

«THE OTHERS» IN POLITICS DURING THE ERA OF THE YOUNG TURKS: OTTOMAN GREEKS IN THE PARLIAMENT (1908-1918)

«LOS OTROS» EN LA POLÍTICA DURANTE LA ERA DE LOS JÓVENES TURCOS: LOS GRIEGOS OTOMANOS EN EL PARLAMENTO (1908-1918)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role and the discourses of the Ottoman Greeks in the parliament during the Young Turks' rule between 1908 and 1918. In this way, it attempts to contribute to the knowledge about the newly established so-called constitutional order in the Ottoman Empire, the parliament and its impact over the socio-political fluctuations which mostly affected the non-Muslims. In order to do it, this work focuses on the speeches, discourses and topics of discussion which were brought to the agenda by the Ottoman Greeks in the parliament. The research is formed upon the parliamentary minutes as well as both Ottoman Turkish and Greek newspapers of the related period. The examination of these sources allows us to conclude that the efforts of the Young Turks for bringing equality, freedom and justice in fact created a reverse effect and further deepened the gap between the Greeks and the Turks; difference in the interpretations of the terms propagated by the Young Turks such as equality, freedom and Ottomanness as a uniting identity, contrary to expectations, accelerated the disintegration of the Empire.

Keywords

Second Constitutional Period; Young Turks; Parliament; Constitution; Ottoman Greeks

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza el papel y los discursos de los griegos otomanos en el parlamento durante el gobierno de los Jóvenes Turcos entre 1908 y 1918. Con ello, intenta contribuir al conocimiento sobre el apodado orden constitucional recién establecido en el Imperio Otomano, el parlamento y su impacto sobre las fluctuaciones sociopolíticas que afectaron principalmente a los no musulmanes. Para ello, este trabajo se centra en los discursos y temas de discusión que fueron traídos a la agenda por los griegos otomanos en el parlamento. La investigación se basa en las actas parlamentarias y los periódicos turco-otomanos y griegos del periodo relacionado. El examen de estas fuentes nos permite llegar al que los esfuerzos de los Jóvenes Turcos por lograr la igualdad, la libertad y la justicia crearon de hecho efecto inverso y profundizaron aún más la brecha entre los griegos y los turcos; la diferencia en las interpretaciones de los términos propagados por los Jóvenes Turcos como igualdad, libertad y otomanidad como identidad unificadora, contrariamente a las expectativas, aceleró la desintegración del Imperio.

Palabras clave

Segundo Periodo Constitucional; Jóvenes Turcos; Parlamento; Constitución; Griegos Otomanos

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1. INTRODUCTION

The last century of the Ottoman Empire witnessed extraordinary transformations along with territorial losses due to political instability, military frailty and government's socio-political and socio-economic actions taken to overcome what came to be perceived as «lagging behind» the other great powers. One of the major changes in the Empire's history was the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 and subsequent transition to constitutional monarchy. It was not the first constitutional experience of the Empire. The 1876 constitution, suspended by sultan Abdulhamid II in 1878, was re-instated, the parliament was re-opened, the long-lasting censorship was lifted and slogans such as equality, fraternity, justice and a common Ottoman identity for all (the so-called Ottomanism) brought a significant relief to non-Muslim communities. Ottomanism was an umbrella ideology which aimed at bringing all the subjects together regardless of their ethno-religious origin. «Ottomanness», thus, would be the supra-identity of every subject but their ethno-religious particularities and certain autonomy that they had enjoyed for centuries, would also be protected by law. However, this euphoria did not last long; beginning with the first elections in 1908, it became clear that equality, justice, fraternity and above all, Ottomanism carried different connotations for the Turks (or more exactly- Turkish-speaking Ottoman Muslims), on the one hand, and the Greeks, on the other, which could be best detected in their speeches in the parliament as well as in newspapers. Therefore analyzing not the incidents but the actors provides a fruitful ground to examine the features and actions of both groups, which displayed a great degree of internal diversity. This work is based basically on two phenomenas; discourse and practice which were leading to a dichotomy since they proved contradictory to each other. The discourse of the Young Turks evolved around the concepts such as equality, fraternity, justice and Ottomanism. The last one could be defined as an umbrella ideology to unite all the subjects of the Empire regardless of their ethno-religious origins to buy off the separatist peril which had been threatening the integrity of the Empire lately. A contradiction appeared; as in this equation, that of equality, fraternity, justice and Ottomanism, Turks were held as *primus inter pares*, organically dominant nation. This can be well observed in periodicals and newspapers of the time as well as in the parliamentary minutes despite the overtly emphasized and propagated principle of «equality». This contradiction between the discourse, the theory and the practice were well reflected in parliamentary sessions. In other words, identity (being Turk, being Ottoman, being Greek Orthodox etc.) played a determining role for politics and policies throughout this period. One must bear in mind that between the given dates (1908-1918) remarkable political developments such as Balkan Wars (1912-1913), The First World War (1914-1918) erupted and, during these wars the Parliament did not function properly. Therefore, the research mainly focuses on the most fruitful period 1908-1912 in the parliament and its

reflections on the press. The impact of the massacres of Armenians (1915) on the discourses of the Ottoman Greek deputies in the parliament in 1918 will be also mentioned, it being still a fresh discussion in Turkish politics.

Although many issues were discussed in the parliamentary sessions, in this work, I have identified the most remarkable themes for which Greek-Orthodox deputies raised voice frequently and with great urgency: equal opportunity for employment in state posts, privileges granted to the Greek-Orthodox community, conscription and the Armenian Genocide. Those issues created fervent arguments both on the Turkish and the Greek-Orthodox side and were a proof of the conflict between discourse and practice reigned throughout the Young Turk period.

Language and religion, in both Turkish and Greek-Orthodox case, appear as two bulks of the identity as well as nationalist tendencies. The consciousness of the «imagined communities»² was raised through the *millet* structure which was thoroughly based on religion and subsequently on language. Nationalism among these groups, as a result, emerged leaning on religion and language. This work, though it was not mainly conducted on the concept of nationalism, consider these two aspects as contingencies of their nationalist inclinations which were analyzed appropriately in the works of Anthony Smith and Liah Greenfeld. Smith holds the religion as one of the contingents of nationalism; the interaction between them is determined on the basis of how religion is identified. Nationalism, according to him, is a secular phenomena; it instrumentalizes religion only for political gains and mobilization of the masses³, which was the case for the CUP and Turkish nationalism.

Liah Greenfeld, on the other hand, claims that the correlation between the nationalist and religious sentiments are not bound to be positive; nationalism could emerge when the religious tendencies are intense. Nationalism is the pioneer of this relationship; if religion occupies a crucial place in a nationalist movement, it is only because nationalism utters religion as a tool. Nationalist inclinations could emerge within the religious environment but its crux is never shaped by its circumstances.⁴ This exactly explains both Greek and Turkish nationalisms; the former founded an independent state utilizing from Orthodoxy as claiming Greeks as «natural, historical wardens» of religion by resisting Patriarchate in Istanbul while the latter allowed Islam to justify their «secular» policies by using it as a bounding, overwhelming, ultimate criteria.

Most of the works focus on the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1920), which also sheds light on the previous situation of minorities, particularly the Greek

2. Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York, Verso, 2016, (kindle version).

3. Smith, Anthony: «The 'Sacred' Dimension of Nationalism», *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29/3 (2000), pp. 791-814.

4. Greenfeld, Liah: «The Modern Religion?», *Critical Review*, 10 (1996), p. 176.

Orthodox. Şükrü Hanioğlu⁵ and Eric Jan Zürcher⁶, in their respective works, talk about the syncretism in the affiliations of the Young Turks that was reflected in their political vocabulary. It is difficult to explain, for example, how they could combine their adherence to Darwinian theory as a guide to understanding social life, and Gustave LeBon's theories on crowd psychology⁷, with the motto «liberty, equality, and fraternity.»⁸ This motto was used as a powerful weapon against the Sultan's regime and also «as a device to win over various Ottoman ethnic groups to the cause of Ottomanism.»⁹ It also refers to the militaristic structure of the Young Turks. The role of the army in social and political life was a long-standing tradition in the Empire, so this transition did not encounter many impediments. Regarding identity and nationalism, it is important to analyze the discourse of the CUP. Hanioğlu detects that until 1907, Young Turk propaganda was predominantly Turkish, which was well seen in the publications of the time when the Turkish term was replaced by the Ottoman one. However, for practical reasons, they were able to cover up their Turkish ideology, which earned them support from non-Muslim groups as well.¹⁰

Zafer Toprak and Aykut Kansu studied in depth the economic and judicial dimensions of the Turkish perspective of the CUP, respectively. According to Toprak, from the beginning, the CUP tried to create a «national economy» by using violence against prosperous non-Muslim communities.¹¹ They succeeded in imposing their policy of modernization and paving the way for reforms that would be systematized and consolidated by the Kemalist regime. Similarly, Kansu and Faroz Ahmad emphasize that this period is an essential struggle of the political characteristic of Turkey.¹² He also states that during the Hamidian period, politics as a public enterprise was restricted to the Court and was deprived of power. Any established mechanism, such as a parliament, could operate as a medium between this imperial milieu and the population. Therefore, the policy was aligned with the public and the agents involved were not accountable to the propertied classes.¹³

On the other hand, Thanos Veremis approaches the period from a different angle; he states that the Turkish military, who had imposed themselves on the movement, were not interested in political freedoms or in decentralization plans

5. Hanioğlu, Şükrü: *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 35.

6. Zürcher, Eric Jan: *Turkey: A Modern History*, London, I. B. Tauris, 2004.

7. According to him, individuals' differences who form the «crowd» are melted in a single pot; indeed, all the individual skills and gains are erased within the crowd, which becomes a community showing identical characteristics. During this interaction, individuals undertake many features which do not belong to him/her. This crowd, on the other hand, also encourages the individual to cease to repress his/her motivational behaviours by leaning on the crowd itself.

8. Hanioğlu, Şükrü, *op. cit.*

9. *Ibidem.*, p. 292.

10. *Ibidem.*, p. 295.

11. Toprak, Zafer: *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat 1908–1918*, Ankara, Yurt Yayınları, 1982.

12. Kansu, Aykut: *Politics in Post Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-1913*, Leiden, Brill, 2000.

13. *Ibidem.*, p. 3.

and the free development of ethnic groups, but rather in preserving the integrity of the Empire and the privileges of the race Turkish ruler over the other ethnic groups.¹⁴ From the perspective of the Greeks, Caterina Boura successfully deconstructs the stereotype of national unanimity against the Revolution, which had been perpetuated mainly by the protagonists themselves. He points out that many Greeks collaborated with the unionists, thus demonstrating their willingness to participate as Ottoman citizens in the creation of the state that the Young Turks envisioned.¹⁵

In a different way, Sia Anagnostopoulou considers that neither Turkish nor Greek nationalism constitutes the main element of the politics of the parties involved, from the beginning. On the contrary, she considers it necessary to trace the field of mutual reinforcement of all the nationalisms that develop during this period and mainly of the legitimation mechanisms.¹⁶ According to her, the problem of identity formation is dealt with through the interrelation of heterodoxies that are built simultaneously. At the same time, the author gives at least two elements of the Revolution, which she therefore uses as key notions to understand the attitudes and conflicts within the Greek Orthodox community. These elements are: i) the gradual development of a radical modernization and ii) the restructuring of the social platform «from above», due to the alliance of the state elites with certain elites of the «social periphery».¹⁷

From a sociological view, Peter W. Preston offers an enriching point identifying three distinguishing elements in identity, namely the notions of place, network and memory constitute the way in which we more or less consciously locate ourselves within a particular medium that becomes the sphere of public interaction and is richly invested with meanings.¹⁸ It does not express an essence but rather a set of acquired characteristics. In terms of location, the focus is on how individuals interpret their position within the place they inhabit and how they consider the relationship of this locality with the outside world. In network terms, the goal is to understand how individuals are housed in dispersed groups and how these groups develop their contact with other groups within the larger collectivity.

Umut Uzer and Stefano Taglia, in their works, shed light on the intellectual dimension of the Turkish nationalist tendencies of the CUP. Uzer's analysis is based on the interaction of thoughts and historical events by identifying both streams within the Turkish nationalism, such as pan-Turkism, Turan *et cetera* and

14. Veremis, Thanos: «From the National State to the Stateless Nation, 1821-1910», in Blinckhorn, Martin & Veremis, Thanos (eds.): *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens, SAGE-ELIAMEP, 1990, pp. 9-22; Boura, Caterina: «The Greek Millet in Turkish Politics: Greeks in the Ottoman Parliament», in Gondicas, Dimitri & Issawi, Charles (eds.): *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism*, New Jersey, Princeton, The Darwin Press, 1999.

15. *Idem*.

16. Anagnostopoulou, Sia: «The terms Millet, Génos, Ethnos, Oikoumenikotita, alytrotismos in Greek Historiography», in Anagnostopoulou, Sia: *The Passage from the Ottoman Empire to the nation-states, a long and difficult process: The Greek case*, Analecta Ilisiana, LXXIII, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2004, pp. 37-55.

17. *Ibidem.*, p. 42.

18. Preston, Peter, W.: *Political/cultural identity, Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, London, SAGE, 1997.

the pioneering intellectuals such as Yusuf Akçura, Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin through the ideals of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkey.¹⁹ They, despite their distinctive characteristics, raised Turkish nationalism, whether or not utilized from the religion. Taglia, on the other hand, based his work mostly on the intellectuals within the CUP itself such as Ahmed Rıza, who was a fervent positivist, social Darwinist Turkish nationalist, Mehmed Sabahaddin (or as known, Prince Sabahaddin) who was a liberal, and who later founded a separate group, Ottoman Liberals' Party (Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası).²⁰ Both studies offer a better understanding for the ideological background of CUP's actions and policies towards non-Muslim groups within the Empire.

All the mentioned works undoubtedly contributed to the profound analysis of the millets and their relationship with the state. However, the equation of majority versus minority has been formulated as the majority is the powerful while the minority is the only the victim of the majority's policies which is not accurate. What is strength? In what sense can a state assumed as powerful? In the case of the Ottoman Greeks and the CUP, the power was shared in different aspects: the first group, using their economic and cultural «superiority» by victimizing themselves consistently asked for more political rights since they were feeling politically inferior despite their economic and cultural advance. The group who dominated the state mechanism, the CUP claimed the political and military power while remained culturally, economically and even socially fragile which caused further repression and even segregation. In this sense, it would be more adequate to describe the Turkish and the «others» as central and centrifugal ethno-religious groups rather than majority and minority, which to some extent gives a *de facto* justification to the majority for its discriminative policies.

The equation of «majority and minority», on the other hand could be considered among the Christian «centrifugal groups» themselves. Greeks were the «majority» among the «minorities.» In fact, they were quite in competition with the Armenians, since the latter was favored by the state as «loyal nation» (*Millet-i Sadıka*) and were overwhelmingly preferred over others for the state posts due to the fact that by that time, they were not representing an explicit, a direct threat to the state while Greeks, who had declared their independence from the Empire in 1829, along with the Armenians' competence with Turkish; comparing to them, Greeks had a rather poor command of the state's official language. However, as it will be discussed in the upcoming chapters, after the Armenian massacre in 1915 and deportation of both Greeks and Armenians paved the way for solidarity between the «downtroddens».

19. Uzer, Umut: *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*, Salt Lake City, The University of Utah Press, 2016.

20. Taglia, Stefano: *Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire: the Young Turks on the challenges of modernity*, London and New York, Routledge, 2015.

2. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD (I. MESRUTİYET) AND THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT (MECLİS-I MEBUSAN) (1876-1878)

Even though the 1908 Parliament may be approached as a key step towards 20th century-modernization in the Ottoman Empire, the constitutional monarchy had been established for the first time in 1876. What these two constitutional monarchy initiatives had in common lies in their purpose: save the Empire from downfall through Ottomanism, seen as a way of de-legitimising and preventing²¹ independentist uprisings. Modernization, often inspired by European models, of state institutions directed government action since the Tanzimat reforms in the 1830s-1850s. This modernization, in fact had already been taken into consideration even before the Tanzimat period. Defeats in the wars and territorial losses²² as a result forced the state to acknowledge the need for reform. In this sense, following the developments in Europe became a «foreign» policy of the Empire; the committees as well as competent individuals such as Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi²³ were sent to several European capitals to detect the innovations and developments which could also be implemented to the Empire. Thus, the idea of «change» had started to root. Even though the first steps of reform were taken in navy and printing²⁴, most of the changes were introduced in the field of military before the Tanzimat.²⁵ Two aspects, religion (namely Islamic rules, sharia) and politics (mainly the sultanate) were decisive in the designation of reforms; introducing military innovations were not seen perilous to those areas. Widening such reforms into socio-cultural domain would impose a great risk to status-quo. In other words, the Ottoman Empire intended to catch up with the modern Western trends while preserving its traditional socio-political and socio-cultural structure which caused, at least in the pre-Tanzimat period, a delay in the adoption of modern state structure and institutions in addition to an inconsistency between modernizing and non-modernizing premises. Despite the

21. The term was coined by the Young Ottomans before the First Constitutional Era under the influence of French Revolution and Rousseau. It aimed to unite all millets under one single «Ottoman» identity regardless of their ethno-religious origins which would bring equality thus jettison the nationalist revolts among non-Muslim communities. It did not mean assimilation; rather it was holding Muslims and non-Muslims alike before the law preserving their linguistic and religious freedom.

22. Especially after the Treaty of Karlowitz, which was signed between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire in 1699 and the Treaty of Passarowitz, which was signed between Austria and the Ottoman Empire in 1718, frailty of the latter was admitted as a fact in the state level as well since they signified the first territorial loses and the loss of the Ottoman control over the central Europe.

23. He was sent to France to «visit the fortresses, factories, and the works of French civilization generally and report on those which might be applicable in Turkey». Quoted in Berkes, Niyazi: *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, London, Hurst&Company, 1998, p. 33.

24. For more information, Berkes, Niyazi: *op.cit.*, Lewis, Bernard: *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001.

25. Lewis, Bernard, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-48.

fact that Selim III took the initiative to implement such reforms, he lacked both the authority and valour for more comprehensive changes.

The path which led to the Tanzimat was paved by Mahmud II in the early 19th century. What distinguished him from his predecessors was his rejection of reforms oriented on only one single area. Since he was aware of the inconsistency between old and new institutions would further damage the state mechanism, he was favoring a total reformation. His progressive initiatives in educational, military and administrative fields lit the beacon for more systematic renovations. Moreover, throughout the 19th century, the heterogeneity of the Empire had been acknowledged at the state level as a fact. The non-Muslim communities began to undergo a process of national «awakening» and thus to pose a threat for the unity of the Empire. Therefore, by respective promulgation of 1839 Imperial Edict of Gülhane (*Tanzimat Fermanı*), of 1856 Edict of Reform (*Islahat Fermanı*) and finally of 1876, the first constitution, The Ottoman Basic Law (*Kanun-ı Esasi*)²⁶, all the Ottoman subjects were declared equal on the basis of rights under the guidon of Ottomanism. Offering Ottomanism as a secular ideology was assumed as the most possible treatment for the ills of the Empire. However, these developments were met with unrest among the Ottoman elites and led to the revolt of a group called Young Ottomans (*Genç Osmanlılar*). They favored a mixture of Islam with Western modernity while rejecting the centralist tendencies of the edicts. As educated bureaucrats, they could achieve to be appointed to official posts and had a considerable impact over the draft of 1876 constitution and further inspired the Young Turk movement.

The legacy of the French Revolution on the increase in demands of constitution and parliamentary system needs to be taken into consideration. The Young Ottoman Movement under the leadership of Namık Kemal, Şinasi, Ziya Paşa and Ali Suavi played an outstanding role concerning the necessity of parliamentary system and constitutional order. Those intellectuals, using the press in an effective manner, introduced many political concepts to people that had originated in the West, such as republic (*cumhuriyet*) and parliament (*meclis*), and combined them with important concepts from Islamic tradition, such as justice (*adalet*) and «consultation» (*meşveret*). The mobilization of these concepts in their press

26. Both Edicts were the outcome of efforts of reform within the Empire. The Edict of Gülhane, for the first time introduced equality for all the subjects regardless of their ethno-religious origins. Moreover, it was the most principal attempt to institutionalization since it drafted the establishments of new judicial organs, dividing secular and religious giving a narrow space to the latter. The Edict of Reform was kind of an extension of the former, which focused on the rights of minorities to prevent a further intervention of the foreign powers for the sake of non-Muslim *millets*. The incidents prior to the declaration of the Ottoman Basic Law helped accelerate the process; by that time, the Empire was threatened both by the chaos in Balkans and Russia. When Serbia and Montenegro declared war against the Empire, Russia intervened to force the Sublime Porte for negotiation. This interference of Russia triggered Western Powers to get involved as well and they proposed a conference to convene in Istanbul. In the very same day as the conference, as a political manoeuvre to demonstrate its «keen efforts» for progress, the Basic Law was declared.

organ *Hürriyet*²⁷ is a proof of their resolute attitude towards setting the order they aimed at.

Ali Suavi is the first among the intellectuals who uttered the term «democracy» (*demokrasi*). In an article published in the newspaper *Ulûm* (titled as «Democracy, Rule of People, Equality» (*Demokrasi, Hükümet-i Halk, Müsavat*), he discussed whether or not the Ottoman Empire's structure was compatible with the democracy.²⁸ The Young Ottomans, therefore, could be considered among the first Ottoman Muslims who laid the ground for the formation of state of law, consecration of democracy, the construction of the parliament and even the establishment of the republic.

The Young Ottomans spearheaded the drafting of *Kanun-ı Esasi*, the first Constitution of the Empire which was also the result of a variety of internal and external incidents. The acceleration of the developments stemmed from the dominant position of Midhat Pasha²⁹, who was a reformist government official and statesman right after the dethronement of Abdulaziz in 1876. His successor Murad V could not have the new constitution drafted and he too was dethroned afterwards. He was replaced by Abdulhamid II who was considered as close to the idea of constitutionalism, in the same year. Reconciliation of Midhat Pasha and Abdulhamid II paved the way for the first constitution of the Empire, *Kanun-ı Esasi*. On 30 September 1876, through an imperial decree, a special commission (*Meclis-i Mahsusa*) was established for the formation of the constitution.³⁰ After several alterations introduced by Abdulhamid II, *Kanun-ı Esasi* was enunciated on 23 December 1876.³¹ As analyzed the press of that time, loyalty of the Sultan to constitutionalism and significance of the *Kanun-ı Esasi* for the Empire created an outstanding euphoria.³² After the declaration of the constitution, Muslims and

27. The press organ of the Young Ottomans in Europe which had been published between the years of 1868-1870.

28. Çelik, Hüseyin: *Yeni Osmanlılar Cemiyeti ve Türkiye'de Parlamenter Sistem Tartışmalarının Başlaması*, Ankara, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999, p. 347.

29. Midhat Pasha was a man of great importance, who served as Grand Vizier twice besides governing Niş, Danube y Baghdad. He played the most considerable role in preparation and implementation of constitution in the Empire as well as in the introduction of the First Constitutional Period in 1876. He was a fervent supporter of reforms in the period of Abdulaziz (1861-1876). He led the dethronement of Abdulaziz and his successor, Murad V and enthronment of Abdulhamid II.

30. Tunaya, Tarık Zafer: «1876 Kanun-ı Esasi ve Türkiye'de Anayasa Geleneği», *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi 1*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1985, pp. 27-45.

31. Gözübüyük, Şeref & Kili, Suna: *Türk Anayasa Metinleri, 1839-1980*, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982, pp. 1-7.

32. The newspapers *Sabah* (28/12/1876) and *Ceride-i Havadis* (29/12/1876) describe the celebrations as such: The day of the ceremony was rainy. In the Square of the Sublime Porte, there was located a special rostrum garnished with Ottoman flags in front of «Hünkâr Dairesi». Because of the rain, there was put a tent for notables. Thousands of people filled the large street extending from Sirkeci Port to the Sublime Porte. The soldiers were alined on each side of the street with the brass band and everyone was waiting for the Midhat Pasha with a great joy. The Grand Vizier, with the principal clerk Sait Pasha behind, despite carrying the imperial decree as well as the constitution, arrived at Sirkeci Port from the sea, welcomed by the brass band and went to the Sublime Porte. Here, Said Pasha took out the imperial decree, kissed and passed to the Grand Vizier. Similarly, Midhat Pasha gave the decree to Mahmud Celaleddin Bey who read it out loud and clear in a very respectful tone. Once the reading was over, the people there applauded.

non-Muslims came together to celebrate and in those events the speeches were given in Turkish, Greek and Armenian.³³

Immunity of the Sultan is indicated in the Article 5. In the constitution, liberty of expression, right to association and congregate were not articulated; however, the most radical novelty introduced was the right of political participation despite its narrow implementation. Through the constitution, the Sultan lost his absolute authority and the people were given the right to participate in the state administration.³⁴

Kanun-ı Esasi was required to be accompanied by the foundation of the parliament and the organization of the elections. The constitution was forming a legislative organ of two parliamentary bodies which was referred as «Common Parliament» (*Meclis-i Umumi*). The members of the one of the parliaments, the Chamber of Notables (*Heyet-i Ayan*) were directly appointed by the Sultan while the members of the Chamber of Deputies (*Heyet-i Mebusan*) were to be elected by the male Ottoman population. Besides, male constituents were only to elect the second electors who would elect the deputies themselves.

However, the first constitutional experience of the Empire was shortlived. Abdulhamid II exercised the rights ensured to him by the constitution and took the first opportunity to suspend it. Firstly, the war erupted in 1877 between the Ottoman Empire and Russia (*'93 Harbi*) impeded the function of the parliament. The defeat of the Ottoman army along with the Russian threat in Istanbul resulted in Edirne Treaty in 31 January 1878. On 13 February 1878, the Sultan, based on the Article 113³⁵ of the Constitution suspended the parliament for an indefinite period of time and sent Midhat Pasha to exile. Despite its short period of execution, the constitution of 1876 still was of a major importance since it contextualized the rights of the Ottoman non-Muslims. There are five particular articles needed to be considered in this respect; article 8 declares that all the subjects were equal regardless of their ethno-religious orientation; article 42 determines the structure of the Parliament in two chambers, «Chamber of Notables» (*Meclis-i Ayan*) and «Chamber of Deputies» (*Meclis-i Mebusan*). Articles 65, 69 and 71 mainly formulates how the elections would be conducted, the length of incumbency and conditions to be elected as deputy; each deputy was to be elected by fifty thousand males for a period of four years who would represent not only his precinct but the entire country.

33. Devareux, Robert: *The First Constitutional Period A Study Of The Mithat: Constitution And Parliament*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1983, p. 15.

34. *Ibidem*, pp. 80-85.

35. «Expelling and dismissing the ones from the soils under the reign of the Sultan whose violation of the security of the government was proven by the investigation of security forces falls within the authorities of the Sultan». (*Hükümetin emniyetini ihlal ettikleri idare-i zabitanın tahkikat-i mevsukası üzerine sabit olanları memalik-i mahruse-i şahanedan ihraç ve teb'id etmek münhasıran zat-ı hazret-i padişahinin yed-i iktidarındadır.*)

3. THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD (II. MESRUTİYET) AND THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT (1908-1918)

The autocratic rule of Abdulhamid II deeply disappointed the constitutionalist intellectuals. Besides the oppression, loss of territories and escalation of the nationalist movements among the minority groups within the Empire brought those intellectuals together against the Sultan. In order to transform the despotic rule into constitutionalist one, four students of medicine, Ibrahim Temo of Ohri (*Ohrili İbrahim Temo*), İshak Sükûti of Diyarbakir (*Diyarbakırlı İshak Sükûti*), Abdullah Cevdet of Arapkir (*Arapkirli Abdullah Cevdet*), Mehmet Reşit of Caucasia (*Kafkasyalı Mehmet Reşit*) assembled and formed a clandestine organization, Association of Ottoman Union (*İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*) on 1 May 1889.³⁶

Although the Sultan was informed about the Association in 1892 and had several of its members arrested, swift release of the arrestees shows that the Palace was not regarding this formation of importance. Organizational purpose of the Association was to increase its sphere of influence so that on 27 September 1907, it officially united with a revolutionary, Salonica based organization, League of Ottoman Liberty (*Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti*) which was mainly composed of military based individuals. After this union, the name of the latter had been changed and became Committee of Ottoman Union and Progress (*Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). As a result of this union, the Committee gained a militaristic structure apart from the political one.

The dynamic components of the Second Constitutional Period emerged in Rumelia where various ethno-religious groups were living together. After Reval meetings³⁷, a force of two thousand entered Monastir. Once the authority was consolidated, the Monastir branch of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) declared liberal constitutionalism. In the same evening, through an imperial decree (*irade-i seniyye*), the Sultan was obliged to approve it. All the millets³⁸ of the Empire, Turks, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Albanians, Jews, Vlachs joined the celebration with an outstanding enthusiasm. Fraternity, equality, justice, constitution were the common slogans uttered by people. «Hail the Fatherland!», «Hail the Army», «Hail the Committee of Union and Progress», «Hail the Equality,

36. For further information about the Committee, see Ahmad, Feroz: *İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914*, İstanbul, Kaynak Yayınları, 2007; Çavdar, Tevfik: *İttihat ve Terakki*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınevi, 1994; Mardin, Şerif: *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınevi, 2003.

37. Reval Meetings were held in 1908 between the King Edward VII of England and Tsar Nikolay II of Russian Empire in Reval. It was organized due to Russia's stake out a claim over India which was by then a colony of Great Britain and the Great Britain's demands over Crete. Comissions of each party reconciled upon the further weakening of the Ottoman Empire and boosting the pressure for the declaration of constitutional monarchy.

38. The self-governing ethno-religious groups were called as *millet* in the Ottoman Empire. The millet system was first established in the reign of Mehmed II (Mehmed the Conquerer) in order to keep them under the state control.

Fraternity, Liberty» were continuously called out. In the newspaper *İkdam*, the atmosphere of Istanbul was portrayed as such:

Yesterday, Christian schools and families garnished the boats of number 33, 48, 51, 19 of *Şirket-i Hayriye* with Ottoman victory flags and laurel branches. As the boats arrived at piers, the brass band was performing the Hamidian Anthem (*Marş-ı Hamidi*) and consecutively was heard the hues «Long Live the Sultan!». The mentioned boats cruised each and every part of Bosphorus and destined to Beykoz.»³⁹

«Equality, Justice, Fraternity, Liberty». The Young Turks ended the autocratic rule of Abdulhamid II with the motivation behind this discourse. Their purpose was not to abolish monarchy but to transform it into a constitutional on the basis of state of law. Parliamentary democracy and an efficient administrative structure were of great importance; the former was to have a symbiotic relationship with the government whilst the latter would represent a meritocratic administration.⁴⁰ Parliamentary democracy would entail a system of political parties as the backbone of popular participation in decision-making and governing processes which meant decrediting the *ulema*⁴¹ and notables. Ideologically, they were motivated by the fervent rejection of foreign intervention and in order for a total prevention, the minorities, non-Muslims millets were to be won. As a result, the Young Turks clung to Ottomanism and underlined the Ottoman identity regardless of ethno-religious origins. Besides, the freedoms violated throughout the Hamidian regime were promised although it was not fulfilled properly.

To some extent, the Young Turks resembled their antecedents, the Young Ottomans. Young Turks too were after how to save the Empire from downfall so that they saw themselves as the sole saviours of the state. They were rather conservative than liberal as it was perceived commonly. As it is slightly mentioned above, their aim was not a total change in the structure; they were to revise and reform what it had long been existed. Despite the fact that the Young Turks were profoundly influenced by the French Revolution, they did not undertake such a radical revolutionary mission to change the absolutism for a republic. It would not be inappropriate to say that they were to re-implement the policies drafted in 1876. What was the most novel and influential for the further Turkish politics that the Young Turks brought about was the rule of one-party.⁴² The CUP was holding a great control over the Sultan, military, bureaucracy and parliament;

39. «Hıristiyan mektepleri ve aileleri dünkü gün Şirket-i Hayriyenin 33, 48, 51, 19 numaralı vapurların her taraflarını defne dalları ve zafer sancakları ayid-i Osmani ile süslemişlerdir. Vapurlar iskelelere vardıklarında mızıkta tarafından Marş-ı Hamidi terennümsaz olmakta ve onu ve onu müteakip «Padişahım çok yaşa» sadaları işitilmekte idi. Mezkur vapurlar Boğaziçinin her tarafını dolaşarak Beykoz'a gitmişlerdir.» *İkdam*, 27/07/1908.

40. Hanioglu, Şükrü: *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 150.

41. It refers basically to a class which was comprised of scholars major in Islamic doctrine and sharia.

42. *Idem*, p. 151.

restricting the authority of the Sultan, it turned out to represent what it pledged to overthrow: the autocracy.

Regarding the elections, theoretically, the males who were more than 25-year of age and paying taxes could vote. For being a deputy, at least 30 year of age as well as competency with Turkish were necessitated. The municipal administrations would determine the candidates and make a list of those; among them one would be elected by 500 voters as representative. The ones who would go to the Chamber of Deputies would be elected by each 50,000 voters. Basically, the uneven number of deputies was ordinary since it was shaped in accordance with the size of the population.⁴³

This kind of wide scale representation system was the main source of conflict between the CUP and other millets, Greek-Orthodox in particular. Several associations which had nationalistic tendencies within the Greek-Orthodox community raised their voice against this electoral system since the minorities would be underrepresented while the Turkish Muslims were to have majority of the seats of the parliament. As it was seen in the newspaper *Sabah*, they requested quotas for millets and they even had the intention to boycott the elections.⁴⁴ In the elections, however, in spite of the lack of quotas, each millet obtained a just portion of representation.

Again, this nationalist associations fervently rejected to deal with the CUP and its policies. They desired to preserve what they had and protested against the CUP's authority. Even though the CUP tried to solve it through the efforts of convincing, it did not work out and the leading figures of the Committee remained motionless against the formation of political parties and such organizations. As a result, many political parties sprang out from a wide range of ideologies varying from that of religious to liberal. Yet, neither of them was capable to compete with the CUP in the political level and thus they were inclined to form a dissident group together. Paradoxically, the authority of the one single party within a multiphonic political structure in the end harmed most the parliamentary regime which was the principal motivation of the CUP. The dissidence caused paranoia in the Committee which led to a more oppressive way of rule.

The election of deputies would be carried out according to «Law of the Election of Deputies» (*İntihab-ı Mebusan Kanunu*) which was drafted in the First Constitutional Period but it was not enacted. To that law, deputies would be elected for

43. *Ibidem*.

44. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Rumların Programı», *Tanin*, 03/09/1908.

four-year period. The annual meetings of the Chamber of Deputies would initiate in November and finish in March.^{45 46}

3.1. POLITICAL LIFE UNDER THE CUP REGIME

Structure and ideology of the CUP, in the post-revolution period hovered blurry. Even though it was on the way to turn into a popular political party, it preserved its clandestine features and averted to spearhead an autocratic, Hamidian-like rule.

As their antecedents, the CUP undertook a mission to maintain ethno-religious diversity of the Empire by coalescing all subjects under the banner of Ottomanism. However, the Committee did not bring an appealing liberal atmosphere to draw all subjects into the process of reform. Moreover, with explicitly a Turkist tendency within the circles of the Committee, non-Turkish of the Empire could not be appealed. In the early twentieth century, the main concern of administrators was nationalist and even separatist uprisings escalated in the periphery. In order to get rid of such a threat, the Committee embraced a more inclusive path. Adopting Ottomanism and disregarding ethno-religious origins for the membership, there occurred an overtly heterogeneous and even conflicting structure within the CUP; the branches began to belie and the central committee remained weak in taking the control.

Regarding the developments and policies conducted afterwards the revolution, it is clear that the rhetoric fell different with the practice of the CUP. In the first year of the CUP regime, the purpose was to narrow the sphere of authority of the Sultan by laws but subsequently they admitted that a Sultan whose role would be secondary to that of the CUP could be authorized as an approval body for the policies of the Committee so that it would serve to the good of the new political

45. Toprak, Zafer: «İlan-ı Hürriyetin 80. Yıldönümünde 1908 Seçimleri ve Mebus Hatıraları», *Tarih ve Toplum Dergisi*, (free additional piece) (1988), p. 6. In the First Legislative Term of the Second Constitutional Parliament, there were four legislative years. The First Period began when the Parliament was first opened on 17 December 1908. The First Legislative Year of the First Legislative Term lasted until 21 August 1909 and 140 sessions were assembled. The Second Legislative Year was conducted between 14 November 1909 and 28 June 1910 and 125 sessions were made. The Third Legislative Year was completed between 14 November 1910 and 3 June 1911 with 114 sessions in total. The Fourth Legislative Year started on 15 October 1911 and finished on 18 January 1912 by rescission of the Chamber of Deputies. In this last legislative year, 140 sessions were held. Gazel, Ali Ahmet: *Osmanlı Meclis-i Mebusanında Parlamenter Denetim*, Konya, Çizgi Kitapevi, 2007, p. 160. The Second Legislative Term of the parliament shortlived and finished with one legislative year. The Term started in 18 April 1912 finished on 5 August 1912 by the closure of the parliament for an indefinite time. The Third Legislative Term was composed of five Legislative Years. Besides, 47 meetings held between 14 May 1914 and 2 August 1914 were named as «Exceptional Meeting» (*İctima-ı Fevkalâde*). This term started in 14 December 1914 and finished in 13 November 1915. The second legislative year initiated in 14 November 1915 and finished in 13 March 1916 with 44 meetings. The third legislative year was opened in 14 November 1916 and ended in 31 March 1917. During this period, 63 meetings were organized. The fifth legislative year was inaugurated in 1 November 1917 and finished in 31 March 1918 with 79 meetings totally. The fifth legislative year came to end with the dissolution of the parliament in 21 December 1918. The last legislative term of the parliament commenced in 12 January 1920 and accomplished its duty in 18 March 1920. In 11 April 1920, the parliament was again dissolved.

46. Demir, Fevzi: *Osmanlı Devleti'nde II: Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-i Mebusan Seçimleri 1908-1914*, Ankara, İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2007, pp. 160-161. In the 1908 election, 281 deputies were elected, 151 of whom were Turks, 56 Arabs, 25 Albanians, 21 Greeks, 11 Armenians, 4 Bulgarians, 3 Serbians, 1 Vlah and 4 Jews.

system. The parliament, backbone of the new structure turned dysfunctional as well. Initially favored multiphonic structure of the parliament threatened the leading position of the CUP. Existence of a parliament brought about a sturdy legislative body which disturbed the Committee consequently. While they once had an anti-Hamidian political agenda, in practice they adopted neo-Hamidian policies; he too was afraid of the potential of the parliament for unsettling the power of the Sultan and further escalated the ethno-religious tension.

On the other hand, the army bore a considerable importance in politics in the post-1908 period. It had always been a powerful actor in politics in the Empire along with the ulema and since the CUP's high cadre was composed of army officers, it is not surprising that the army would again be a political force. Under the rule of the CUP, the armed forces became a beating stick to threaten any discourse criticizing the policies of the Committee. Undoubtedly, there were dissident voices raised against the reciprocal relationship between the army and the Committee but it brought no practical solution. Even in the parliament, the dissident deputies put forward several legislative bills to eradicate the domination of the army officers in politics but the CUP did not give up on its affiliation with the army until its dissolution. In fact, the CUP was perceiving the army as an organic part of the society which would be designated in a militaristic manner. The mentality of military-politics of the CUP is seen in one of the speeches given by a CUP leader: «The Ottoman Army and the CUP are built by the majority of the Ottoman nation and they are capable of decimating the supporters of tyranny at any time.»⁴⁷ As seen through the abovementioned developments, the conventional power structure of the Ottoman politics have been altered; the source of legitimacy for the state authority was replaced by «the people» and «the military ethic».⁴⁸

Leaning on the will of people had been the curtain covering the autocratic and even authoritarian rule of the CUP; therefore the Committee insisted on a functioning parliamentary system despite the fact that the parliament hindered the sphere of influence of the CUP just as it did for Abdulhamid II. Elitism, inspired by Gustave LeBon hence triggered political pragmatism of the Committee which recognized the symbolic power of the «will of people»⁴⁹. The Committee, on the other hand, knew the great power of the press to shape, create and manipulate the people's views and used it in an effective manner. Once they claimed the power, they immediately established organs in order to propagate their ideology and dominate the *vox populi*. Press along with the limitations put over the freedom of speech helped the CUP manipulate and form its own supporters among the literates.

47. «Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Osmanlı Ordusu», *Şura-yı Ümmet*, 18/10/1908 in Hanioglu, Şükrü, *op.cit.*, p. 164.

48. *Ibidem*, p. 165.

49. *Ibidem*, p. 163.

3.2. ETHNIC COMMUNITIES AND THE CUP

Just as the rest of the aspects of political life, the texture of the relationship between the government and the «millets» had altered in the post-revolutionary era. So to say, liberal atmosphere which marked the early years of the post-revolutionary period did not calm the unrest as it had been expected but further escalated it. Holding of being an Ottoman prior to any ethno-religious identity, conducting radical centralist policies and more importantly lifting all the privileges granted to non-Muslim groups as an extension of the principle of equality, unlike what had been aimed, resulted in more tension. With the advent of Turkification of «Ottomanism», being a Turkish and being an Ottoman started to be used interchangeably. Once the Turks along with Turkish customs and language re-defined as the dominant nation, non-Muslim groups stroked restless even more. In the distant parts of the Empire, the situation severed and non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups were hallucinated by the pledges of nationalist bands. Nationalism among non-Muslims, Greeks and Armenians in particular already existed while that of the Muslims were newly emerging after 1908 especially among Kurds, Albanians and Arabs. Evaluating the two sides of the equation, center and periphery, it is witnessed that the center was prone to perceive any particular demands coming from ethno-religious groups as the beacon of a separatist threat which triggered the Turkist tendencies within the CUP whereas the periphery, as a result, turned more radical and demanding that led to more adamant nationalist actions which subordinated Ottomanness and Ottomanism to their own ethno-religious identity. These nationalisms, however, were not widespread movements in the beginning; they were a clash remained between intellectuals of each party. Upper classes of *millets* (merchants, moneychangers, bankers etc.) did not support these separatist movements, at least until 1915.

The formulation of Ottomanism, in fact, was overtly similar in Abdulhamid II's and the CUP's rule. While Abdulhamid II forged upon the Muslim elements of the Empire, the latter devised the ideology granting the leading role to Turks. Videlicet, the religious ground of Ottomanism shifted to the Turkist one. Therefore, the ideology became the primitive, proto-nationalist phenomenon for the further development of Turkish nationalism which conceived the Turkish elements as the core of the Ottoman society and ignored the egalitarian supranational identity of Ottomanness offered by Ottomanism.⁵⁰

The relative liberal atmosphere was of use for the intellectuals and provided them with a wide variety of ways to propagate their opinions. Not only the intelligentsia but also lower-middle classes took an active part in the politicized texture of the new structure through boycotts and strikes. However, these socio-economic (and

50. *Ibidem*, p. 188.

even political) mobility was not conducted against the government but it was done as a reaction to foreign powers dominating the economic scene. The First World War made explicit the neo-Hamidian tendencies of the CUP regime; participation of the Empire in the war against the Entente forces put previously propagated terms such as Westernization and modernization into question. As a result, just as Abdulhamid II's practices, the CUP censored several newspapers and in the end laid the freedom of press aside. Since the war went to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire, the dosis of political pressure noticeably increased; manifestations were restricted, any kind of political associations were banned and anti-Westernism turned into the new political agency of the CUP.

The CUP era is commonly defined as a period introduced radical alterations in every aspect of the politics both internally and externally; however, this era could be better named as neo-Hamidian. Not the policies and politics but the features of the ruling class had been changed with the rule of the Young Turks. Whether functioned properly or not, political parties undertook the business of politics which transformed the nature and composition of the Ottoman ruling elite.⁵¹

The ambiguity in practices was almost the main characteristic of the CUP regime. Polishing Ottomanness as the supranational identity while prioritizing the Turkist tendencies was the most obvious example and proof of this fact. Even though the system was a modified continuation of the Hamidian regime, the ideological mentality of the CUP cadre was similar to that of Tanzimat. Just as they did, the CUP statesmen too tried to combine old and new and to combine all the contradictory phenomenons such as Ottomanism with Turkist tendencies, Islamist texture with secularized institutional structure⁵², maintaining the Sultan along with the rule of the Committee. This dualism and semi-modernization brought a disabled structure which inevitably was dragged into downfall in the end.

4. PRE- AND POST-ELECTION PERIOD IN 1908

When the Young Turks seized the power through a revolution in 1908, the constitutional monarchic system was re-established. Since the beginning, the CUP's aim was overtly dualistic; while they wanted the Ottomanism to spearhead the social, political and economic spheres on the basis of equality, in this equation Turks were to be held as «*primus inter pares*». This equality in principle and inequality in practice was best shown by Hüseyin Cahid, an Istanbul deputy of the CUP and the editor of the Ottoman, Unionist newspaper *Tanin*:

51. *Ibidem*, p. 200.

52. Indeed, the secularization of Islamist practices was more of a political move. Ulema class was of a great importance and it had a dominant voice in politics prior to the CUP era. The Committee tried to create its own novel ruling elite and it required the dismissal of this dilapidated actor from the politics.

Turks must hold the initiative to decide on the country's future. Yet, how could we build a compromise between this necessity and the principles declared in the recently-enacted constitution? If this constitutional structure envisaged a government empowered by the majority, so how could be preserved an element that did not hold a majority ruling the Empire?⁵³

The question of *Millet-i Hakime* (dominant nation) was also an issue to consider for Greeks which is reflected in the Greek newspapers as well. One of the newspapers that produces sparkling criticisms towards the CUP and resented it was *Proodos*.⁵⁴ In several volumes, they presented the Ottoman Greeks as victims, describing them «a group solely after their rights and defending their balanced representation in accordance with the population» while demonizing the CUP claiming that in the election process they worked against the Greeks. The newspaper went even further in its accusations alleging that they were not resorted to that much humiliation under the reign of Abdülhamid II. One last criticism was the accusation of political jealousy towards other non-Muslim communities. Ottoman Greeks were the ones who helped most the Young Turks for revolution but in return, Turks stood with others, referring to Armenians.

September 1908 in fact was the beginning for the inception and politicization of Turkish nationalism in the Empire. The term «Ottoman» was started to be used interchangeably with the term «Turkish» as a result of secularist tendencies and the desire for being *Millet-i Hakime*. Seeing the CUP as the saviour of the Empire was thus to see Turks as the leader and the saviour while alienating other national initiatives as «jeopardizing the unity of the country». In one of his columns, Hüseyin Cahid exemplified what is claimed above: «...even though our citizens of non-Muslim groups too participated in the CUP, the dominancy of the Turks within the committee facilitates to name its road map as that of the Turks.»⁵⁵

His words are of great importance since the *Tanin* was the voice of the CUP and he was a Unionist deputy to Istanbul. He was not hesitant to normalize inequality between Turks and other ethnic groups; he was favoring not the equality but the recognition of the superiority of the Turkish component. Besides being the *Millet-i Hakime*, being the decision-maker in the parliament was also crucial.⁵⁶ It must be pointed that the ultimate aim was not to found a Turkish nation-state; they planned to preserve the multinational structure of the Empire under the domination of Turkish millet which led to discrimination not only against the Ottoman Greeks but also against all non-Turkish communities.

53. Gözübüyük, Şeref & Kili, Suna: *op.cit.*, pp. 3-8.

54. It was a daily Ottoman Greek newspaper published in Istanbul between 1871-1912 and 1919 which was quiet dissident to the CUP. It was owned by Todoraki Mavragani Efendi. Yet it was a common practice to transfer the ownership of a journal or newspaper to another due mostly to financial questions so that until it ceased to publish, its editors had changed a variety of times.

55. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Osmanlı Terakki ve Ittihat Cemiyeti'nin Siyasi Programı», *Tanin*, 25/09/1908.

56. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Millet-i Hakime», *Tanin*, 07/11/1908.

After the elections, the parliament indeed had a multicolored structure. Unlike what is generally thought, the CUP did not participate in the elections as a political party but supported the candidates sympathetic to its political program regardless of ethno-religious orientations. Besides Unionists, there was Ottoman Freedom Party (*Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası*) under the leadership of Prince Sabahaddin who was in favor of economic liberalism and decentralization. This political formation also drew the non-Muslims who were suspicious about the centralist tendencies of the CUP.

Regarding the Ottoman Greeks' political position, «Society of Constantinople» considerably signified a great importance. It was founded by Athanassios Souliotis in Istanbul to resist the Bulgarian challenge imposed to Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. It was also to encounter the influences of cosmopolitanism inspired by France since it jeopardized the Greek national character of the Istanbulite Greeks. The July Revolution thus was seen as an opportunity to strengthen the bounds between the Turks and the Greeks: «...it brought a fraternal environment to...all the nations of the East and the liberties pledged should ease the Hellenism in the Empire in order to adopt a program through which the nations and the states of the East could collaborate.»⁵⁷

Why this organization is important is due to the fact that the Society of Constantinople, just like the CUP did not participate in the elections but disseminated its doctrines through *Politikos Syndesmos* in the elections as the political organ of the former.⁵⁸ Souliotis was well aware of the reaya⁵⁹ position of the non-Muslims as well as linguistic and religious differences yet he rather highlighted similarities between the Eastern peoples. After the elections which was supposedly corrupted by the CUP, he declared that they could not achieve to elect the deputies they were supposed to but they would not give up struggling to reject to be subordinated to Young Turks.

Analyzing the minutes of the parliament and the newspapers of the time, it could be observed that besides the question of proportional representation, Greeks' opposition in the parliament contrarily to the silence of Armenians as another non-Muslim group remained futile. This, undoubtedly led to a comparison between them that could be traced in the press. In *Proodos*, the Greek side was claiming that the CUP turned a blind eye to Greeks to favour the Armenians. In *Tanin*, the response was tough; the journal claimed that it is likely *Proodos* could be speaking on behalf of the Old Regime, since under the absolutism Greeks suffered the least whilst Turks and Armenians suffered to death.⁶⁰ The efforts to

57. Veremis, Thanos & Boura, Caterina: *Athanasios Souliotis-Nikolaidis, The Society of Constantinople*, Athens, Dodoni Press, 1984, pp. 45-50.

58. It was a secret organization established and based in Istanbul. It could be defined as the political branch of the Society of Constantinople.

59. The term was used for the non-Muslim millets in the pre-Tanzimat period, mainly before 1839.

60. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Rum Matbuatı», *Tanin*, 27/10/1908.

pit these two communities against each other continued in the columns of *Tanin* after the elections as well.⁶¹

As a result of the election, 24 Ottoman Greek deputies were elected to the parliament. Differently from the first parliamentary experience, the number of the deputies increased substantially and all the Ottoman regions were represented in the parliament. However, in the numbers of the deputies belonging to distinct communities of the Ottoman Empire cannot be seen a proportional representation. The distribution of the deputies considering the each ethno-religious community was as such: 147 Turks, 60 Arabs, 27 Albanians, 24 Greeks, 14 Armenians, 10 Slavs and 4 Jews.⁶² As seen, the non-Muslims were actually represented in disproportionately high numbers.⁶³

5. DISPUTES IN THE PARLIAMENT

5.1. PARTICIPATION IN STATE ADMINISTRATION

Indeed, the placement of non-Muslims in the state posts was not a new implementation; it was one of the novelties brought about by the Tanzimat Edict. Even before Tanzimat, non-Muslims were *de facto* employed in state offices, particularly as dragomans. However, there was no formal recruitment mechanism: in the logic of Ancien Régime, they were the sultans servants, rather than Ottoman public employees. After Reform Edict, it was institutionalized and legalized that non-Muslims would be *de jure* given equal opportunity to be employed in state offices. There were two main bureaucratic domains where the Ottoman Greeks proved influential: diplomatic missions and politics. For example, Alexander Karateodoris was an ambassador to Rome (who later became the representator of the Empire in the Berlin Congress in 1878), Fotiadi Bey to Athens and Musurus Pasha to London. Whether functioned well or not, this change in appearance could point an egalitarian change in state mind. Especially in the late nineteenth century, non-Muslims were massively employed in the expanding bureaucracy. One might suppose that it did even increase throughout the Young Turk Regime

61. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Yaşasın Asker», *Tanin*, 23/11/1908.

62. Ahmad, Faroz & Dankwart A., Rustow: «İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Meclisler, 1908-1918», *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 4-5 (1976), p. 247.

63. Regarding the latest census realized in the Empire, Muslims (majority of whom were Kurds, Turks and Arabs) were forming 76,09-74,23%; Greeks (which means the Christians bound to the Orthodox Church, including Slavs and Albanians) were of 13,86-13,56%; Armenians (including a variety of Assyrian churches as well as the followers of the Gregorian Church) were of 5,07-5,46%; Bulgarians (the Bulgarian Exarchate had declared its independence from the Orthodox Patriarchate in 1872) were of 3,74-3,65%; Jews were of 1,24-1,23%; Protestants were of 0,26% and others were of 1,59%. Only the Greek population among other *millet*s did not densify in one particular region; they were located in a variety of cities and towns which also contributed to disproportionality in the numbers of the deputies elected in each city.

since the principles of justice and equality was the main discourse of the CUP and it was consolidated by the Constitution. Article 19 was directly referring to this issue: «Officers are to be appointed to state posts according to virtue and capability regardless of faith and ethnicity.»⁶⁴

Since Kanun-i Esasi was re-enacted in the Revolutionary period, it is expected that relying on the Article 19 of the constitution, «civil servants are to be employed in official posts regarding capability and merit with no regard to ethnicity», non-Muslims would be appointed to state posts in the Second Constitutional Period.⁶⁵ However, tracing the Greek newspapers, it is found that the above-mentioned article was not put into practice effectively. In *Neologos*, an Ottoman Greek newspaper, it was discussed in December 1908 that Greeks were under-employed in the state-level posts. It was claiming that the related articles of the Constitution were ignored. For instance there were only 10 Greeks out of 676 kaymakam (district governor). They also raised a question why to cities where the Greeks formed majority in population were not appointed Greek origin governors.⁶⁶

In the same month, in Tanin responses to those claims were published; it was stated that it was not for being a non-Muslim but being incompetent with the requirements of those posts-more importantly for poor command of Turkish of Ottoman Greeks.⁶⁷ They also blamed *Neologos* for doing the propaganda of Hamidian autocracy.«...A Greek...besides anything, is not capable of speaking Turkish. Moreover, he does not have knowledge and skill which are compatible with being a state officer.»⁶⁸

We also see, in the columns of Tanin, a comparison between Greeks and Armenians; the latter was given more posts in the state level since they were competent with Turkish language as well as being more familiar with Turkish traditions. Whilst every Armenian speaks Turkish, majority of the Greeks even mistake Turkish with Chinese.⁶⁹ What Tanin claimed was right to some extent since the Constitution itself (Article 18) held the competency in Turkish obligatory.

As it might be anticipated, Greeks did not form a homogenous block. Some Greeks within the community also emphasized with the Turkish party; the posts were available for anyone with no regard to ethno-religious background and it was not that Greeks were discriminated but it was that Greeks were not compatible with the use of Turkish. In a volume of *Sada-ı Millet*, a letter was published which proved this heterogeneity true. On the one side, they portrayed Greeks as of importance after Turks in the Empire and on the other, they admitted their

64. Gözübüyük, Şeref & Kili, Suna: *op.cit.*, p. 29.

65. Appointment of non-Muslims to state-level posts were first brought by Tanzimat and Islahat era so that they could have the opportunity to participate in decision-making process.

66. «Rumlar ve Memuriyetler», *Tanin*, 24/12/1908.

67. *Idem.*

68. *Idem.*

69. *Idem.*

under employment in state posts yet they held the Greeks responsible for this fact. Wide placement of Armenians in bureaucracy and the effort of Jewish community to implement Turkish in their faith schools were reflected to show the lack of will of the Greek Orthodox community comparing with other millets: «do not encroach our national benefit, besides anything, put effort with the purpose of attaining the Ottoman union by holding the hand of fellowship thrust out towards us with goodwill.»⁷⁰

This was a warning to Greek-Orthodox millet to get more familiar to and competent with the Turkish language. Still, the inequality between the millets was not gone unmentioned. By 1910, Istanbul deputy Cosmidis' speech was of great importance in this sense. He stated that the equality was being performed only concerning the duties as seen in the abolishment of the *bedel-i askeri* tax and declaration of the universal conscription; equality in rights was seemingly overseen by the new government. He also highlighted that even though Ottomanism was propagated, Ottomanness of a Turk and Ottomanness of a non-Muslim was treated differently.⁷¹ On the other hand, Boussios chose a more tactical way underlining the overrepresentation of Turks in the parliament: «When are we supposed to see merchants with Turkish origins among us?...we should allot properly our forces and guarantee that all the Ottoman subjects benefit from it equally.»⁷²

5.2. CONCESSIONS TO GREEK MILLET

The Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate used to have an outstanding position within the Empire. It was so powerful that when the Greek Kingdom was founded, it resisted the establishment of a new Hellenic center in Athens along with rejecting the emergence of a separate Greek-Orthodox church while claiming the central role of the Phanar in Istanbul as the core of the Orthodoxy. The Patriarch was the head of all religious and social issues of millet which positioned him as the bridge between the central power and his brood.

As in all the non-Muslim communities, the spiritual leader of the Greeks, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch was *millet başı* who was in charge of religious and civil administration of his own millet. This privileged situation of his was challenged by the CUP after the revolution through two pillars: equality and institutional homogeneity. On the other hand, the Article 11 of *Kanun-ı Esasi* declared Islam as the Empire's religion while granting religious-based privileges to the millets. In fact, the term «privilege» had different connotations for Turks and Greeks; while the former attributed a pejorative meaning to it, the latter was interpreting

70. «Rum Vatandaşlarımıza», *Sada-ı Millet*, 04/03/1910.

71. Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi (MMZC) (Parliamentary Minute Journal), pp. 294-296, 03/12/1910. «You see a huge difference between the Ottomanness of Kostı and the Ottomanness of Mehmed».

72. *Ibidem*, pp. 566-567, 16.05.1911.

it as «rights». In general, the terms such as Ottoman, equality, privilege etc. were described differently by these two communities which led to problems in practice.

After the CUP took up the power, the principle of equality was also implied in the institutional level which envisaged the removal of the previous privileges granted to millets. Maintaining the privileged situation of ethno-religious institutions of each millet would entail an institutional heterogeneity contradicting the purpose of the Committee. Due to the negative tendency the term «privilege» bore for the Turkish side, the Committee did grant nothing but only religious authority to the Patriarchate. It had two dimensions; this was a move to narrow the impacts of non-Muslim activities and on the other hand, it was an indicator of the secular tendencies of the new government limiting the influence of religious institutions.

5.2.1. Political road map of Greeks

As seen in the newspapers that the Greeks of the Empire prepared a road map for the post-revolutionary period. It was a document which included the demands of the Greek-Orthodox community. Basically, they asked for their rights and privileges to be respected. This demand, in fact was based upon the Article 11 of the constitution: «the official religion of the Ottoman Empire is the religion of Islam. Yet, the conduct of the privileges regarding the religion of different communities is under the guarantee of the state as it had been in the past.»⁷³ In *Tanin*, it is pointed that there would be no violation of the articles of the Constitution but the related article could possibly be misinterpreted by the the Greek-Orthodox. No privileges were granted to a group or to a community nor could the mentioned article be interpreted as such.⁷⁴

In this case, «privilege» and «right» should not be used interchangeably which might be the main cause of conflict between the Greek and the Turkish parties. The CUP was attributing a pejorative meaning to word «privilege» which bore the signs of the old regime; the one that gave concessions to foreign powers especially in economic domain behind the mask of «modernization» and «economic liberalization». One must bear in mind that at least in theory, the Young Turks were profoundly inspired by the Young Ottomans who resisted the reforms initiated by the Tanzimat statesmen. The latter, in order to modernize the state structure gave many concessions to non-Muslim groups by ignoring the resentment it might cause among Muslims. Therefore, what Cahid stated was that the privileges pointed in the Article 11 was concerning only the religious affairs of the communities which would also entail a process of secularization within the millets:«If there

73. Gözübüyük, Şeref & Kili, Suna: *op.cit.*, p. 28. «Devlet-i Osmaniye'nin dini din-i İslamdır. Bu esasi vikaye ile beraber cemaat-ı muhtelifeye verilmiş olan imtiyazat-ı mezhebiyenin kema-kan cereyanı devletin taht-ı himayetindedir).

74. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Rumların Programı», *op.cit.*

reigns equality, it does so for every Ottoman element. The Patriarchates are not consulates who would enjoy capitulations.»⁷⁵

5.2.2. Education

Education was another field about which the Phanar⁷⁶ doubted whether or not it would lose its privileges. Equality and institutional homogenization required the unification of education as well. In fact, as an extension of Tanzimat reforms, this unification was launched through a regulation for public education⁷⁷ in 1869. The most significant novelty it brought about was the envision of mixed education for pupils to gather with their peers in other ethno-religious communities. Only the religious courses fell outside the oversight of the state.

In 1909, primary education was regulated by Emrullah Efendi, specifying Turkish as the language of instruction. In June 1909, the Article 16 was put into discussion which installed all the schools under state control detailing that the courses related to religion of each millet would not be harmed.⁷⁸ However, state intervention with education limited the authority of the Patriarchate. Subsequently, the Greek deputy Cosmidis uttered his doubt about the extent of the regulation; in this regard the education would turn stunted for the further expectations of the Ottoman Greeks in educational sense such as learning Greek culture and history by setting Turkish language as the sole language for instruction. Ottomanism was supposed to mean union not domination of a particular nation: «The union under the banner of Ottomanism is a political one, not a hectic mixture of millets. The purpose is to obtain such a union and serve to the common good of the country that is unpartable, whilst every Ottoman component retains his ethno-religious feature.»⁷⁹

Another remarkable Greek deputy, Boussios made his peculiar contribution to the discussion: «The Ottoman Empire resembles a company. For it being the principal, each and every shareholder should dedicate himself with all the capital they have. What is the capital? Education and religion. There is nothing else to offer.»⁸⁰

In order to illegalize the mentioned regulation, Greeks intended to refer to the past. In the newspaper *Sada-ı Millet* was published a piece excerpted from *Neologos*; it depicted Caliphate Omar as an example who after conquering Jerusalem bestowed a protected status to non-Muslims as Mehmet the Conquerer (*Mehmet II, Fatih Sultan Mehmet*) who endowed privileges to Patriarchate. Therefore, violation of

75. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Rumlar Ne İstiyor?», *Tanin*, 25/03/1909.

76. «Phanar» is a term used to refer to the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate since it was located in the district of Phanar (*Fener*) in Istanbul.

77. Maarif-i Umumiyye Nizamnamesi.

78. Gözübüyük, Şeref & Kili, Suna: *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29.

79. MMZC, p. 206, 08/06/1909.

80. *Ibidem*, pp. 210-211.

privileges was violation of Islam. Again in *Neologos*, the Patriarch Joachim III gave an interview commenting that the Young Turks were under French influence due to their educational experience there thus they wanted to separate the Church and the State as in France had been done to restrict the Church's influence.⁸¹ He radically took the issue further and stated that he would give up on all the ages old privileges of the Patriarchate only if the Sultan too would dismantle his authority which was a combination of worldly and spiritual aspects.

The Patriarch Joachim III had an eccentric characteristic and during his tenure he demonstrated radical and even extreme reactions to ongoing events. Concomitantly, regarding the issue, he made a visit to Grand Vizier Huseyin Hilmi Paşa and he stated that he would no way disavow the title of *millet başı* which was given to the Greek Patriarch by Mehmet II. By behaving as such, he showed that he would reject his position to reduce and to limit to the religious sphere only.⁸²

5.3. UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION

Inclusion of the non-Muslims into the army was declared in the CUP's program: «every person will have liberty, equality as well as same duties...thence, non-Muslims will also be tied to conscription».⁸³

Before the universal conscription, Ottoman administration used to collect a special tax from non-Muslims, which was called *bedel-i askeri tax*, to exempt them from the military service. During the preparation of conscription law, Ottoman deputies were defending the perpetuation of *bedel-i askeri tax* instead of conscripting non-Muslims. On the Greek side, though, the discussion the view went to the opposite defending the content of the bill. What needs to be mentioned is that those discussions were not conducted with the sense of patriotism but with financial concerns since it would obstruct the income of the Empire. On the other hand, the law draft indicated the exemption of non-Muslims over 22 years of age who were engaged in the most lucrative economic sectors like trade and industry since their conscription would hinder the survival of the Empire in the long term. However, this move created inequality while claiming equality; Greeks cried out that they wanted to be held equal at any cost: «...we are not in favor of such a privilege. We desire to do it even if it costs us more than it does Muslims.»⁸⁴

Rejection of *bedel-i askeri tax* was romantically systematized by an Armenian deputy, Krikor Zohrab Efendi who insistently underlined the importance of fraternity by ignoring the finances despite all the opposite voices raised by the Turkish deputies: «We desire to live together. To learn to live together, we should learn

81. «İntihabat Meselesi ve Rumlar», *Tanin*, 06/11/1908.

82. «Rum Patrikhanesi», *Sada-ı Millet*, 05/11/1909.

83. Tunaya, Tarık Zafer: *Türkiye'de Siyasî Partiler, 1859-1952*, İstanbul, Arba Yayınları, 1983, pp. 159-160.

84. MMZC, pp. 134-136, 01/07/1909.

to die together.»⁸⁵ In the end, the former law draft was passed until the new one would be regulated. However, there occurred another question about another tax called «lump-sum tax» which basically gave right to opulent males to pay a specific sum of money to be exempted from the military service. Again, the principle of equality was violated and more significantly, the Turkish deputies who claimed to be the patriotic saviors of the Empire remained silent while Ottoman Greek deputies harshly rejected this clause.

What is witnessed in the minutes of the parliament that two issues, religion and education in military service paved the way for the further discussions about equality. The Greek deputies, Cosmidis and Choneos disclosed that a priest should be stationed in the army while the Armenian deputies did not agree; it was stated that the law did not contain any clause privileging the Muslims either.⁸⁶ When the conscription law was passed in 1911, Greek deputies grew dissatisfied since their expectations were not met. In the Ottoman Army, religion was holding a considerable place for motivation; forming a multinational army, if equality be paid regard, required the employment of priests for non-Muslim soldiers.⁸⁷ The conflict between Turkish and Greek side is well seen through the newspapers *Sada-ı Millet*, *Neologos* and *Tanin*. In *Tanin*, Hüseyin Cahid fervently advocated that what Greeks offered would bring harm to unity whereas *Neologos* would offer it as the only solution for discontent: «...the results which are expected to be achieved through mixing under the same roof with the ones who do not feel any obligation to comply with the religion of the rest; they assume that overseeing the sanctities of others emerges from a religious duty.»⁸⁸

Article 6, on the other hand caused another question about the extent of equality and education. It conditions that the males who received higher education within or outside the Empire acknowledged by the state would not be subjected to conscription. It led to another dichotomy since those who studied in a school abroad were taken as qualified while those educated in schools run by non-Muslims of the Empire were not. Boussios commented on the issue: «if this is to happen, then some will go to Athens, some to Belgrade or Sofia. Allow us to establish business and industrial schools and universities in order to offer students an education in accordance with the Ottoman merits.»⁸⁹

85. MMZC, pp. 190-192, 05/07/1909.

86. MMZC, pp. 157-158, 16/01/1911.

87. Two years before the law, in 1909, the high cadres of the government met with the Patriarch. Phanar listed its demands as such: priests for Christians, arrangement of worship places, prohibition of apostasy and separate companies for Christians. Hüseyin Cahid, in his columns severely criticized the last demand since it had a humdrum tendency that was extending the control of Phanar outside the religious domain. Cahid, Hüseyin: «Gayrimüslimlerin Askerliği», *Tanin*, 18/09/1909. In the extract taken from *Neologos*, *Sada-ı Millet* published these demands contradicting the Cahid's claims and in the piece taken from *Ekklesiastiki Althea*, it was referred to the past, exemplifying other sultans' doings for the separate companies in wars.

88. *Sada-ı Millet*, 29/10/1909.

89. MMZC, pp. 58-60, 04/01/1911.

These claims did not remain unchallenged; Turkish deputies mentioned that limitation to non-state schools was to be applied to all Ottoman millets including the Turkish one. Considering all the discussions between Turkish and the Greek deputies, it could be seen that the conflict between the two sides emerged from a mutual distrust. Whereas the Greeks feared an enforced Turkification process, the Turks doubted the Greeks' sense of belonging and loyalty to the Ottoman Empire in every aspect in their life. All these discussions also signified that the CUP intended to bring equality in duties and obligations, not in rights of the non-Muslim communities.⁹⁰ While the Greeks pondered that the Ottoman education was a cover for the Turkification process, the Turkish side perceived the Greeks as their intention was not to impose the Ottoman values.

The last issue discussed regarding the military service was its duration. It was specified in the Article 3 of the draft as 25 years of total service three years of which were to be served regularly. Not surprisingly, the proposed duration was not welcomed by a number of deputies. Boussios, for example, stated that such a lengthy military service would lead to indigence: «...if the Empire abolishes, we the Ottoman Greeks will too deteriorate...we desire to live as civilized people. We persistently say that we are first civilians then soldiers. Yet you defend the opposite. You claim that we will work the soil and run business when we give up on being soldier.»⁹¹

In the pages of *Politiki Epitheorisis*, a detailed analysis regarding the universal conscription was made. They related the question directly to economic domination of foreign powers within the Empire and to imposing Turkish superiority on other millets. The problem could be solved if non-Muslims were appealed to the military service and showed that they were equal to Turks on the basis of rights and duties. The matter of duration was also mentioned in the newspaper; this long-lasting military service would bring a downfall over the Empire's economy which had already begun especially among the Muslim subjects of the state so that the government should take preventive and plausible actions to forestall it.⁹²

5.4. THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

Due to the Balkan Wars erupted in 1912 and continued until 1913, the parliament did not function effectively and during the World War I (1914-1918) until the Mudros Armistice (30 October 1918), neither the opposition nor the Ottoman Greek deputies could raise their voice in the parliament. After the Armistice, the CUP leaders fled the country and Istanbul was occupied by Central Powers so that under these circumstances the parliament began to function. Party of Renewal

90. Tunaya, Tarik Zafer: *op.cit.*, pp. 209-210.

91. MMZC, p. 105, 25/10/1911.

92. *Politiki Epitheorisis*, 10/1910.

(*Teceddüt Partisi*) was founded in the CUP's stead and this period was characterized by a particular dynamism in the parliament leading to the formation of dozens of parties. However, Sultan Vahdettin dissolved the parliament in December 1918 with a pledge for new elections that was not held until 1920.

The major action taken in the parliament was to call the CUP accountable for the atrocities and the participation of the World War I with no plausible motivation. The Armenian Massacres that occurred during Armenian deportations in 1915 was the greatest atrocity discussed in the parliament in detail. It is a question that is still on the agenda of the modern Turkey but what is to be seen that in 1918 parliament this massacre was not rejected by the deputies but all the opposite; the old Unionist elites and deputies tried not to negate what had happened but to exclude themselves from the responsibility claiming that they did not take part in conducting this massacre.

The Greek deputies were the ones bringing the Armenian massacre to the parliament as advocates of their Armenian fellow citizens. The Greek deputies, Vangel, Emanuelidis and Tokinidis submitted a report listing the atrocities of the CUP; clauses concerning the non-Muslims were as such:

1. One million Armenians (men, women and children) were exterminated.
2. 250,000 Greeks were deported from the Empire and their assets were confiscated.
3. Prior to the war, 550,000 Greeks were massacred in various coastal and inland areas and their properties too were confiscated.
4. non-Muslims were banned from certain commercial activities.
5. Armenian deputies Zohrab Efendi and Varteks Efendi were murdered.
6. 250,000 people of the Labour Battalions -majority of whom were non-Muslims- suffered death by starvation.⁹³

Even though it was the very first time that the actions of the CUP to the detriment of minorities as well as Armenian deportation conducted by the Committee was revealed as such, it would not be realistic to expect from a government which inhabited old Unionist deputies an objective response. Emanuel Emanuelidis, still brought a question: «...all the preventive actions regarding this quest proved useless. Does the government plan to conduct policies in this aspect?»⁹⁴

Fethi Bey responded these clauses in the parliament: «...I guarantee you that Turks have suffered equally or even more than the Armenian, Arab or Greek communities. I wish you would also have stated that Turks got harmed the same or even more than all these communities.»⁹⁵

93. MMZC, p. 129, 24/12/1918.

94. *Ibidem*, p. 110.

95. *Ibidem*, p. 103.

Greek and Turkish deputies were at odds about the number of people massacred. Contrarily to the claims of Emanuelidis, a Turkish deputy Mehmet Emin Bey stated: «...I admit that many Armenians were slaughtered and their properties were usurped. But it did not start like this». ⁹⁶ He also claimed that this miscalculation was the result of Armenians' manipulation about the number of their population.

Overall, it is seen in the parliament minutes that it was the minority deputies who were willing to discuss the atrocities and massacres carried out by the CUP government thus pushing the new government to take an action. Yet, they formed the minority in the parliament and the other side of the question were not but to cover up the atrocities as «bad incidents of the past that there is no need to reveal it now.»

6. CONCLUSION

This study has focused on a period which was unique in the Ottoman history and was dominated by a secular party, limiting the Sultan's authority and pledging equality, fraternity and justice to all the Ottoman subjects. The ideological perspectives which dominated this period were reflected on narratives especially disseminated in the press and in the parliament by the Ottoman Greeks and Turks. Neither of the camps was homogeneous; while the former divided in Unionists, supporters of the Greek Party and the supporters of Party of Liberty and Entente (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*), the latter was grouped as liberals and Unionists. However, the alliance with the CUP did not mean a complete approval to any policy of the CUP; rather, it was a tactical move to consolidate their position in politics and in the parliament.

The equation of «minority versus majority» could be reversed in the case of Ottoman Greeks and Turks. By the early 20th century, the Greeks had already had their independent kingdom; they could gain their sovereignty from the Empire. However, especially in the western part of the country, there were many Greeks, especially the ones of upper classes within the Greek-Orthodox society, who were not directly identifying themselves with the newly established Greek state. Greeks in general, held the considerable majority of wealth which brought them with economic strength. They, along with the other Christian minorities, shared not same but similar cultural aspects with the West whose system had inspired the reforms and renovations within the Ottoman Empire. This social and cultural advance (approved by the Empire's own efforts to catch the level of Europe) brought with it a sentiment of superiority. So-called deprived of their political rights, the Ottoman Greeks started to feel inferior which eventually created an inconsistency,

96. *Ibidem*, p. 115.

even a paradigm: a minority group who felt socially and economically superior and politically inferior. The forcefully inclusive and then segregating policy of the CUP overlapped with the superior-inferior duality.

The centrifugal groups were also separated by Turks as Greeks and the others. It was the Greek deputies who raised their voices during and after the elections. The terms used by the Unionist as «Ottoman, equality» etc. had different connotations for each community that in the end it led them to have many conflicts in the parliament. Greeks were also the most vocal group in the parliament who brought up their hesitations and doubts about issues such as the military service, religious practices of the Christians, education, the length of the service onto the agenda. The duality in understanding the terms stemmed from different strategies to achieve the same goal. This continued until the Turkish side decided to be Turkish instead of Ottoman and the minorities were doomed to be only perils to be silenced. This fact could only be brought to the agenda after the World War I to hold the CUP accountable for numerous atrocities, especially for the Armenian massacres; however, in the end centrifugal communities and their statements remained in minority and the parliament itself was silenced until 1920.

The newspapers and parliamentary minutes show that claiming equality was different than practicing equality; the practice paradoxically was reproducing the inequality in this case. Both sides were in favor of Ottomanism by blaming one another as «traitor» to that ideology. This continued until the Ottoman Muslims shifted to a Turkish national instead of Ottoman imperial identity and the centrifugal groups were left to be perceived as peril to be silenced for the sake of the Empire.

On the other hand, as holding the military and political power, together with being the majority as Turkish-Muslims, the CUP too saw themselves as the organic dominating power within the Ottoman soils; the socio-economic inferiority of the Turkish-Muslims gave way to vengeful attitude towards non-Muslims which became crystal clear through the Balkan Wars. Ottomanism, thus, remained idle as a socio-political and socio-cultural glue since its political part was rather weak and open to abused according to interests.

Even though this would exceed the limit and content of this work, a question arises: could military and political strength be sufficient to conduct a country? In the case of the Ottoman Empire, it did not: strength is a whole and if the political and military strength is not accompanied by the social and cultural one, any effort to maintain the integrity will possibly result in further dissolution.

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