blamed for surrendering the country to Russia. But the rebellion calmed down in a very short time.¹⁹²

When the rebellion was suppressed quickly, the Armenians began to trust the Ottoman government that it would make the reforms and in *Ikdam* it was given like this:

¹⁹¹ Davison, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

¹⁹² Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-303.

“Because of the efforts of the government in Bitlis incident, the Armenians began to trust the government that the reforms would be made for the Armenians and they celebrated the government for its efforts.”¹⁹³ Some of the rebels could not be captured since they escaped to Russia. However, some others were captured. *Ikdam* gave information about this subject almost everyday and tried to show the reflections of Armenians about the Ottoman government’s effort in this rebellion in Bitlis. “Sheikh Şehabettin was captured while he was escaping to Russia.”¹⁹⁴ To calm down the rebellion, Ottoman government sent troops. Number of these troops and their efforts to calm down the rebellion was written in *Ikdam* as “To calm down the city, 1500 soldiers came and they tried to capture rebellious Kurds.”¹⁹⁵

The Ottoman government took strict precautions to suppress the rebellion. Most of the leaders of this rebellion were trailed and took the capital punishment. On 8 May 1914 *Ikdam* wrote about the ones that would be condemned to death as: “Those captured were trialed and 11 were condemned to death”¹⁹⁶ The city was in peace in a short time and many of the rebels were captured. The captured ones were trialed and most of them sent to the Divan-ı Harp according to the news of *Ikdam* on 24 May 1914 “Bitlis is in peace. Rebels were trying to save their own life. 258 were captured and sent for trial to Divan-ı Harp.”¹⁹⁷

In the time of this rebellion, Ottoman government distributed arms to Armenians to defend themselves. This was to protect the Armenians from the rebels and may be to take the attention of the Great Powers that the Ottoman government is trying to make its

¹⁹³ *Ikdam*, no: 6155, 11 April 1914.

¹⁹⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 6172, 28 April 1914.

¹⁹⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 6180, 6 May 1914.

¹⁹⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 6182, 8 May 1914.

best for the Armenians. “Bitlis Armenian journalist said that, to defend Armenians, 150 arms were distributed them, that were taken from store, and an Armenian was killed. But the killers were captured.”¹⁹⁸ After public order provided, people opened their markets and the government collected the arms that were given the Armenians and the Turks. The people who helped the rebels were captured but some of them escaped.¹⁹⁹ But, not every Kurdish notable involved in this rebellion. *Ikdam* published the telegram of Bitlis notables that was sent to the government: “They informed that they had no connection with the rebels.”²⁰⁰ In these telegrams, the notables tried to show the government that they were not on the side of the rebels and would be always on the side of the Ottoman government. “Many of Bitlis notables sent telegram to the government and the Sultan and informed them of their loyalty to the government.”²⁰¹

As it is seen, there was not much news about the life of the Armenians in *Ikdam*. The news was mostly about the Patriarch’s activities and the elections of 1914. Because of the there was not much news about their financial and economic activities, the cultural, social, educational as well as about their religious activities. In fact, most of the news was from the front lines of the Ottoman army or about the allies. During the war, the newspaper was printed as two pages and thus it was not possible to give information from all parts of the life of both the Muslims and the non-Muslims.

¹⁹⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 6186, 12 May 1914 and no: 6198, 24 May 1914.

¹⁹⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 6151, 7 April 1914.

¹⁹⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 6168, 24 April 1914.

²⁰⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 6153, 9 April 1914.

CHAPTER 3

ARMED ACTIVITIES AND UPRISINGS

3.1. Armenian Activities and Uprisings Before Relocation

The Great Powers have decided how to divide the Ottoman Empire among them. They determined influence areas according to their economic interests before the World War I started. According to this determination, while Germany was accepting the Russian penetration to Northern Iran in 1910, Russia confirmed not to be against the Berlin Baghdad railway project of Germany in Anatolia. Germany also accepted not to make railway in Eastern Anatolia that would be dangerous strategically for Russia. The Ottoman Empire accepted the economic control of England over the South Mesopotamia and the Gulf in 1913. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy cooperated to take a part from the partition of the Ottoman Empire and wanted to make an agreement with the Entente Powers in 1913-14. The Entente Powers wanted a protectorate over the Ottoman Empire like the English protectorate over Egypt. For this reason, they accepted to give Eastern Anatolia to Russia, Syria to France and Egypt to England. Germany agreed that the French could obtain the concession of railway in Northern Anatolia and England could accept the Berlin-Baghdad railway project with some conditions. As it is seen,

²⁰¹ *Ikdam*, no: 6158, 14 April 1914.

Germany had taken the lion's share in the economic activities in the Ottoman territories.²⁰²

While these participation plans were done over the Ottoman territories, a Serbian assassinated Austria-Hungarian crown prince Arch Duke Ferdinand. Thus, the political and economic struggles came to the battleground. The government of Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP) knew that whoever won the war would divide the Empire. With this thought, they wanted to take part in one of the sides since they could just prevent the partition of the Empire only if they were able to take a part in that war. At first, the CUP government wanted to enter the war on the side of the Entente Powers but neither England, Russia nor France accepted their desire. Thus, the CUP had to be on the side of Germany. So the Ottoman Empire entered the war in October 1914 on the side of the Alliances. After the Ottoman Empire entered war, the Entente Powers made secret treaties among themselves for the division of the Ottoman Empire. According to these treaties; Russia accepted the establishment of an independent Arabian state or federation and partition of Syria, Adana and Mesopotamia between England and France. In return, the provinces of Erzurum, Van and Bitlis, territories between Southern Van and Euphrates, Muş and Siirt and the Black Sea coast from the west of Trabzon to the place that would be defined later, would be given to Russia. France would take the Anatolian territories between Akdağ, Kayseri, Yıldızdağ, Eğin, Harput. Antalya, Konya and İzmir were to be given to Italy.²⁰³

When we look at these secret treaties and partitioned territories, there was not any explanation about an Armenia or the word of Armenians. The places that the

²⁰² Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

Armenians claim as theirs, which was Eastern Anatolia had been given to Russia and Cilicia to France. When the Armenians learned in these partitions, and these regions would not be given to themselves, they applied to Quai d'Orsay. The committee in Quai d'Orsay asked the Russian ambassador of Paris what answer would be given to the Armenians. The Russian ambassador answered as: "The negotiations with the Armenians were only in academic context, we could not help to their desires."²⁰⁴ *Ikdam* had written the news about the places in Eastern and Northern Anatolia that were claimed by the Armenians as theirs in 1917. The news published on 25 August 1917 that was taken from the speech of Dr. Mikhail told that: "During the negotiations among the Entente Powers, the places that were called as Armenia and Trabzon were given to the Russians."²⁰⁵ The Entente Powers did not do anything to give even limited autonomy to the Armenians.²⁰⁶

While all these plans were made, Uras says that an agreement was made between the CUP and the Dashnaksutiun in 1909. According to this agreement, the CUP and the Armenians would work to strengthen the Constitution and try to avoid from any plan to divide the Ottoman Empire and to achieve this the Armenians would remove the rumours about the Armenians' trend towards independency and work to improve the country.²⁰⁷ Gürün says that this may be not true because there is not any other document to support this pretension.²⁰⁸ Before entering the war, the Ottoman officials met with

²⁰³ Yuluğ Tekin Kurat, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Paylaşılması*, (Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1976), pp. 7-29. For detailed information, it can be looked at this book.

²⁰⁴ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

²⁰⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7377, 25 August 1917.

²⁰⁶ Entente Powers thought that the Armenians would be an effective propaganda tool for themselves. Because, in the war time, the propaganda was very important to increase the psychological oppression and to be accepted the result of the war by the people.

²⁰⁷ Uras, *op. cit.*, pp. 576-577.

²⁰⁸ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

the representatives of the Armenians and a negotiation was achieved. According to this negotiation: if the Ottoman Empire enters the war, the Armenians promised that the Ottoman Armenians would be loyal to the Empire and would do their military service. In August 1914, the CUP came together with the Dashnaks to provoke the Caucasian Armenians against Russia. Dashnaks refused this proposal and said that they would be loyal to the Ottoman Empire but they were not responsible from the activities of the Caucasian Armenians.²⁰⁹

In the congress of Dashnaksutiun in June 1914, the Dashnaks decided to oppose the CUP and to struggle against it because of the deceptive policy of the CUP for the process of the reforms.²¹⁰ The decisions of this congress were: “The Armenians would preserve their loyalty in peace time but pending the declaration of war, would carry on their preparations and arming themselves with weapons brought from Russia. If war was declared, the Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman armies would join the Russian armies with their weapons, if the Ottoman armies retreated or came to a standstill, the Armenians would form armed guerilla bands and begin programmed operations behind the Ottoman lines.”²¹¹ After this congress, Vramian visited Governor of Erzurum and informed that if the Ottoman Empire enters the war against Russia, the Armenians would be on the side of the Ottomans during the war to enable the promise of establishing an Armenian state. Vramian’s aim was if the Ottomans won the war, it was to inform that the Armenians preserving their nationalistic desires.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

²¹⁰ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

²¹¹ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

²¹² *Ibid.*

After the war started, the Armenians first started their preparations in Russia. The Armenian volunteers came from all over the country and joined the Russian army and the bandits. The local Armenian newspapers recommended their coreligionists living in Persia, to come and join to assist Russia.²¹³ About the returning Armenians, there was news in *Ikdam* on 29 May 1914. According to the news: “All the Armenians in America or in the other countries will return their country.”²¹⁴

The Russians began to give arms to the Armenians with the start of the war. The Ottoman Empire worried about this situation as it was shown in a telegram that “It is informed that the armed Armenians were sent to our side and wanted to find bandits in the Ottoman Empire.”²¹⁵ Apart from Russia, the English, French and Italian consuls were helping to the Armenians. They played an intermediary role in providing the necessities such as money, arms for the Armenians.²¹⁶ After these preparations, with the help of Russia, the first events began to take place in Bitlis in March-April 1914.²¹⁷

After the declaration of general mobilization, the Armenians who were called to join the Ottoman army began not to come and those in the army began to escape. Some of the deputies escaped to Russia and became the leader of the Armenian bandits and started to massacre the Muslims. Armenian bandits began to cut off Ottoman army’s supply routes and attack the Muslim villages and the units. Muslim villages were totally undefended because every young and adult male were recruited for the army and the forces were preoccupied with the Russians. Most of Kurdish Muslims were massacred and even women and children were killed brutally. The Armenians did not shot people

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

²¹⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 6203, 29 May 1914.

²¹⁵ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

but left them die slowly. They burnt everything on their way and drove women, children and elderly men to the Mosques and burnt them there. Women and children were raped in front of crowds. They wanted the remaining Muslims to escape Western or Southern Anatolia.²¹⁸

In fact, there was not serious problem between the Muslims and the Armenians but as a result of provocation of the members of the Armenian committees and Russians, the Armenians rebelled. When some Armenians opposed to these harmful actions and said that these would only bring damage to them, these Armenians were threatened by death.²¹⁹ The Armenian rebellions disturbed the Ottoman strength by dividing the Ottoman military power. The Russians trained the Armenian volunteers. Etchmiadzin Catholics said to Tsar that the Armenians would be freed from the Turkish rule, establish an independent Armenian state and come under the Russian sovereignty only with the Russian help. As a response to this, Tsar said that a bright future is waiting for the Armenians.²²⁰

The first Armenian rebellion against the Ottoman Empire started on 30 August 1914 at Zeytun. The Armenians at Zeytun announced that they would not join the Ottoman army, instead they would set up their own volunteer regiment commanded by their own officers to defend Zeytun area. The Ottomans did not accept their demand. So they rebelled and attacked an army unit and killed many Muslims.²²¹ Halaçoğlu says that the most influenced city from the Armenian-Russian cooperation was Erzurum and

²¹⁷ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²¹⁸ Yılmaz Öztuna, "The Political Milieu of the Armenian Question" in *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed., Türkkaya Ataöv, (Ankara: The Turkish Historical Society, 2001), p. 60.

²¹⁹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

²²⁰ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²²¹ Foreign Office 371/ 2147/ 74733: Stevens to Foreign Office, desp. 29 to 1914 from Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

many Armenian fugitives escaped to Russia from Erzurum and then joined the bandits, which were set up by the Russians.²²²

Between November 1914 and May 1915, the Armenian extremists and rebels caused many incidents in all over the Ottoman Empire. In nearly November 1914 there were secret reports about the preparation of the rebellion in Van. Armenians of Salmas were cooperating with the Russians, also in Karçikan and Ceva there were indications for rebellion. They cut telegram lines, killed a corporal, fired at a sub-governor etc.. In January 1915 among the Zeytun Armenians, there were indications for rebellion. They attacked government officials' home, many sick and wounded Turkish soldiers were murdered while they were on their way back to their home. In many villages of Elazığ region, Armenians fired gendarmeries on. Sekur village of Gargar Armenians said that they would not obey the government' rules, for this gendarmerie was sent to area but they were fired on too. At Korsar, Sekur and Arsin villages, many Armenians assembled and raided Muslim villages. The rebellion spread all of plain of Muş.²²³ The Ottoman army made inquiries and it was seen that there were many weapons with ammunition and many arms and ammunition were discovered in the stores. At Develi district of Ankara and in Erzincan region bombs, weapons, gunpowder etc. were found. Also revolutionary leaflets and programs were found, for example in Kayseri many bombs and codes in French, Russian and Armenian were found. Armenian bandits were organized with the help of clergy. Armenian monasteries had taken active role in the rebellions. From Arak Monastery, a gendarmerie unit was attacked and the Armenian priests were assisting insurgents. At Hizan, Servenk and Kumes villages gendarmerie

²²² Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

²²³ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-399.

were fired and also in Sironik village. Armenians rebelled in many other villages. Besides, Russia asked to England and France for sending arms to Armenians in Turkey. England did not accept this proposal, because of the difficulties for the transportation of munitions. On February 25 some bandits began operations at Bitlis. They attacked gendarmerie at Dörtyol and Halep. At the village of Arin a volunteer unit was attacked while they were going to Van from Siirt.

At these events, most of the responsibility belonged to the Dashnaks. Dashnaks organized bandits who were driven from the Armenians who were army deserters. They attacked many villages and often exterminate the population of villages. Karahisar-ı Şarki organization of Dashnak committee collected 30.000 men and armed and equipped them. 15.000 of them were sent to Russia and the other half of them remained for a rebellion. In March 1915, Dashnak bandits attacked gendarmerie detachment between Zeytun and Maraş. In the middle of March, there was a rebellion in the province of Van and Russia armed the bandits.²²⁴

From the Armenian rebellions, the most important one was Van rebellion. As it is said before, up to Van rebellion, the Armenians attacked to the Ottomans from behind and with establishing bandits either massacred Muslim people or attacked to the Ottoman soldiers. There were many Armenian fugitives in the country trained by the desires of the Armenian parties and by the committees and with the help of Russia. It was informed by Erzurum governorship that Russia brought the Turkish government in a difficult position by using the Armenian volunteers and for them Russia was spending a

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 395-401.

lot of money.²²⁵ The signs of rebellion around Van had been informed to İstanbul via some messages. In the towns of Van, Karçikan and Gevas, there were the signs of rebellion. The Armenian bandits had cut the telegram wires in the region and killed a corporal. From Bitlis to this region, some gendarmerie units were sent and the fight began. Because the Ottoman military power was not enough and the arms were not sufficient, some more military power was required. With this report, which was sent to chief Commander on 20 December 1914, it is seen that the Armenians started the rebellion.²²⁶ In spite of the rebellion in Van, vice-governor of Van summoned the influential the Armenians for a meeting and explained how danger these events for the Empire, but he could not get a result.²²⁷

It was informed that Armenians, to help the Russians and to make the occupation of Van easy, were preparing for a widespread rebellion.²²⁸ Armenians were waiting for the most suitable moment for the rebellion. During the Van rebellion, Ottomans were fighting in the Dardanelles and in Iraq; the soldiers in Eastern Anatolia were fighting against the Russian attacks from Caucasus. The Armenians thought this situation as the most suitable moment and started a widespread rebellion first around Van on 15 April 1915, then in Bitlis on 17 April 1915 and then in the center of Van on 20 April 1915.²²⁹ Armenian bands killed many Muslims and tribe members, the Ottomans fought with Armenians but rebellion could not be suppressed. On 17 May, the city was lost to the Armenians. Russians were shocked when they came to the city because there were many deaths in the Van Lake. Armenian slaughter actually far exceeded the Russian

²²⁵ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara. 46/2, numara. 45/2, numara. 45/1 from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²²⁶ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no: 1/1 KLS 4, Dosya 23A, F. S. from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

²²⁷ Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi, Ekim 1985, sayı 85, belge 1966 from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

expectations.²³⁰ With the help of Armenians, the city was at the hands of the Russians. Because of Armenian assistance for the Russians, Tsar thanked Van people for their sacrifices.²³¹

There was news in *İkdam* about Van rebellion in 1915. The Armenian-Russian cooperation can be seen easily from the news. One of the news was on 16 August 1915: “The Armenian bandits with the Russians attacked Van and they occupied the city after twenty days with the Russian help.”²³² In the other news, there were explanations about the massacres of the Muslims by the Armenians. One of the news was: “The Armenians seized İstegar village, imprisoned all the peasants, raped the women and killed some of the men. But when the army units were informed, they saved these poor fellows. The two girls were raped terribly and then recovered hardly.”²³³ *İkdam* continued to give the news about the Russian and Armenian massacre. For instance in the issue 6647 on 19 August 1915, it is said that: “Russian and Armenian bandits molested Muslim districts in Van and raped women and the girls. Even these bandits fired the American consulate building to kill the Muslims who were refugees there.”²³⁴ There was other news in *İkdam* that was taken from a newspaper, printed in Halep, it informed about the Armenian bandits in that region. The Armenians were processing in many places at that time. The news was like this: “An Armenian bandit in Fendide was attacking to the Muslims. To prevent their harmful actions, gendarmerie was asked to sent a

²²⁸ Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi, Nisan 1987, sayı 86, belge 2052 from *Ibid*.

²²⁹ Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi, Ekim 1985, sayı 85, belge 2003, 2005 from *Ibid*.

²³⁰ Öztuna, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²³¹ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

²³² *İkdam*, no: 6644, 16 August 1915, the main text is given in appendix B.

²³³ *İkdam*, no: 6645, 17 August 1915.

²³⁴ *İkdam*, no: 6647, 19 August 1915, the main text is given in appendix B.

detachment.”²³⁵ The event of the occupation of Van by the Armenians was rejoiced by the Armenian and Western newspapers.²³⁶

Apart from Van, there were events in Ankara, Kayseri, Bitlis, Muş, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzurum, Sivas, Trabzon, Ankara, Urfa, İzmit, Adapazarı and Bursa. Because of these events, Talat Pasha said that: “I am thinking that the foreign institutions and officials were training the Armenians to sent them to some other places during the war. And even wanted the governors of the related cities to give the lists of these persons and institutions and wanted information where to sent these people.”²³⁷

Before taking the relocation decision under these circumstances, the Ottoman Empire had to do something while Russia advancing into the Eastern Anatolia with the help of Armenians whom attacking Ottoman armies behind and making war with the allies from Mesopotamia to Galicia. For this, to secure the loyalty of the Armenians, Ottoman government made a meeting with Patriarch, some Armenian deputies and other delegates. Ottoman government warned them that if the Armenians do not stop their attacks against Muslims and not give up working to undermine war effort, some drastic measures would be taken. But these meetings did not give a result.²³⁸

Up to the Van rebellion, in order to prevent activities of committees and the rebellions, the Ottoman government took some precautions. One of them was to send the Zeytun Armenians to Konya. Because Zeytun events affected Antep, the Armenians living in that region were also ordered not to leave their settlements whatever

²³⁵ *İkdam*, no: 6647, 19 August 1915, the main text is given in appendix B.

²³⁶ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²³⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

happens.²³⁹ After his visit to Zeytun, Proprietor of Maraş, Mümtaz Bey said that the events could not be prevented by changing places of a few families, the rebellions in and around this region could only be encountered by decreasing the Armenian population in the area. Because of this, as a precaution, it was decided some Armenians to be sent Konya. When these Armenians continued their activities in Konya it was decided that the remained Armenians were to be sent to South Eastern Halep, Urfa and Zor regions.²⁴⁰ As a second precaution, the Armenian communities were closed. The Armenians were preparing wide-scale rebellions and sent instructions that were conveyed to all villages. According to these:

1. All Armenians had to be armed.
2. The Armenians who wanted to be recruited to the army would not go and they would try to convince the Muslims not to join the army.
3. The Armenians in the army would escape and join the Armenian bandits and volunteer units.
4. As soon as the Russian army passed frontier, the members of committees, bandits and fugitives would join the Russian army.
5. As cutting the reinforcement ways and telegram wires, the Ottoman army's communication and provision support would be interrupted.
6. Behind the front lines, all the Muslims even the children would be killed.
7. The property and food of the Muslims would be fired.
8. The church, wakfs and cereals would be fired then it would be propagated as if the Ottomans did these.

²³⁹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

9. The formal institutions were set on fire; the Ottoman officials and gendarmeries would ambush and kill.
10. The wounded Ottomans soldiers returning from front lines would be killed.
11. Rebellions would be done in villagers, towns and cities.
12. As disturbing the psychology of the Muslims, they would compel migration.
13. The Armenian oppressions would be propagated if the Muslims with the country and the outside did these. For the Entente powers, the Armenians would be spies and guidance.²⁴¹

When the war started, the Armenians began to process these decisions as Armenians began to establish bandits, escaped from army and in the investigations a lot of arms and bombs were found. Thus, the headquarter of Command had to take some precautions:

1. The Armenians would not be taken to mobile army units and not be used in armed services.
2. The commanders would meet the armed attacks and if it were necessary, the martial law would be proclaimed.
3. In the searches, it would be careful and don't harm the loyal people.²⁴²

The Ottoman government with these precautions could not prevent the rebellions. When the Van rebellion started, a circular letter was sent to the related provinces on 24 April 1915. It was ordered that the center and sections of Armenian committees have to

²⁴¹ *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler*, ed., Azmi Süslü, F. Kırzıoğlu, R. Yinanç, Y. Halaçoğlu, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1995), pp. 196-197.

²⁴² *Tarih Boyunca Ermeni Meselesi*, (Ankara: Genelkurmay Yayınları, 1979), pp. 185-186.

be closed and their document would be taken and their leaders would be arrested.²⁴³ On 26 April 1915, another circular letter was sent and it was asked the leaders should be sent to courts and the guilty ones should be punished. Because of this order, 2345 people were detained.²⁴⁴ In İstanbul, as a reason of being members of Dashnak committee, many people were entrapped. According to Halaçoğlu as the decision of arrestment was accepted to destroy their committees and organizations, the Armenians thought the date of circular of letters as a massacre day every year.²⁴⁵ On July 1914, the Hintchak committee clubs were attacked and about 25-30 people were arrested. There was former Kozan deputy among them.²⁴⁶ Some of these arrested people were transmitted to Anatolia such as Çankırı and Ankara.²⁴⁷ The Ottoman precautions did not bring any results. These precautions, which were to prevent the committees' harmful activities inside, were for military purposes. The reason why these precautions were insufficient was that, the committees spread even to small villages as a result of activities of 25-30 years.²⁴⁸

As another precaution, the Ottoman government tried to nationalize the Armenian Patriarchate and wanted to prevent to serve for the aims of division since it was the main element of the Armenian nationalism movement. The Ottoman Armenians accepted the Etchmiadzin Catholics as the highest spiritual authority. This caused Etchmiadzin Catholics made propagation against the Ottoman Empire for the advantage of the Russians and the clergy became the tools of this purpose. Russia could control the

²⁴³ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/1, KLS 401, Dosya 1580, F. 1-3 from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

²⁴⁴ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/131, KLS 2287, Dosya 12, F. 12-1 from *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²⁴⁶ *İkdam*, no: 6266, 1 August 1914.

²⁴⁷ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara. 52/94, 102, 297 from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
²⁴⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

Ottoman Armenians by the way of Etchmiadzin Catholics. Since the Ottoman Armenians were bound to Etchmiadzin Catholics, this caused many problems for the Ottoman during the World War I. The Ottomans wanted to prevent this danger, so a new Rules and Regulations for the Patriarchate were decided. According to this, Sis and Akdamar Patriarchates were united and İstanbul and Jerusalem Patriarchates were also united. Thus all the Ottoman Patriarchates were united and the government cut their connection with Etchmiadzin. Jerusalem, became the settlement of Ottoman Armenian Patriarchates. Patriarch was nominated only to do the Ottoman orders and his duty.²⁴⁹

3.2. Armenian Activities and Uprisings During and After Relocation

When all these precautions failed, the Relocation decision was taken. The Armenians, apart from the rebellions before relocation, continued their rebellions during the relocation. These were in Boğazlıyan on 23 July 1915 where the Armenians attacked the Ottoman soldiers, gendarmerie and police units. They fired and destroyed the Muslim villages on 15 September 1915.²⁵⁰ On June 1915, the Armenian rebels invaded Şebinkarahisar. While they were taken out from some parts of the town soon, some parts of the town were left under their control for a while. Because the Armenians were defeated quickly, not many Muslims were killed. The Armenians attacked to the villages near Karahisar and many Muslims were killed there.²⁵¹ Karahisar sanjack between Trabzon and Erzurum and Sivas was a very important base for the Armenian activities. The committees spread their ideas in these areas by the way of clergy and teachers. As a result of provocation, two policemen were killed during the days from 2 to 5 June 1915,

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁵⁰ Alpay Kabacalı, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş., 1994), p. 81.

²⁵¹ Justin McCarty, *Ölüm ve Sürgün 1821-1922*, Transl. by Bilge Umar, (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 1998), p. 197.

while they were making search. Telegram wires were cut. After attacking to the Muslims with arms and bombs, Armenians withdrawn to Karahisar castle. They fired many houses there. They surrendered in very short time. During the rebellion, 84 soldiers and 30 civil populations were killed.²⁵²

On 29 September 1915, the Armenian bandits and local Armenians rebelled in Urfa. The rebels had taken the Armenian districts of the city and resisted to local gendarmerie units based there. The Armenians were armed with guns and the Ottoman had to send military units to the city. After the rebellion, 200 Armenians were sent from Urfa to Musul.²⁵³ English, French and Russians made contributions to the Armenian insurgents during the Urfa rebellion. Food and ammunitions were stocked and the consuls of the Entente powers supported them. Missionaries also helped them; such as American Missionaries gave clothing aid.²⁵⁴

There were other Armenian rebellions in Anatolia such as on 9 August 1915, in village of Çörmüş in Urfa, on 14 September 1915 in Musa Mountain in Antakya, on 7 February 1916 in Islahiye, on 4 April 1916 in Akdağ Mine, on 9 April 1917 in Tosyan. The rebellions in the cities of Eastern Anatolia were spreading to the villages. Armenian rebels were attacking Muslim villagers and in return the Kurds were attacking the Armenian villages.²⁵⁵ Another rebellion was in Bitlis in 1916. The rebellion was started soon before the Russian occupation of the city and continued throughout the Russian occupation. Each Muslim women, men and children were killed in the city. The villages were fired and destroyed and the Muslims were massacred. The rebels wanted to kill

²⁵² Kabacalı, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

²⁵³ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

²⁵⁴ Kabacalı, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

²⁵⁵ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

especially the Ottoman officials.²⁵⁶ Between 1916 and 1917 there is not much information about events. But with the Russian revolution in 1917, Russian forces began to go back to Russia. After Russian evacuation of these territories, Armenians began to kill Muslims; the aim was to exterminate Muslims.²⁵⁷

The Armenian rebellions as it is seen began with the start of the war and continued during the war. The Ottoman government took some precautions to prevent these rebellions but their efforts did not give a result. The Armenian rebels by taking the support of the Entente Powers continued their activities in Eastern Anatolia. These activities of the Armenians made harmful effects for the Ottoman military power.

3.3. Armenians and the Great Powers

The relations between the Armenians and France, England, Russia were actually started in an effective way in the 19th century. These states used the Armenians for their own purposes for their goal over the Ottoman territories. As a pretext to interfere the Ottoman Empire's internal affairs, they used Armenians from the 19th century onwards. Armenians were divided three main sects at that time as Orthodox (Gregorian), Catholic and Protestant. In this division, effects of the missionary activities of these powers played an important role. With this division, Russia had seen herself as the protector of Gregorian Armenians, France took the protection of Catholic Armenians and England had seen herself as the protector of both the Protestant and Orthodox Armenians. While Russia was using the Gregorian Armenians to reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean, England wanted to keep safe the roads to India and keeping Russia out of these places. France used them for her interests in the Near East.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

²⁵⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

3.3.1. Armenian-Russian Relations

Roots of Russian-Armenian relations lay far back in the 18th century. Russia had taken protection of all Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire with Küçük Kainarca Treaty in 1774. Among them, there were the Armenians. With the emergence of nationalistic feelings among the Armenians, they inclined towards Russia. With the help of Russia, they wanted to gain their independence. According to Sonyel, during the 19th century Russian influence over the Armenians increased. During the Crimean War, some of the Armenians served as spies for the Russians in the provinces of Eastern Anatolia. Religious ties, long custom and neighbourhood inclined them towards Russia.²⁵⁸

During the Turco-Russian war of 1877-78, the Armenians helped Russian army and attacked the Muslim villages and killed many of these Muslims in Eastern Anatolia. At that time, Russia gave opportunities for improvement of mercantile services of the Armenians.²⁵⁹ They made collaboration with the Russians. Armenians knew that they could gain their independence only with the help of Great Powers. Russia was the closest one to the Armenians for their aims. With the establishment of Armenian committees, they collaborated with Russia before and during the World War I. Many of the committee members were educated in Russia and in Europe. They took their supplies from Russia, thus many of the rebellions in the Empire started with the help of Russians. They were provoked by the Russians and attacked to the Muslims. Russia wanted to establish an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia under her protection. Using Armenians, she could reach to the Mediterranean.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

When the World War I broke out, Armenians took on the side of Entente Powers that mean on the Russian side. Immediately before the War broke out, the Dashnaks made a congress in Erzurum in June 1914 and approved the Russo-Armenian agreement, according to which:

They would be loyal to the Ottoman Empire in peacetime and make preparations with weapons brought from Russia. When the war broke out, they would join the Russian army with their weapons, would form guerilla bands and begin programmed operations behind the Ottoman lines.²⁶¹ This project was followed during the war. They were in the lines of the enemies of the Empire. Tsar tried to take the Armenians on Russian side and wanted to use them for the purposes of his country during the War. Russian authorities were preparing the Armenians to be used as soldiers or bandits to support them during the War. As it is understood from the news of *Ikdam*, Tsar asked the Armenians to be on the side of the Russians and this support to the Russians would bring them independency. *Ikdam* printed the Russian Tsar's call to the Ottoman Armenians on 9 October 1914. The news in *Ikdam* is given as: "After war broke out, Tsar summoned to the Ottoman Armenians to be with the Russians and he promised freedom for them."²⁶² During the War, while Armenians rebelling in some parts of Anatolia on the one hand, they were helping the Russian army on the other hand. In some places, Russians and the Armenians collaborated and attacked together to the Ottoman army.

Russian army came to the Eastern Anatolia easily by the help of Armenian bands, which were harming the Ottoman army by attacking behind them. There were

²⁶¹ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²⁶² *Ikdam*, no: 6334, 9 October 1914, the main text is given in appendix B.

many indications of Armenian-Russian relations during the War. “It was informed that the Russians were arming the Russian and Ottoman Armenians in Caucasus and founding bands and they will send them to our side and increase the number of these bandits in our country. The Armenian fugitives in the army are increasing.”²⁶³

In Kağızman about 800 Armenians were collected, most of them were Ottoman citizen and have escaped from the army. They were given arms by the Russian government. It is learned that Armenians called as Beyazıtlı Suryen and Haçık Sirup went Russian side, and each of the collected about two thousand men. One of them thought to come to Beyazıt or Iran, the other would go to Moson by the way of Abbas Lake.²⁶⁴

When the War began, the Armenians started to escape from the Ottoman Army and joined to Russian forces or as Armenian bands attacked Ottoman Army from their back. Russia promised them to be free from Turkish rule. Many arms and ammunition were stored all over Anatolia especially at Oltu, Sarıkamış, Kağızman and Iğdır regions and they were used to arm Armenians living in these regions. About 6000 Armenians met at Iğdır and they were armed, organized as guerilla bands under Andranik, Ershan, Portakalian and Surpin. Armenian spy centers were set up in the cities such as in Trabzon, Erzurum, Muş, Bitlis, Van, Sivas and Kayseri. Their duty was to inform the Russian army about the position, movements and operations of the Turkish army. Armenian soldiers, officers and doctors, serving in the Turkish army, took every opportunity to escape with their weapons and to join the Russian army. These Armenians took with themselves the vital information about the position and resources

²⁶³ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, 4/3671, KLS 2811, Dosya 26, F.15-1 from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

of the Ottoman army. This was the most important moment of the battle and the position of Turkish munitions and reserves were given to the Russians. Also, a committee was established in Batum, which consisted of Russian, Armenian and Greek members. This was to facilitate the import of arms to Turkey and to prove rebellions in the Black sea region by utilizing the services of the Armenians. Many of the Armenians living in the east of Hopa, Erzurum, Hınıs, Van line escaped to Russia and joined Armenian organization working against the Ottoman Empire. In many places, the Russian weapons were discovered in the houses, schools and churches of the Armenians.²⁶⁵

During the War, Armenian bands did not hesitate to kill Muslims on their way. During the war many rebellions took place in Eastern part of Anatolia with the help of Russia. This was to weaken the Ottoman army in war. To prevent this, the Ottoman government had to take decision of relocation. The Armenian help to the Russians was very useful for the latter. However the thought of an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia made Russia anxious like the Ottoman Empire. There was no place for an autonomous Turkish Armenia in the Post-war plans of Russia. This region was planned to be a part of Russian Empire in the secret treaties signed among the Entente Powers. For this reason, in 1916, Russian authorities suddenly ordered the demobilization of the Armenian volunteer units, prevented the Armenian civic activities. There are many indications for the relation of the Armenian-Russian relations. Some of the documents were: The report of third army commandship on 11 October 1914 and the code of 24 September 1914, sent by third army commander Hasan İzzet Pasha, which was unrevealed by supreme

²⁶⁴ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, 4/3671, KLS 2818, Dosya 59, F.2-43 from *Ibid.*, p. 264.

²⁶⁵ About the Armenian and Russian oppressions to the Turks and the relations between these two nations, could be found more information in Erdal İlter, *Armenian and Russian Oppressions 1914-1916*, (Ankara:

commandership. This code gave information that the Russians would give the territories that they took from the Ottoman State to the Armenians and they promised to the Armenians for their independence. About the arming of Russians to the Armenians we can give more information.²⁶⁶

3.3.2. Armenian-British Relations

Britain had seen herself as the protector of Protestant and Gregorian Armenians of the Empire. With English support, in 1850 Protestant Armenians were approved as an independent sect in the Ottoman Empire. Missionaries played an important role in the improvement of the relation between England and Armenians. In order to prevent the Russian control over the Armenians and Eastern Anatolia and to prevent Russia to take a free hand over Armenian question, England wanted to interfere the matters about the situations of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. England brought Armenian question to the international platform in Berlin Treaty in 1878. Also as a pretext to interfere the Ottoman Empire's internal affairs, she used Armenians and asked the Ottoman Empire to make reforms on the behalf of the Armenians. There were close relations between England and Armenian committees.

Armenians wanted support of Britain and on 12 November 1914 Bogos Nubar Pasha one of the Armenian leaders wanted Britain to give arms and ammunitions to the Armenians living especially in the mountainous regions and said that if those men are supplied with arms they would rise against the Ottomans. But Britain did not accept this idea. Because there was not a trustworthy and representative Armenian leader, so Britain

Sistem Ofset, 1999). In this book the oppression was explained by the people who lived there at that time. Also the information about this subject could be found in Süslü, *op. cit.*

²⁶⁶ Ercan, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95. From Ercan's article, there could be found many examples about the Russian help to the Armenians.

could not spare such arms. These arms and ammunitions would be sent through İskenderun and in Cilicia district the Armenians would rebel and harm the Ottoman forces. But England did not accept this idea in spite of the efforts of France and Russia. Later in 1914 Armenians also wanted support from Britain and said that some 20.000 Armenian volunteers could be assembled and trained with support of arm and ammunitions from Britain and these volunteers would be useful in Cilicia region against Turkey. But since Britain could not trust the Armenians, the British government did not accept this proposal.²⁶⁷ There were two reasons for this negative approach of Britain. First of all, in the agreement between England and France, this region was given to France so she did not want France to be suspicious about the situation. Second of all, they were attacking from Dardanelles to the Ottoman Empire and the idea of entering the Ottoman territory by the way of İskenderun was not accepted by the war ministry of England

However, again following the 1917 Russian Revolution, Armenians appealed to the British government for assistance to continue fighting against the Ottoman Empire. Britain used these volunteers for her own purposes. Britain gave the arms to separate the Anatolian Turks from the Tatars of Caucasus and Central Asia. But the Armenians, who were given arms to fight for Anglo-French imperialistic ambitions, used them against the Muslims and among themselves for their blood feuds.²⁶⁸

Although there were formal information about not giving support to the Armenians, Britain did not hesitate to help some of Armenians. For instance, in Egypt in 1905 Britain accepted the establishment of an Armenian Union and Progress Society

²⁶⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

under the leadership of Bogos Nubar Pasha. And this community would make preparations for making revolution and to be sent Adana by Britain. These members of committee talked to church members and said that arms will be brought there by the way of Greece from England. Cyprus, which was under the protection of England, was one of the centers of Armenian committees. An Armenian school was opened in Cyprus and students from this school were sent to Anatolia to start a rebellion. The rebellions in Urfa, Maraş, Adana were started by protection and support of England. English navy communicated with the Armenians living in around of this region and said that with the start of rebellion, we would come and help you, but they could not do that.²⁶⁹ The support of England to Armenians was a measure against Turanism policy of some Ottomans. England was reluctant to give perceptible promises to the Armenians for the Armenian independency. They approached Armenians only to turn the chances on behalf of themselves during the war. The only aim of England was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire by encouraging Armenian war efforts. According to this she could manage the impartial states and encourage the minorities against the Ottoman Empire under her control.²⁷⁰

In an article in *İkdam* in 1918, the English atrocity against Turkey was described as: “ the English tried to take the impartial states on her side against Turkey during the war but she could not be successful in her effort. But in 1918, England again began her works with the provocation by using the Caucasian Armenians”. In this article also an Armenian’s article published in Switzerland was given. According to this article it is assumed that the Ottomans wanted to evacuate the Armenians from Anatolia as it

²⁶⁹ Öke, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-154.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

happened to the Balkan nations. Also it is said that, 3000 Armenians escaped from Ottoman territories to Caucasus. But with the Brest-Litovsk treaty, the cities of Erzurum and Van, given to Turkey and Muslims of the region were provocateur against the Christians in the region by sending Hodjas. So, the Armenians tried to present the Turks as if using all their means to evacuate the Armenians from Anatolia.

In the same article in *Ikdam*, it is said that main enemy of the Armenians are the British. Why they do not see that the first country that accepted the Armenian state formally is Turkey. *Ikdam* says that we have to answer them by the way of press, this is an important way. “The English helped the Armenians every time to destroy Turkey. Their main goal was to attack Turkey with the Armenians. Our enemies are provoking Armenians against us. Even try to turn the impartial states against us by the way of Armenian committees. As an example: An Armenian wrote an article and claimed that the Ottomans wanted to evacuate the Armenians after the Balkan nations. The saved 3000 Armenians escaped to Caucasus and with the treaty of Brest-Litovsk the cities like Erzurum, Kars given to Turkey again and the people in this region are provoked against the Christians by sending Hodjas. He tried to show Turkey like using all her ways to evacuate the Armenians. But their main enemy is the British. Is not Turkey the first state that accepted the Armenian Republic?”²⁷¹ England was still supporting the Armenian activities and provoking them against Turkey and using them for her own purposes.

There was news in *Ikdam* about the promise of the English minister of foreign affairs, about the Armenian’s independency in future. The article of *Ikdam* on 21 November 1918 was: “English Foreign Affairs minister said that the Armenians will

save themselves from the Turkish yoke”.²⁷² The English were still using the Armenian question as a propaganda tool for their purposes. For this, they used the Armenians and these Armenians were encouraged to say that as if the Ottomans would shoot whoever from the Armenians was taken to their hands in spite of the Turco–Armenian agreement. The article in *Ikdam* was like this “...The English are using the Armenians as a propaganda tools of themselves. Although the agreement was signed between Turkey and Armenia, Armenians are told that the Turks would shoot when they saw whomever from the Armenians.²⁷³

When the World War I ended and agreement was signed between the Ottomans and the new established Armenian State. Some of the Armenian newspapers began to write articles about brotherhood of the Turks and Armenians in 1918. The committees and their members were blamed as they made relations with the enemies of the Empire like the Russians and the English. It was said that the Russians and English to separate two nations used committees. In spite of the committees and their cooperation with Russia and England, the ordinary Ottoman Armenians had no relations with these committees. The Armenians in order to show their friendship with the Ottomans should pay their dept to the state. An article in *Ikdam* published on 16 April 1918 was copied from Jamanak newspaper and it tells that: “Armenians should show their friendship to Turkey by making public dept. They should prove that they have no relation with the committee members and show their bound to their country. The committees, which were

²⁷¹ *Ikdam*, no: 7764, 24 September 1918.

²⁷² *Ikdam*, no: 7822, 21 November 1918.

²⁷³ *Ikdam*, no: 7762, 22 September 1918.

used by English and Russians, brought the Turks and the Armenians face to face. We have to show we are not like them and not from them.”²⁷⁴

The Armenian newspapers wrote about the Armenian-Turkish brotherhood. They said that the West caused the harmful activities. If they did not encourage, the Armenians would still be the loyal nation of the Ottomans. *Ikdam* took the news of Armenian Pajanyon newspaper as: “There would not be provocation by the West any more. Some wrong decisions were taken and because of this the Ottoman government had to take some precautions. There is not war any longer, the Armenians continue to be loyal. Konya Armenians living in peace and the Ottoman government is so just. The Armenian and Turkish teachers are teaching in the schools together. The Armenians took part in the industry. We want the protection of the Ottoman Empire.”²⁷⁵

3.3.3. Armenian-French Relations

Catholic Armenians were under the protection of France and she used them like the other European powers to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottomans. Before and during the War, there were relations between Armenians and France. With the start of war, Armenians took part on the side of Entente powers. They accepted France as their second country. They said that they would be on the side of Entente powers and so does France. Armenians were instructed to be volunteer soldiers in the Entente armies.²⁷⁶ *Ikdam* wrote about the Armenian volunteers in the Entente armies as “Many volunteers applied to Entente states and wanted to be accepted as volunteer soldiers.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 7609, 16 April 1918.

²⁷⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7683, 29 June 1918.

²⁷⁶ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

²⁷⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 7826, 25 November 1918.

The Armenians applied to France like they did to England. France did not accept this application at first, because they did not want to act in their effective areas in Cilicia with the help of the Armenians. Later the French decided to use these Armenians in this area for their interest, for this, they would train and would set up military units and then use them against the Ottoman Empire. So they established Legion d'Orient. These Armenians were trained around Magosa in 1916, and later France with the other Entente powers used them in the fronts in Palestine in 1917, in Caucasia in 1918 and in 1919 when the French forces occupied Cilicia.²⁷⁸ After war ended in 1918, *Ikdam* published an article titled as Armenia and Entente powers which was about the Armenian support to the French and English forces during the war. This was the letter of Bogos Nubar Pasha who worked in Europe for an independent Armenia. Bogos Nubar Pasha sent his letter to the French Prime Minister and War Minister, Kalamansu. In this letter, "Yesterday in French Parliament, there was an announcement about the Armenians. It was accepted that the Great Powers would define every nation. 'Because of betray of Bolsheviks, the Turks had taken the cities in Eastern Anatolia and the Armenians, in Caucasus, had to establish a small state in that region. About 25 000 Armenians whom escaped from massacre of the Turks are living in Caucasian region. During the war 900 Armenians became as volunteer soldiers to the French army and

²⁷⁸ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 156. More information could be taken from the article of Shaw. Many Armenians came to Cyprus to join the Legion as a result of recruitment campaign of Bogos Nubar Pasha. These Armenians were encouraged by the tales about establishing Great Armenia, stretching from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Because of difficulties in training and disciplining these Armenians in the Legion. The Armenians were not used in the campaigns against the Ottoman Empire up to the sign of Armistice. These Armenians brought Turkey by the French after the sign of Armistice on October 1918. After coming to Cilicia region, these Armenians began to kill the Muslims indiscriminately. They at first attacked to the Turks in areas of İskenderun and Islahiye and later extended to the areas such as Mersin, Adana, Tarsus, Pozanti. The attacks of these Armenians to the Muslims continued upto the withdrawing of the French in 1921. In 1922, they were mostly became unharmed and most of them migrated from Cilicia region. Stanford J. Shaw, "The Armenian Legion and its Destruction of the Armenian Community of Cilicia" in

among them only 50 were saved, the others died in the front lines. The Armenians from America and Egypt came and joined Legion d'Orient as French volunteers and fought in Palestine front. While helping the Entente powers, these Armenians' aim was to set up their own states. These Armenians like Van and Erzurum Armenians fought and they only wanted to hear good words because of their supports to France. I want to hear this from you Mösyö. The answer of Clemenceau to this letter was like that; we are so pleased for the Armenians help during the war in Legion d'Orient and in foreign units in Caucasian. With these Armenians bound France, much more. Both France and England would make efforts like the other nations and Armenians would have their independency.²⁷⁹

A French journalist's article published in *Ikdam* on 10 April 1918 tells that France is ready to help the Armenians every time. "The French would help the Armenians in every way and the Armenians are using Switzerland as center for their activities."²⁸⁰ France helped the Armenians and believed the Armenian claims of massacres. In 1918, there was news in *Ikdam* about a French newspaper, which began to be printed to protect the rights of the Armenians. The news about this paper is given as: "A French newspaper is began to be printed to protect the Armenian rights."²⁸¹

After the sign of Armistice in 1918, the Armenians began to be on the side of the Ottoman Empire and these Armenians said that they did not support the revolutionary organizations of the Armenians, which were supported by the Russian Armenians. During the war, the Caucasian Armenians worked against the Ottomans. The Ottoman

The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period, ed., Türkkaya Ataöv, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 2001), pp. 157-204.

²⁷⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 7723, 11 August 1918.

²⁸⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 7603, 10 April 1918.

Armenians were not on the side of them and always supported their country. *Ikdam* gave the news of Horanian newspaper, an Armenian newspaper, about this subject and the news of explanation about the Etchmiadzin Catholics. As it is seen, the Armenians accepted that the Etchmiadzin Catholics became the tools of Russia and they trusted to the promises of the Great powers for the Armenian independency and acted in that way. The Catholics accepted that the Great Powers would advocate the Armenian goal. Horanian newspaper's article taken from *Ikdam* tells that: "Caucasian Armenians came together especially in Switzerland and took financial support from foreign countries. But the Ottoman Armenians worked only for the Ottoman Empire. There is no relation between the Caucasian Armenians and the Ottoman Armenians. Etchmiadzin Catholics became the tools of Russia and the Great powers. Etchmiadzin believed the promises of independency, given by the Great Powers."²⁸²

Armenians wanted the European powers and Russia to help them to establish an independent state in Eastern Anatolia. They made several attempts to the Entente Powers to join as volunteers in their army and in return for this to take the support of these powers. European powers presented themselves as they were protecting the Armenians, but they only used them for their goals. In none of the secret treaties, which were signed during the War, there was a word Armenian and not an Armenian state was mentioned of. However, the rebellions that were started by the Armenians were very useful for the Entente powers since they promised them to gain their independence.

²⁸¹ *Ikdam*, no: 7840, 9 December 1918.

²⁸² *Ikdam*, no: 7685, 1 July 1918.

The news in *Ikdam* about the period from 1914 to 1918, mention of the evidences about the Entente powers' support of the Armenians and also mention how the Armenians were willing to take their support.

Interestingly, these states are still supporting the Armenians and especially France support the Armenian claims about establishing an Armenian state in Anatolia and even they passed a bill in their parliament to show their support of the Armenian claims.

CHAPTER 4

RELOCATION

4.1. Decision: Why and How Taken

With the beginning of the World War I, the Armenian rebellions had increased. The Armenian attacks to the Ottoman army as well as to the Turks, and their co-operation with the Russians forced the Ottoman Empire, which was fighting in many front lines at the same time, to take a decision to bring an end these problems. The most effective event that forced the Ottoman Government to take this decision was the Van rebellion. On 2 May 1915, Enver Pasha sent his plan, which he thought to be as a solution to this situation, to Talat Pasha: “The Armenians in order to continue their rebellions are staying together. I thought that they should be driven from their collective places and these rebellion centers should be disbanded. The Armenians had to be sent either to Russia or to somewhere in Anatolia. I request from you to materialize one of these two choices.” The first step for the relocation process was taken upon this plan.²⁸³ This first relocation decision was taken especially for the regions where the rebellions happened and with this decision the possibility of rebellion among the Armenians would be prevented by distributing them as small groups.

Talat Pasha Minister of Interior Affairs started this process without taking a decision from the Senate [Meclis-i Vükela] and without deriving a provisional

decision.²⁸⁴ At first, the decision of deportation of the Armenians around Van, Bitlis and Erzurum were taken. In the orders that were sent to the governors of these cities, it was required from them to make all kinds of collaboration with the military commanders and the Armenians of these cities would be transmitted to the south immediately.²⁸⁵ On 23 May 1915, the places, which were to be evacuated, determined as:

- 1- Erzurum, Van and Bitlis provinces,
- 2- Apart from the center of Halep Province, the villages and towns in the regions of İskenderun, Belen, Cizr-i Şugur and Antakya,
- 3- Excluding Maraş city center, sancak of Maraş city,
- 4- Adana, Sis, Mersin, Kozan and Cebel-i Bereket sanjaks. The Armenians, removed from Erzurum, Van and Bitlis, would be sent to the southern part of Musul Province, Zor sanjak, and excluding the center, to Maraş sanjak and they would be settled there.

In order to safeguard the transportation process, officials and supervisors were appointed. The Armenians who came to their settlement areas were to settle in villages which were founded again by themselves, either to the places that were pointed out by the government or they would settle the houses which were constructed afresh by them in existing villages or kasaba. It was the stipulation that the settlement villages of the Armenians must be at least 25 kms far from the Baghdad railway. The dispatch and settlement of the transmitted Armenians were left to the local officials. The prevention of lives and properties, providing food and comfort of these Armenians were left to existing governmental officials according to this direction. The deported Armenians

¹ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/1, KLS 44, Dosya 207, F 2-1 from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

²⁸⁴ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

could carry their removable properties with themselves and it was decided that an instruction would be prepared about their irremovable properties and it would be rescripted.²⁸⁶

4.2. Relocation Process

With a coded telegram from the chief commander to Interior ministry on 26 May 1915 it was declared that “It is decided that the Armenians from Eastern Anatolian provinces, from Zeytun and the places like these where they have a larger community would be sent to the south of Diyarbakır, the Euphrates valley and towns and villages around Urfa and Süleymaniye. In order not to cause new rebellions, these measures for the Armenian deportation should be taken into account:

1- The Armenian community must not be much more than the proportion of the Muslim community and the tribes and their numbers must not be over than % 10 of the Muslims and the tribes, in the places where they were sent.

2- The villages that would be founded by the deported Armenians must not be over than fifty houses.

3- The Armenian immigrants must not change houses even if it would be for travelling and deportation.”²⁸⁷

This telegram was sent to prevent the Armenians from getting together and starting a new revolt. Meanwhile, Russia, England and France sent a notification and said that the Armenians have been killed and Ottoman government is responsible from

²⁸⁵ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara (nr.). 52/200 (Ek 1); nr. 52/281-282 from *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara. 53/94 from *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

²⁸⁷ Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Riyaseti, no. 1/1, KLS 44, Dosya 207, F. 2-3 from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

this event.²⁸⁸ After this, Talat Paşa sent a proposal to Senate [Meclis-i Vükela] to be accepted there. On 27 May 1915 Senate [Meclisi Vükela] accepted this proposal and a temporary law was approved. The Assembly approved this decision on 15 September 1915 since the Assembly was not open at that time. Senate informed that the decision of Interior Ministry is useful in this struggle in order to protect the state's existence and security and also to prevent the harmful activities.²⁸⁹ With the approval of all ministries, the way to relocation process would be opened and in the light of the following statements it was decided that:

“1. The Armenians would be sent to the places only when their life and property security is provided.

2. Up to they would be settled in the given places, their commodities would be provided by the immigrant fund.

3. The houses and fields would be given to these Armenians according the values of their previous properties. For the poor, the government would construct houses, for the farmers and artisans; seed and tools would be provided.

4. The properties of these Armenians that were remained behind would be accounted and they would be given to their owners later.

5. The places that were evacuated by the Armenians would be given to the refugees after identified the Armenian irremovable properties.

6. Special commissions would carry out all these subjects and about them an order would be prepared.

²⁸⁸ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi*, III./3, 3rd ed., (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1983), p. 27.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, III/3, pp. 40-42.

7. Revenues like olive yards, caravanserai, factory etc., which were out of the interests of refugees, would be rented or sold and their revenues would be sent to their owners.²⁹⁰ The relocation was being timeless on 30 May 1915 onwards.”²⁹¹

About relocation process, another order was given. According to this order: “If the transmitters, while they were either in the camps or were travelling were attacked, the attackers would be caught and arrested as soon as possible and they would be sent to Divanı Harb.” “From the travellers if some kinds of bribe or presents were taken, or threaten and convince or have illegitimate relations with women, all of these people would be taken from their positions and they would be punished heavily”.²⁹²

The properties of the relocated Armenians were taken under control with an order, which was published on 10 June 1915. An Abandoned Property Commission was founded. These commissions would establish the Armenian properties in evacuated areas and mufassal notebooks would be written. One of these notebooks would be given to the local church, the other one would be given to the local administration and the commission would take the last one. The perishable belongings and animals would be sold and their revenues would be protected. In the places, where the commissions were not sent, the local officials would do this task. For the protection of these properties, local administration and commission were responsible.²⁹³

On 30 July 1915 a decision was taken, with which, sales of people who bought belongings with ridiculous prices would be cancelled. The prices would increase to the

²⁹⁰ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

²⁹¹ Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913-1918)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001), p. 63.

²⁹² Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

²⁹³ Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi, Aralık 1982, no: 81, belge 1832 from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

average level and illegal profits would be prevented.²⁹⁴ As it is understood from these decisions, the government considered all of the situations about the relocation of the Armenians very carefully. The Ottomans wanted to relocate these Armenians from one place to another by a peaceful way, so it was interested in all the cases about the Armenian immigrants. The detailed orders were prepared about how the works would be processed and they were sent to related provinces. Among these subjects, the relocated Armenians' health, sickness, selling of properties etc. were taken into consideration. On 28 August, the Ministry of Interior Affairs ordered to check health conditions of those relocated and the sick ones among them and ordered a special interest should be given for pregnant women and babies. The railway would transport patients, women and children and horses and carts would transport the rest. Each convoy's food stock should be provided and the army units would defend them, all of these were guaranteed.²⁹⁵

As it is seen, in none of the orders, the Ottomans did not order for "genocide" as the Armenians claim today or mentioned of any order to kill the Armenians.²⁹⁶ In order to provide the security of the Armenians and to sent them to their settlement areas in comfort, all of things were planned carefully. For the security of the Armenians, all kinds of precautions were taken and in order to explain the aim of relocation, new orders were sent to some provinces again. In a telegram sent to Hüdavendigâr, Ankara, Konya, İzmit, Adana, Maraş, Urfa, Halep, Zor, Sivas, Kütahya, Niğde, Mamuratülaziz, Diyarbakır, Karahisar-ı Sahip, Erzurum and Kayseri mutasarrıflıks, it was stated that:

²⁹⁴ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ Genocide means to send exile all of a nation without any discrimination out of the country. In genocide, there is a consciousness about killing the unarmed and defenceless people. But the Ottoman government did all the necessary things to provide the security of these people. Moreover, the Ottomans did not send these Armenians out of the Ottoman borders. Also not all the Armenians had taken place in this process.

“The aim of government about relocation of Armenians from their residences to the defined regions was to prevent their harmful activities against government and to provide that the Armenians could not follow their national goals for establishing an Armenian state. The annihilation of these people is not thought and also the security of the convoys must be provided during relocation process and for their maintenance, all kinds of precautions must be taken. Those who stayed at their permanent places would not be taken out after this time.”²⁹⁷

As it is seen the Ottoman Government took all measures to carry out the relocation process in a proper way. However, we could not meet any news about relocation decision and its process in *İkdam*' issues belonging to the years 1915-16. This must be originated from the censor applied to the press because of the war. Also it was not possible to have the news soon as an event occurred.

The government tried to perform the decision of relocation in a perfect way. In order not to encounter possible difficulties for the Armenian convoys, it was planned to transfer Armenians to most suitable and closest places. Apart from this, the security and protection of the convoys were taken seriously along the road. For instance, those who were sent from Samsun and Kayseri, transferred through Malatya to Musul. Sometimes, due to the crowds of the roads and the possibility of violation of security, the places of passages were changed. The places that have means of transportation with railway and river were preferred as place of passage. The trains sent those who were transferred from Western Anatolia. In the places, where there was not both the train and river transportation, animals and carts were used to carry them. The Ottoman government used its entire means and tried to transport those Armenians without having any harm in

²⁹⁷ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, numara. 55/292 (Ek IV) from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

spite of the war conditions. However, because of the going on transportation of soldiers and supplies to the front lines, there was a comfort problem in the transportation of the Armenians. In the stations, there were huge crowds and because of insufficiency of means, the transportation was delayed.²⁹⁸

It was also accepted and confirmed by the foreigners that, in spite of all of difficulties, the government made the transportation with a great attention and tried to do its best. The American consulate Edward Nothan in his report to Ambassador Henry Morgenthau on 30 August 1915, said that the Armenians have some difficulties and were in poverty because of crowd, but the Ottoman government is doing this process in an order, the immigrants were provided enough tickets. It was not given a possibility for insecurity, violence and disorder. The people who needed any aid were helped.²⁹⁹ While the Armenian relocation was going on, the Armenian committees continued their attacks.³⁰⁰

The orders were sent to all of the provinces in order to provide all necessities that these resettled Armenians needed and to take necessary precautions. According to the information of Halaçoğlu, during relocation, to meet the needs of convoys about 2.250.000 Kuruş were spent.³⁰¹ Gürün said that, for this project, in 1915 about 5 million, at the end of October 1916, 86 million and at the end of the year 150 million Kuruş were spent.³⁰² When it was necessary, money was taken from the treasury. Apart from this, the Americans under the knowledge of the Ottoman government gave some money to the Armenians. The American aid to the Armenians continued even after the relocation.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-59.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

There was news in *İkdam* about the aid of the Americans to the Armenians in 1918. It is said that: “America sent some maintenance and clothes to our city, İstanbul, to be given to the Armenians that were in need of help”.³⁰³ While the Ottoman government spending a lot of money for the relocated Armenians, it was decided to postpone the debts of these Armenians or they were erased completely. Besides this, the investigation about the Armenians who are guilty and under trial was halted.³⁰⁴

In spite of all these precautions and taken decisions and rules, there were many attacks against these Armenian convoys and so some of the Armenians lost their lives. The necessity of completing the transportation in a short time and the war conditions made it difficult for the Ottoman Government to provide the security of the Armenian convoys and assurance of maintenance. Because of the war, the security of the Armenian convoys had to be left to the small gendarmerie units in these regions. The Ottomans must use her units either to defend the Armenian convoys well or these units would protect the local people against advancing Russian units. The Ottoman Empire was between these two choices and she had chosen the second one.³⁰⁵

The properties of these Armenians could not be protected in many places because the thieves and even some of the Ottoman officers had stolen properties of these people. Some of the officers, especially those whom were from Caucasian Muslim Communities, had taken an advantage of the position at that time and stolen the Armenian’s goods as a revenge. Because of the Armenian goods and properties, some of

³⁰² Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

³⁰³ *İkdam*, no: 7828, 27 November 1918.

³⁰⁴ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-68.

³⁰⁵ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

the people from the local ones became prosperous, and those people used the poverty of the Armenians. Among them, there were also the Greeks.³⁰⁶

As a result of large scale military and guerilla activities which were taking place in the areas that the convoys passed, and the general insecurity and blood feuds that some tribal forces sought to carry out in the territories where the convoys passed, the security of the Armenians could not be provided. Apart from this, the Armenians died because in Ottoman Empire there were severe shortages of food, fuel, medicine, and other supplies. And also there were a large-scale plague and famine, diseases and the climatic conditions, difficulties of travel, and illegal actions of some officers during the relocation.³⁰⁷

In addition, the Arabian tribes attacked some of the convoys. Especially, between Halep and Zor region, with their attacks, many Armenians were killed. Along the road up to Menzeke, which was an hour from Halep, with the attacks of Urba, Arabian tribes, about 2000 Armenians were killed.³⁰⁸ Again in the way from Diyarbakır to Zor and from Suruç to Menbiç, the Armenians were robbed as a result of the attacks of Urban tribe.³⁰⁹ Besides the Arabian tribes' attacks, it was informed that, the Armenians were killed around Mardin as a result of attacks of the Armenian bandits. In a telegram dated 26 June 1915 sent to Elazığ governor, "It is informed that many of the Armenians in the Armenian convoy, which were sent from Erzurum under protection, were killed by cutting their roads by Dersim bandits. These were because of continuing activities of the Armenian bandits. It is certainly appropriate the continuing murders of Dersim bandits

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

³⁰⁷ Sonyel, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

³⁰⁸ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemî, numara. 59/244 from Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

³⁰⁹ Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemî, numara. 56/140; 56A-144 from *Ibid.*, pp.59-60.

like this, so the precautions must be taken quickly to provide security of the coming convoys.³¹⁰

A code was sent on 14 June 1915 tells “About 500 Armenians from Erzurum were killed between Erzurum and Erzincan. It is necessary to defend the lives of travelling Armenians and during the transportation, those Armenians who trying to escape and attack the protectors must be punished. The killings of these removing people must be prevented and along the road, all kinds of precautions must be taken against the attacks of the tribes and peasants. Those who strive to seize by violence and murders had to be punished.”³¹¹ The Ottoman government sent orders like these to prevent the attacks against the Armenian convoys. In addition to this, Kurdish bandits also attacked the convoys. The convoys were accompanied by the Ottoman gendarmeries, which could not fire on the attacking Kurds. If they attacked, they would have faced, at this time, retaliation and the emergence of a Kurdish question. These Kurds were the people whose families were killed by the Armenians and so they wanted to take revenge.³¹²

The Ottomans made efforts to prevent the attacks against the Armenian convoys, to provide the maintenance and security of them. Also, to protect the Armenians by the attacks and robes of the bandits it was ordered that the Armenian convoys must not travel without officers. It was also ordered that all kinds of precautions must be taken in order to make transportation effectively and without damage. Talat Pasha founded four investigation commissions to arrest the people who attacked the Armenians and to punish them. For this purpose he sent these commissions to Anatolia. These

³¹⁰ Dahiliye Nezareti, Ev. Oda, Şif, Kol, Dosya 54, 904/83 from Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

³¹¹ Dahiliye Nezareti, Ev. Oda, Şif, Kol, Dosya 54, 864/62 from *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

commissions surrendered these criminals to local war courts.³¹³ About this subject, Talat Pasha says that in his memory “It is understood that from the official investigation files and from the information given by the election offices, immoral, vulgar and unscrupulous some people wanted to use the situation on their behalf and caused the murders of many people. General governors and governors showed the events as insignificant because of fear of taking events’ responsibility and they blamed the Kurdish people partially.....I gave orders to civilian officials to take necessary precautions and I wanted from military posts to be caught the guilty ones and to send units to protect the people. Four investigation commissions were formed from the members of court of appeals, council of state and chairmen of courts of punishment and I sent them to Anatolia. These commissions brought an end to the jobs of many officials and gave them to the local war council of state.”³¹⁴

These commissions imprisoned about 1397 people. Most of them were sentenced to capital punishment and to some sorts of punishments.³¹⁵ There was news in *İkdam* about these commissions established during the war. It tells that “At that time, to observe the relocation process, three commissions were established by impartial states and they were sent to the country which was partitioned into three regions. These commissions could not reach some places in Anatolia such as Sivas, Mamuratülaziz and Diyarbakır, so they were unsuccessful in these regions. The reports of them were not taken into account at that time and these reports did not affect the people who had high ranks. Only its effect happened to some low rank officers, who were trialed and

³¹² Öztuna, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

³¹³ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³¹⁴ Alpay Kabacalı, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş., 1994), pp. 82-83.

³¹⁵ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

punished. They were sent only for research and these commissions had no other effect.”³¹⁶

Talat Pasha in his memory accepted that many Armenians died because of relocation and Armenian rebellions but he stated that in these many Muslims were killed too. He said that, because of relocation and rebellions, many Armenians were killed and at that time the Armenians killed many Muslims as well.³¹⁷ In Cemal Pasha’s memory, he said that; the situation of the Muslims, who wanted to save their lives from the Armenian oppression and their murders, was not different from the Armenians. He defined that the German and American missionaries did not write about these Muslims and because of the Armenian rebellion, about 1.5 million Muslims were killed. Cemal Pasha asked that why the Armenians were not accepted responsible from these murders.³¹⁸ McCarty said that it should be accepted that in the murders of Armenians both the Ottomans and also the Russians were guilty and the Armenian rebels also were responsible for this crime.³¹⁹

4.3. Armenians Spared from the Move

The decision for deportation was not applied to all Armenians. The main purpose of the relocation was to send the Armenians who were making harmful activities and making cooperation with the enemy in the places where they could not conduct crime. For this reason, coded telegrams were sent on 15 August 1915 to related provinces. The officials were ordered not to deport Catholic and Protestant Armenians and settle them

³¹⁶ *İkdam*, no: 7851, 20 December 1918.

³¹⁷ Tevfik Çavdar, *Talat Paşa: Bir Örgüt Ustasının Yaşam Öyküsü*, (İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2001), p. 402.

³¹⁸ Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001), p. 444.

³¹⁹ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

in their original cities and report their numbers.³²⁰ These Armenians were settled in various towns within their respective provinces.³²¹ Those who were mistakenly deported were sought and settled at the cities where they were living.³²²

At first, some of the Armenians living in certain places such as towns of Germiş and Birecik in Urfa, Canik, Çanakale, Adapazarı, Halep, Bolu, Kastamonu, Erzurum, Aydın, Trabzon, Edirne, Tekirdağ, Konya, and Karahisar-ı Sahib were excluded from the scope of deportation. Later when these were seen engaged in acts of treason, it was decided that most of them should be sent away. Apart from these, the sick and blind, civil servants, soldiers and their families, tradesmen, some construction workers and foremen were also excluded from the scope of deportation.³²³ In addition to these, the Armenians who employed in the main and provincial branches of the Ottoman Bank, Tobacco administration and some foreign consulates were allowed to stay, as long as they remained loyal to the Empire and display good manner. Moreover, instruction was delivered to local administrators of some provinces and said that to keep the Armenians serving as officers, doctors or medics in the Ottoman army they would be excluded from relocation with their families.³²⁴ Also, orphaned children and widows were excluded from deportation and it was ordered that they should be taken under protection in orphanages or villages and should be given material aid to them.³²⁵

Some of the Armenians accepted Islam not to be sent away during the deportation. But the government decided not to accept such applications even if they

³²⁰ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³²⁵ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

accepted Islam, and decided to send them away.³²⁶ At the end of the relocation process, the application of those who want to accept Islam was accepted but on the condition that they would not resist the deportation in future. When some of the converts were deported later, it was decided not to write their new religion on their identity papers. The documents were only showing their original domiciles. With this, the aim was to prevent the infiltration of terrorists back in to the country under guise of conversion.³²⁷

Besides these, the Ottoman government decided not to allow the Ottoman Armenians coming from abroad and going out of country during the deportation. Only those Armenians who were nationals of neutral countries were allowed to leave on the condition that they shall not return until the end of the war. It was refused to let the Armenians come from abroad regardless of nationality. Some Armenians used a tactic with that they were showing themselves as foreign nationals, in order to avoid deportation. This caused serious problems for the Ottoman Empire. Some Armenians showed themselves as American nationals and because of this American ambassador intervened on the behalf of the Armenians who claimed to be American nationals and requested from the government to halt their deportation. Due to this, the government wanted the real lists of American Armenians. America and the European countries watched the events closely and interested with the Armenians. When it became clear that foreign officials were using rumours or fabricated news that they gathered from the Armenian civil servants to make propaganda campaign against the Ottoman state abroad, the government sent coded instructions to the concerned provinces for measures

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

to be taken in the deportation areas to prevent the incidents that the foreigners could use them against the country.³²⁸

Gürün claims that, the number of the Armenians was about 1.300.000 in 1914 and the number of death is between 300.000 and 400.000.³²⁹ On October 1916, the relocation process was halted. Gürün inform that on 7 December 1916 with a report, about 702.900 Armenians were deported, it was informed at that report to interior ministry.³³⁰ But Halaçoğlu says that the number of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire at that time between the numbers 600.000 and 800.000 and about 400.000 Armenians were relocated.³³¹ During deportation in 1915, it was claimed that the number of the murdered Armenians were about 300.000 but this number increased as time went on and in 1980s, it increased 2.000.000 with the Armenian speculations. During relocation process, because of some kinds of reasons many Armenians died. These deaths were in some place because of the attacks came from Arabian tribes and Armenian bandits, some of them died as a result of epidemics, also because of starvation, hardness of travelling and illegal actions of some chief administrators. After the Armistice in 1918, the explanations about the relocation of the Armenians started to be discussed in *İkdam*. It tried to give all the information about this process. The Armenians and the Entente Powers claimed that the number of death Armenians were more than 1.000.000. As I read from *İkdam*, there was the speech of deputies in the Parliament in 1918, an Armenian minister claimed that in the relocation process, about 1.000.000 Armenian women and children were murdered and offered an application for

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

³²⁹ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

³³¹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

the punishment of the people who had taken place in this oppression.³³² Also a Greek deputy gave a proposal in the Parliament for the Armenians and this was given in *Ikdam* “About 1.000.000 people were killed and their properties were distributed. These people had no guilty without being a member of Armenian tribe.”³³³ It is understood from this news that these Armenians were sent only they were Armenians but it was not seen that they were rebelling against to the Ottoman Empire and making harmful activities. There is other news in *Ikdam*, according to it, “It was claimed that there were 2.000.000 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before the relocation. But now, there are 30.000 in Konya, 25.000 in Halep, 10.000 in Maraş, 6.000 in Adana and Eskişehir, 7.000 in Bozdoğan, Malatya, Kayseri and totally 93.000 Armenians remained. But this claim is not thrustworthy. It is a lie.”³³⁴ With this calculation, the Armenians tried to prove their claims of “genocide” as if most of the Armenians were killed in the Empire.

There was other news in *Ikdam* on 17 May 1918 about the Armenian population in Eastern Anatolia. And when it is compared with the population of the Muslims it was estimated very low. The news was given as: “When we look at the proportion of the population in Diyarbakır, the Armenian population is only % 10. If they were recruited to the army, even this would be lower. As it is understood from the proportion, the Armenian population was very low. In none of the six provinces, the Armenian population is more than % 10 or % 15. However, there were many Muslims who were not counted in the census. In addition to this, the tribes always escaped from the census.”³³⁵ Apart from this news, *Ikdam* gave another one about the population of

³³² *Ikdam*, no: 7806, 5 November 1918.

³³³ *Ikdam*, no: 7805, 4 November 1918.

³³⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 7734, 22 August 1918.

³³⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7640, 17 May 1918.

Adana, which was an important place for the Armenian rebellions. It was said that: “In Adana, the population of the Muslims and the Turks is consisted of 10/9. Adana could not be divided from the Ottoman Empire. Also, in the six provinces, the Muslims are in majority.”³³⁶

The number of the Armenians in the Empire in war years decreased because of the murders during the deportation process. But besides this, some of the Armenians were settled in the places where they were living after the relocation was halted. Some of them escaped to Russia and joined the Russian army to fight against the Ottomans and many of them escaped America or to the European countries. In every opportunity, the government stated that the aim was not to annihilate the Armenians but only it was for the security purposes. In all of the calculations, as it is understood from Gürün’s information, it is seen that about 300.000 or 400.000 Armenians were death and these are not a sign of evacuation of a nation. There were deaths but these were not only because of relocation but also it was the war times and natural and war conditions caused the death of the Armenians.³³⁷ In some cities such as in İstanbul, the Armenians were excluded from the scope of deportation. If there were a plan of evacuation, there would not be exclusion. In none of the coded telegrams, there was a word about killing or annihilation. In contrast, the government took heavy inconvenience like opening a front line and many precautions were taken on the behalf of them.³³⁸

There was news in *İkdam* as an answer to the claims of massacre. It is said that “to protect the lives of these Armenians some Ottoman officials lost their lives. If it was

³³⁶ *İkdam*, no: 7847, 16 December 1918, the main text is given in appendix C.

³³⁷ Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 94. It is possible to find the calculations of the resettled Armenians in a detailed way in Kamuran Gürün and about the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before the First World War in his book *Ermeni Dosyası*. Also there these calculations in the book of Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*

for the annihilation of nation, most probably no one would help to these people for the sake of their lives”. In an article it is said that, “Relocation was a necessity and it was made. The country suffered from harm as politically and financially. It was mistakenly to be accepted as it was done by the entire Turkish nation. Persons did this. In order to protect the Armenians, two head officials of districts were killed and they were Turkish, too.³³⁹ In another article in *Ikdam*, Talat Pasha and his government were blamed of the events. The news of *Ikdam* on 7 October 1918 was: “The documents for the massacre of the Armenians could not be found. It is estimated that Talat Pasha and his followers destroyed these documents before leaving İstanbul.”³⁴⁰

Talat Pasha wrote his reaction for the claims of massacre in his memory and said that if the death of 400.000 Armenians was accepted as a massacre, why there is not any indication of reaction for the death of 1.000.000 Muslims killed by the Armenians. The Armenians lost many people because of rebellions and deportation. But in the eastern cities, the Muslims lost their lives too, also, almost in the same number because of the Armenians. During the occupation of the cities like Van, Erzurum, Bitlis and Muş by the Russians, about 600.000 Muslim lost their lives while the Muslims were escaping from Russian oppression.³⁴¹

4.4. Reflection of Great Powers to Relocation

Foreign observers who visited the areas of relocation wrote that despite the difficulties entailed by the war, the Ottoman government had carried out resettlement in an efficient and orderly way. But in some countries such as Russia, America and

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95; Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-80.

³³⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 7820, 19 November 1918.

³⁴⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 7808, 7 October 1918.

³⁴¹ Kabacalı, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

Western countries, their presses in general, have painted a distorted picture of the events. As soon as the resettlement process started, the claim of massacre was used widely as a tool of propaganda in time of war in Europe. England and France informed that the Ottoman Empire is responsible from the massacres. *İkdam* published the speeches given in the Parliament of England as news. In that news the Turks were accused of creating tension between the Armenians and the Kurds. The English' opinion was about this subject like that "The Armenian oppression was not made by the Turkish officers or Turkish bandits by their wish. This was done with the code that came from İstanbul. This is not a religious matter. If it were like that, many of the Arabs would not protect the Armenians. If the Turks withdraw from there, there would not be problem between the Armenians and the Kurds. The Armenians and the Kurds were preparing to make an agreement, but it is seen that the Kurds did not take a lesson from this situation. If the Turks want to make, they will cause a struggle among the European states."³⁴²

While the U.S. consul Edward Nothan in Mersin was reporting that the transports of deportees were made in an order, the U.S. ambassador in İstanbul Henry Morgenthau reported the events to his country in a completely different way. The American and European press used these reports to attack to the Turks. Besides, the U.S. ambassador, the spread of news that Armenians were massacred, can be attributed to Lord James Bryce and the German Protestant priest Johannes Lepsius. By the encouragement of English war propaganda office, Arnold Toynbee was another avid user of information provided by Morgenthau. A book was printed by Arnold Toynbee, which was used as a

³⁴² *İkdam*, no: 7831, 30 November 1918. As it is understood from the news of *İkdam* England claimed that the Ottoman government made the relocation to kill the Armenians in a conscious way. Also, it was claimed that the Armenians and the Kurds were in a good manner towards each other. All the blames were for the Ottomans, the main text is given in appendix C.

source in the books that were claiming that the Armenians were subjected to massacres. This book was published in Britain in the name of Blue Book. It was claimed that a third of 1.800.000 Armenians said to be living in Turkey had been murdered. With the claims of this book, the Ottoman administrators who exiled Malta after the war ended could not be found guilty. This book was printed only for the purpose of propaganda and was full of completely biased articles and lies. This book was prepared to include America into the war. Another source for accusing the people, who exiled to Malta, were reports of Armenian Patriarchate.³⁴³ These reports were written only for the purposes of propaganda and they could not display an event to confirm the claims of massacre.

About the accusation of the Ottomans by the Armenians and the Western countries, there was news in *İkdam*, according to it; “in order to accuse the Turks, all of the reports are controlled but it could not be found an evidence to accuse the Turks”.³⁴⁴ European countries used the Armenian relocation as a propaganda tool against the Turks, but they could not find evidence, which was depending on accurate evidence. However, the death of the Armenians during relocation was used against both the Ottoman State and Turkish Republic during and after the war, with a new claims that is called today “genocide.”³⁴⁵ *İkdam* took this subject under the title of Slanders [İftiralar] and said that “There is news in foreign press as the Turks making oppression, but those are not true. This news has no base. For example, they say that, while the captives had been transferring, they died because of plague and other epidemics and their corpses were thrown away.”³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

³⁴⁴ *İkdam*, no: 7808, 7 November 1918.

³⁴⁵ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71; Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

³⁴⁶ *İkdam*, no: 7716, 4 August 1918, the main text is given in appendix C.

Although some Western press showed the Turks as oppressors and brutal, a newspaper, which was printed in Stockholm, explained the reasons for these ridiculous claims and insubstantial news. None of the news, which was about Armenian claims of massacre, depends on trustworthy sources. At first the numbers of death were about 300.000 and it increased more than 1.000.000 later. The Armenians' claims of massacre were presented in the west not only by propaganda but also by the way of novels.³⁴⁷ In order to make of the Ottoman Government accept the claims of massacre that was assumed to be happened during the resettlement process, the Europeans and America made special efforts. Many articles and books were written to prove their claims and to accuse the Turks. *İkdam* gave how many books were written for this purpose in its issue 7846. *İkdam* printed news under the title of 900 books and said that "To explain the claims of oppression applied to the Armenians during the relocation, about 900 books were printed in America and Europe."³⁴⁸

The Ottoman Empire decided to collect all of the documents, in which there was the explanation of oppression, which was done by the Armenians to the Muslims. Coded telegrams were sent to all the cities and it was ordered that all related documents to be sent to the Government. With these documents a book was printed which was called as "Ermeni Komitelerinin Amal ve Harekat-ı İhtilaliyyesi, İlan-ı Meşrutiyetten evvel ve sonra."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Enver Konukçu, "Osmanlılar ve Millet-i Sadıkan Ermeniler" in *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Ermeni Sorunu*, ed., Hasan Celal Güzel, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2001), p. 69.

³⁴⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7846, 15 December 1918.

³⁴⁹ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-81. In *İkdam* there was news for an article that was written in 1917 for the Armenian committees and their actions in the past. *İkdam* said that with this article many realities could be seen easily. The name of article was "Ermeni Komitelerinin Meşrutiyetten evvel ve Sonraki Harekat-ı İhtilaliyyesi" in *İkdam* no: 7471 on 29 November 1917.

4.5. End of Relocation and the Events up to the end of 1918

During relocation, the transportation was sometimes halted because of climatic conditions and sometimes due to the crowd. From 25 November 1915 onwards while with the coded telegrams it was informed that, orders were sent to provinces that the transmission was halted because of winter, but it was maintained. In another telegram sent on 21 February 1916, it was informed to all provinces that the transportation was halted. But some of Armenians still continued their harmful activities and so the transportation started again. With another general order, as the last one, on 15 March 1916, it was informed that the resettlement process was halted exactly. For this reason, because some Armenians did not reach their settlement areas, they settled places where they were at that time. During relocation, Armenian activities continued. Between 1916 and 1917, there is not much information about what happened.

McCarty divided the massacres that were done to the Muslims into two parts. The first one was that when the Ottoman Empire entered war and the Armenians revolted against the government as organized. This period covered the events up to relocation and during relocation process. It was ended when the Russians occupied Eastern Anatolia. The second one was started with the Russian Revolution in 1917 and with it, the Russians started to withdraw. The second part ended when the Turks beaten the Armenians who replaced the Russians.³⁵⁰

In 1917, the Armenians entered Erzurum and up to 1918 the massacre of Armenian committees continued on local people.³⁵¹ With Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian army started to evacuate the Turkish lands. The Armenian soldiers and bandits

³⁵⁰ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

³⁵¹ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

took the place of the Russians there. These were the members of Transcaucasia Federation at first. Later, they became the military units of Armenian Republic. The Russian units oppressed Muslim people much, but the Armenians oppressed them much more as well. The Armenian units, who could not take control, killed many Muslims, fired their houses and attacked to women. The aim was to exterminate the Muslims.³⁵² Especially in Eastern provinces like Erzincan, Erzurum, Kars, and Bayburt, they massacred Muslims. Both in Russian and Turkish documents, these massacres had taken place: “The Armenian bandits, which were withdrawing from Erzincan to Erzurum, exterminated all the Muslim villages and their people on their way. The Turks who could not escape from Ilca village were killed and many children’s head were cut..... The Armenians in Erzurum fired Turkish Bazaar. All of the people; women, men and children were killed....”³⁵³

About the oppressions that the Armenians made to the Turkish people, there was much news in *İkdam*. *İkdam* gave a special attention to this subject. The news: “Armenians made lots of oppression in Erzurum. The massacre was started there by leaving the general Ol Şedze. Up to this time, hundreds of Muslim corpses were found.”³⁵⁴ Apart from Erzurum, Armenians oppressed many Muslim people in many other places. The Ottoman government in order to prevent these massacres sent auxiliary units to places that were evacuated by the Russians. Although Armenians were armed with Russian materials, the Ottomans beat them. The news about this had taken place in *İkdam* as “The Ottoman forces came face to face with the Armenian bandits around

³⁵² Soyel, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

³⁵³ Kabacalı, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-94. Erdal İlter explained in his book the oppressions of the Armenians and the Russians in Muş, Van, Erzurum, Hakkari, Siirt, Erzincan and Trabzon to the Turks in a detailed way. He used in his explanations the speeches of the witnesses who were living at that time in that regions.

Erzurum and the raids continued at night. The fires were extinguished in Erzurum.”³⁵⁵ *Ikdam* tried to inform people about the massacre that the Armenians made to the Muslims in Eastern Anatolia after the Russian units withdrawn from 1917 onwards. These Armenians were entering the cities and the killing all the Muslims on their way. *Ikdam* definitely claimed that strong and concise reaction should be given against the massacre of these Armenians. The news was as “Armenian bandits occupied Van and they were acting with good organization and killing whoever they saw on their way. We hope that these would not be left without punishment.”³⁵⁶ Thus *Ikdam* asked that these actions should not be left without punishment.

After a while, the Armenian bandits, who were beaten by the Ottoman army, began to withdraw. The news about withdrawing Armenians and their oppressions continued to be given in *Ikdam*, in 1918. *Ikdam* gave the news with national feelings. “The Armenian bandits around Erzurum escaped.”³⁵⁷ “On the fighting between the Armenian forces and the Ottomans, the Armenians were expelled.”³⁵⁸ However, the Armenians, while withdrawing, continued to destroy, fire the properties of the Muslims and kill them. The Armenians made their oppressions mostly around Erzurum and Erzincan. *Ikdam* also reacted this situation and to the European press and it wanted those that they must see the massacres, which were done to the Muslims by the Armenians. According to this news: “The Armenians doing every kind of oppression, violation around Erzurum and Erzincan. Where is the Western press which printed many books and magazines with the claim of that the Armenians were oppressed by the Ottomans,

³⁵⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 7587, 25 March 1918.

³⁵⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7575, 13 March 1918.

³⁵⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 7603, 10 April 1918.

³⁵⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 7566, 4 March 1918.

could not they see these oppressions? Armenians withdrawing on the one hand and they are killing everybody on their way on the other hand. But our army reached our help.”³⁵⁹ *Ikdam* questioned the West because of their insensitivity towards these Armenian oppressions. In other news in *Ikdam*; “Armenians have no other work apart from killing the people on their way and the Ottoman army was engaging in these Armenian bandits which threaten the security. While the army was continuing towards Van and Kars regions, the bandits were seen.”

In February 1918, the Ottoman army took the authority at the region and the violation acts came to an end. There was news about this subject in *Ikdam* and it was said that “Trabzon has been saved from oppression of the bandits.”³⁶⁰ And “Our Eastern provinces were taken back with the evacuation from the Armenian bandits.”³⁶¹ Also with other news in *Ikdam*, “The agreement was made for the Eastern provinces and this means that the Armenian bandits could not make oppression in this region.”³⁶²

After the explanation about the Armenian events after relocation, I will try to explain the decision about the return of the deported Armenians in 1918 with the sign of Armistice. An order was sent to call back the deported Armenians on 31 December 1918. After the war, the CUP government resigned and new government was established. The new government prepared the decision of return on 31 December 1918. On 4 January 1919, Interior Minister Mustafa Pasha informed Porte and in his writing, he said that it was ordered the Armenians who were relocated could come back if they want. For this, the necessary precautions were taken. According to this decision:

³⁵⁸ *Ikdam*, no: 7577, 15 March 1918.

³⁵⁹ *Ikdam*, no: 7574, 12 March 1918.

³⁶⁰ *Ikdam*, no: 7559, 25 February 1918.

³⁶¹ *Ikdam*, no: 7614, 21 April 1918.

1. Only those who want to return would be transmitted, apart from them no one would be touched.

2. For the ones who will return, all the precautions would be taken for not to encounter difficulty. For maintenance and settlement there would not be any difficulty. The contact would be provided with the administrators of those regions and after taking necessary precautions, process of return would be started.

3. The houses and fields of those who will return would be given back.

4. The houses, which were settled by the refugees, would be evacuated. Also, the properties, which were given to refugees, would take back.

5. A few families would be settled together to not to left someone homeless.

6. The buildings such as church, school and their endowments would be given back to their communities.

7. Orphan children would be given to their families and communities if they were wanted.

8. The converted ones could accept again their previous religion. Those converts, who married with a Muslim, if wanted, could return to her old religion.

9. The unused properties of the Armenians would be given back to their owners. The works of property officials would treat those, which were used.

10. The maintenance and expenses of transportation of poor Armenians would be provided from treasury.³⁶³

With the sign of Armistice, it was informed that relocated Armenians could return their old settlements. About this subject, the decisions and precautions of the

³⁶² *İkdam*, no: 7567, 5 March 1918.

³⁶³ Halaçoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

government started to be printed in *İkdam* from 5 August 1918 onwards. The news on 5 August 1918 in *İkdam* was like that: “It was given permission to the deported Armenians and Arabs to return their countries.”³⁶⁴ “Armenians were allowed to return their country”³⁶⁵ “The Armenians who want to go from somewhere to another, could travel freely because the decision of previous government was abandoned.”³⁶⁶ With the decision of return for the Armenians, the Armenians newspapers explained the decision of relocation as the necessity during the war. The news in *İkdam* stated that: “In Armenian newspapers this news taken place: the government made necessary research for the return of those who were deported because of military necessities during war.”³⁶⁷

Government also saved money for these returning Armenians and the Ottoman government would provide all of the commodities of these Armenians. Besides this, when these Armenians had been relocated, the houses of them were given to the refugees that came from lost territories of the Ottoman Empire during the war. Government ordered that the houses of the Armenians should be evacuated for their owners. *İkdam* tried to give all the information about the order or return and its application by the government. The news about the fund for the Armenians was like this in *İkdam*: “The government made a research for the returning ones and about 2.000.000 lira fund was separated for this purpose. The houses of immigrants, which were settled by the refugees, would be evacuated.”³⁶⁸

Decision of the government about the Armenians was written in *İkdam*. According to this news, the government would provide all the necessary things for these

³⁶⁴ *İkdam*, no: 7717, 5 August 1918.

³⁶⁵ *İkdam*, no: 7722, 10 August 1918.

³⁶⁶ *İkdam*, no: 7786, 16 October 1918.

³⁶⁷ *İkdam*, no: 7719, 7 August 1918.

Armenians. The houses and properties that were sold because of necessity would be given back to their owners. The news in *İkdam* was that: “The Armenians, who were deported because of military necessities, could return and in their returns to their homes all kind of precautions would be taken and their maintenance’s would be provided. Also the sold houses and properties because of necessity would be given back.”³⁶⁹

In order to help especially to the patients and old people, it was applied for the construction of a hospital in Adapazarı. To help those immigrants, the news in *İkdam* was: “In order to help these refugees, it was applied for the construction of a hospital in Adapazarı.”³⁷⁰ For the return of these Armenians to their homes under better conditions and in an order, commissions were founded. About these commissions, there was news in *İkdam*. “To return their homes, all kind of help would be made to these Armenians. For this these commissions were founded. To these commissions an Armenian and a Greek officer could join. These commissions would do the transportation. Apart from this Armenian Patriarchate established another commission to deal with settlements of the Armenians.”³⁷¹

After the returning decision was taken, many of the Armenians returned to their houses, but some of them stayed where they were sent and some of them migrated to Western countries. *İkdam* gave the number of the returned Armenians in news as: “On 22 November, 2342 Armenians returned to their places.”³⁷² In spite of these returned ones, some of the Armenians did not return because their jobs were good in their new homes such as in Damascus, but some others could not return due to the economic

³⁶⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7734, 22 August 1918.

³⁶⁹ *İkdam*, no: 7856, 25 December 1918.

³⁷⁰ *İkdam*, no: 7837, 6 December 1918.

³⁷¹ *İkdam*, no: 7855, 24 December 1918.

difficulties. About the ones who remained, where they were sent, news in *Ikdam* was as: “The Armenians who had good business in Damascus did not return.”³⁷³ In other news in *Ikdam*: “Those relocated ones could easily return to their homes but only those prosperous ones returned, there are not so much from the others.”³⁷⁴ The Armenian Patriarchate helped those returning ones and about it, the news was like that in *Ikdam*: “From Konya and other provinces, among the relocated ones, 100 Armenians returned by means of Armenian Patriarchate.”³⁷⁵ While the Ottoman government was trying to make its best to return those people in an orderly way, but the European countries blamed the Ottoman government as if it was in slackness. The news was like that in *Ikdam*: “It is informed that England and her allies are anxious about the return of Greeks and the Armenians because of Sublime Porte’s slackness and they said that they would want indemnity from the Ottomans.”³⁷⁶

With the end of war and decision of return, commissions were established to investigate the claims of oppression and massacre; this investigation would be made for the CUP government’s members and for the officials who carried out the deportation. In the Parliament, it was said that the investigation would start soon for the people who made oppressions during the relocation. The documents of the officials would be sent to the Grand Court.³⁷⁷ In order to provide settlements and meet the damages of the relocated Armenians and the Greeks, commissions were established under the supervisor

³⁷² *Ikdam*, no: 7853, 22 December 1918.

³⁷³ *Ikdam*, no: 7742, 30 August 1918.

³⁷⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 7795, 25 September 1918.

³⁷⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7832, 1 December 1918.

³⁷⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 7832, 1 December 1918.

³⁷⁷ *Ikdam*, no: 7835, 4 December 1918. To investigate the relocation process, commissions would be founded. This was another news of *Ikdam*, no: 7839, 8 December 1918, the main text is given in appendix C.

of the minister of Internal Affairs, Mustafa Arif Bey.³⁷⁸ Ten commissions were established to examine the people who were claimed to make oppressions during the relocation in İzmit and Eastern Provinces.³⁷⁹

For investigation of the CUP government's officials, *İkdam* published news that the CUP government was accused for the attitudes to Armenians and the Greeks. This news is read as follows "The CUP government followed a harsh and senseless policy against the Armenians and the Greeks."³⁸⁰ With sign of Armistice, Gürün divided the arrest of the guilty ones in two phases: The first one was the works of the Ottoman government. A court was established to catch the criminals. It was decided at this court, that some of the people, whose names were given by the England, were arrested and even some of them were punished with capital punishment and many others fined with other punishments.³⁸¹ There was news in *İkdam* about the commissions established for the trial of the members of previous government. *İkdam* gave the number of these commissions and the names of the persons whom would be trialed. These commissions cross-examined many governors and officials. There was news about this subject in *İkdam* as "In order to examine the previous government's relocation process, a commission was established by interior ministry."³⁸² "These commissions received the statements of governors of Erzincan and Konya and also the statements of the officials

³⁷⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7826, 25 November 1918.

³⁷⁹ *İkdam*, no: 7840, 9 December 1918. The same news was given in *İkdam* no: 7841, on 10 December 1918 and no: 7846, on 15 December 1918.

³⁸⁰ *İkdam*, no: 7804, 3 November 1918.

³⁸¹ Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-311. The second step of these efforts for the claims of genocide was followed especially by the English. The English tried to prove the massacre of the Armenians by the Ottomans as it was a reality. Some actions were made by England about this subject. It could be found much more information about the efforts of the English in Gürün's *Ermeni Dosyası*.

³⁸² *İkdam*, no: 7825, 24 November 1918.

who were in service at that time, and also some tradesmen of Erzincan.”³⁸³ *Ikdam* also wrote about the explanations of the Armenian newspapers regarding this subject. The news in *Ikdam* from an Armenian newspaper ‘Jamanak’ was: “England would join the trials which were continuing in the interior ministry but this news was denied by *Ikdam*.”³⁸⁴

There was news in *Ikdam* as: “In order to examine the oppressions, which were claimed to done to the Armenians during relocation, an English commission would be established.”³⁸⁵ According to the news of *Ikdam*, these commissions sometimes could not find any evidences to accuse these people who were claimed to make massacre of the Armenians in a conscious way during the resettlement. In one of these trials, the previous Erzurum governor reacted to the Europeans as Europe did everything to accuse the Turks of making massacre of the Armenians. But the same Europe did not give any reaction when the Muslims were killed by the Armenians in time of rebellions during the war and after the Russian army withdrawn from 1917 onwards. The news was like this on 6 December 1918: “It could not be found any evidences to accuse the previous Erzurum governor. The governor asked that there are commissions to examine the oppressions which were done to Greeks and the Armenians, but why is not there a commission for the Turks who were oppressed and killed because of the Armenian oppressions?”³⁸⁶ In some trials, the foreign consulate’s view was taken. For instance, American consulate said his views about the Mamuratülaziz governor as “It was claimed that governor of Mamuratülaziz involved in the oppression, but the consulate of America

³⁸³ *Ikdam*, no: 7845, 14 December 1918.

³⁸⁴ *Ikdam*, no: 7857, 26 December 1918.

³⁸⁵ *Ikdam*, no: 7843, 12 December 1918.

³⁸⁶ *Ikdam*, no: 7857, 26 December 1918.

gave information opposite to this claim and said that the governor has good intentions for the Christians.’’³⁸⁷

After the war, commissions were established to make investigation for the punishment of the related ones with this subject and in these investigations not only for the low rank officials were trialed but also those who had high ranks were trialed. That is, all the people who were in service at that time were trialed. The news in *İkdam* on 25 December 1918 was read as follows: “It was about the previous general director of prisons, İbrahim Bey. He was accused of oppressing the Armenians living around İzmir and Adapazarı. For him, an investigation was wanted and it is informed that he and some of his followers returned with a filled pockets after relocation.”³⁸⁸ “Because the relocation process was made by the Third Army under the command of Mahmut Şevket Bey in İstanbul and Erzurum, he was invited to court for trial by the war ministry.”³⁸⁹ The other news was “The previous governor of Diyarbakır, Raşid Bey, and the secretary of the CUP, Mithat Şükrü Bey, were invited to come for inquiry.”³⁹⁰ “The officials, who made oppressions in Ankara, Çorum and Adana, were examined in their places and some of them were sent to İstanbul.”³⁹¹ “Due to the news about the houses of relocated Armenians, sold in Karamürsel, investigation is wanted for those who made this.”³⁹²

İkdam’s interpretation about the claims of oppression to the Armenians was given in *İkdam* as “this was done by the individuals”. The perpetrators of these actions have to be found, the state treasury should not pay these damages. Not only had the Armenians been affected from these actions but also the Turks had been affected as well.

³⁸⁷ *İkdam*, no: 7799, 29 October 1918.

³⁸⁸ *İkdam*, no: 7856, 25 December 1918.

³⁸⁹ *İkdam*, no: 7855, 24 December 1918.

³⁹⁰ *İkdam*, no: 7850, 19 December 1918.

The article in *İkdam* in the context of reaction was: “Head officials, directors of property had sold the properties of Greeks, the Armenians and the foreigners as they want. Some of the officials made illegal things. The treasury could not pay all the damages in the situations. Their agents have to be found. The Turks were also damaged from this situation”³⁹³ In another article in *İkdam* “Those two officers make arbitrary treatment not only to the Armenians and the Greeks but also to the Turkish people”³⁹⁴

According to Halaçođlu, the Armenian relocation process was seen to save the Ottoman Empire from the treaty, which was signed between the Ottomans and the Russians on 8 February 1914. This treaty was fairly recognizing the Armenian independence in six provinces of the Ottoman Empire. With the beginning of the World War I, the Ottomans saved themselves from undertakings of this treaty. In order to save her from this process with which an Armenian state could be established at this region with the end of the War, she should think to send the Armenians far away from the Russian frontier and to secure places.³⁹⁵

However, Őükrü Elekdađ emphasized that the relocation process was a necessity. He said that the Ottomans knew that the Armenians were making plans of rebellions with Russia beforehand and with the start of War, the Armenians betrayed to their own states and joined the Russian army. They made all kinds of sabotage during the war against to the Ottomans. As a result of these developments, the Ottomans had to take relocation decision after seven months from the beginning of war.³⁹⁶

³⁹¹ *İkdam*, no: 7833, 2 December 1918.

³⁹² *İkdam*, no: 7797, 27 October 1918.

³⁹³ *İkdam*, no: 7815, 14 November 1918.

³⁹⁴ *İkdam*, no: 7836, 5 October 1918.

³⁹⁵ Halaçođlu, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³⁹⁶ Őükrü Elekdađ, “Armenian Question” in *Journal of Armenian Studies*, 1., ed., Ömer Engin Lütem, (Ankara: Grafiker Ltd. Őti., 2001), p. 75.

These Armenians were sent out of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. They were transformed to more secure places, unlike what was claimed, this was not done to massacre these Armenians. However, because of advantages, this event wanted to be hidden and reflected as if the Turks did that.³⁹⁷

McCarty evaluated the relocation process as the response of the Ottomans to the Armenian rebellions was almost the same with the decision of the other 20th century states, which were struggling with guerilla wars. And he added that this relocation is to leave them destitute from the local aids and it was to be sent away from the local helpers. The Ottomans knew that the Armenian rebels were supported either by the Armenian villagers or by the dwellers of the Eastern cities. For this reason, they took a fundamental decision that the Armenians in the regions of rebellions and the possibility of emerging rebellions would be relocated.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ İlter, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³⁹⁸ McCarty, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As a result of the efforts of the Great Powers, which wanted to use the Armenians for their own purposes, the Armenian question emerged in the last quarter of the 19th century. This was also the effect of the nationalist movement over the Armenians. The nationalism affected the European states before coming into the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman nations in the Balkans were affected from the nationalism and with the support of the European Powers and of Russia especially either taken their independence or gained some privileges on the way of independency in the 19th century. Russia was the most important supporter of the Balkan nations since Russia wanted to reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean via the Ottoman territories. Due to this purpose, she used these Balkan nations. When these nations gained their independency, they turned their backs to Russia. So Russia had to find another tool to achieve her purpose. For this, Russia turned towards Anatolia, the most suitable nation for her aims, were the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. England, France and later Germany had taken an important part in this subject. Because, these powers did not want Russia to be only power in the region. The Armenians, to take the foreign powers' support, began to make rebellions to reach their goals. The aim of these works was to gain some privileges first, then take autonomy or even may have independency. Up to the World War I, the Armenians gained some privileges from the

Ottoman administration during Tanzimat and the Constitutional periods. In fact, the Armenians were working to own the places in which they were not a majority.³⁹⁹ They knew this reality and in order to be successful, they tried to win the Great Powers' support. They rebelled many times and organized actions through the works of committees, which were supported by Russia and the other powers. Because of the terrorist actions of the committees, many Armenians and Muslims lost their lives. After each of these rebellions, they gained some privileges. Their main aim was to bring the Armenian question into the international platform. They achieved this with the Berlin Treaty in 1878. After that, the Great Powers made some efforts for the Armenians. The Ottoman government also promised for the reforms in the region, where the Armenians were living. But these reforms were not performed wholly because of the economic bankrupt of the Ottoman Empire. The reform negotiations continued for a long time. At the end an agreement was signed on 8 February 1914, which would bring peace to the region. As there was turmoil in the region, the Armenians were provoked by the works of the committees that were mostly supported by Russia and the European powers and peace could not be established there. This agreement was not processed when the World War I began.

When the World War I broke out, the Armenians again began to work against the Ottoman Empire and continued their harmful activities. Most of them escaped from the Ottoman army and attacked from behind and killed many Muslims in the cities and fired the villages. To bring an end to these actions, the Ottoman government made some efforts but these were not successful.

³⁹⁹ Öke, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

Because of the damaging Armenian activities, the Ottoman government had to take the decision of relocation in 1915. The Ottoman government tried to make this resettlement process in an order and for this many orders were sent to the provinces where the relocation was applied. Unfortunately, many Armenians died during the relocation process. This was caused by the natural deaths and health conditions and epidemics, attacks by the Armenian bandits, the Arabian tribes, and the Kurdish tribes and by some officers' actions. According to the Ottoman documents, the Ottoman government was responsible from the death of any Armenians since it did not order any murder.

In the relocation process not all the Armenians had taken place such as the Protestant and Catholic Armenians, patients, orphans etc. were left out of this process. The ones who acted against the Ottoman Empire were relocated. In some cities Armenians were not under the obligation of resettlement such as in İstanbul. The relocation process was sometimes halted but as the harmful activities of the Armenians continued, it was started again. On March 1916, it was completely halted. For this subject, the foreign powers reacted strongly. They used this as war propaganda and most of the foreign press showed this as a massacre. But some foreigners, in the Empire, witnessed this process and said that it is not massacre, even the process is carried out in an order. But their explanations were not taken into consideration and many articles and books were written against the Ottoman Empire.

While all these events going on the Ottoman press reflected them as much as the censor permitted. *İkdam* as one of the important newspaper of the Ottoman press followed these events and informed its readers impartially as it is declared in its columns. The Armenian question and the news about the Armenians and their activities

from 1914 to 1918 were given place in *Ikdam*. The news of *Ikdam* in 1914 about the Armenians was impartial, there was not much interpretation about the activities of them, and only the events were given.

Before the Ottoman Empire entered the World War I in 1914, there was news about the social, economic, religious, political, cultural and economic life of the Armenians in each issue of *Ikdam* in 1914. It was shown that the Armenians played active role in the political life of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian parties and their struggles among themselves for the 1914 elections that were taken before the war started were given more places in *Ikdam*. However, this was not the same for the educational, social, economic and religious life, since there was not much news about them. As it is understood from the news, although there were many rebellions and harmful activities against the Empire, the Armenians continued their lives without any prevention from the Ottoman Empire.

During the war, most of the news in *Ikdam* was about the war and it was not given much attention for the daily life of the Armenians or other millets in the Empire. But in some of issues of the newspaper, it is seen that in a few news *Ikdam* interpreted the Armenian activities as harmful and criticized the oppressions of them to the Muslims. The news about the Armenian suppression to the Muslims, in *Ikdam* in 1915, was about the Van rebellion and the massacre of the Armenians to the Muslims there. Thus there was not so much news in *Ikdam* about the harmful activities of the Armenians during the war. This was because of censorship over the press and the occasional difficulties caused by communication.

In some news *Ikdam* tried to give relations of the Armenians with the Entente Powers during the war but the news about this subject was printed in 1918. The news of

Ikdam supported the idea that during the war the Armenians served for the Entente Powers' goal and cooperated with especially Russia in Eastern Anatolia to weaken the Ottoman military power. By supporting the Entente Powers, the Armenians wanted to reach their goals in Eastern Anatolia.

After the Armistice, the Armenian activities continued on Eastern Anatolia and killed many Muslims until the Turkish army came the region. *Ikdam* gave the news about the oppression of the Armenians to the Muslims and reacted the Western Powers that they did not give any reflection to these massacres of the Armenians to the Muslims in the region. *Ikdam* blamed the West since they gave strong reaction to the death of the Armenians as if the Armenians were killed consciously by the orders of the Ottoman government.

Although the relocation was an important event in 1915 and 1916, *Ikdam* did not write any news about this subject at that time. However, the new government was established after the war ended and there was not any restriction for the press for a while so the news about this event written and interpretations were made in *Ikdam* in 1918. In the news of *Ikdam* sometimes it was written that this decision was a necessity for the government and it had to do it, but in some other news, the CUP government was accused and it was strongly advocated that the oppressions to the Armenians were made by the persons and by some officials. There was news that these persons also made oppressions to the Turks. While there were officials who made oppression to the Armenians, there were the others who tried to protect them and for this lost their lives.

The news about these relocated Armenians was especially printed in 1918 after the Armistice. This news was about the government's decision of return for the Armenians.

After the returning decision was taken for the resettled Armenians, many of them did not return, some of them stayed where they were sent, some of them went to America, to Russia or to other European countries.

The new Ottoman government gave a special attention to the returning process in 1918 and *Ikdam* gave all kinds of decisions of government about this subject and news about how the process was followed. The claims of massacre increased at that time. *Ikdam*, also, refused these claims and said that all the Turks did not make those actions. This was seen as fault of the government.

Some statistics of Armenian newspapers were given in *Ikdam*, that were to prove the claims of massacre, but this was not accepted by *Ikdam* and it gave some other statistical information about the Armenians who were not majority in the six provinces of Anatolia and Cilicia region. The information of the Armenian newspapers was seen as a lie.

Ikdam, sometimes used the news of the Armenian newspapers especially those about the relocation process. With this, it tried to show the view of the Armenian about this subject at that time. While sometimes accepted their approaches to the subject, sometimes definitely opposed the news of the Armenian newspapers.

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