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## **INTRODUCTION:**

In conducting a research on a subject in history, it is evidently necessary to formulate meaningful questions at the very beginning. However, for these questions to come about, a researcher needs to have an interest and a certain level of knowledge of the subject for research. While having an initial interest in the experience of the Armenian community in Turkey, the basic motive for me to conduct a historical research was the attraction of being able to touch the past experience of humanity and sense it more closely in a historical research. At the initial phase, the very crude questions were how the Armenians perceive themselves in the Turkish nation state and society, how their belongingness to the Turkish state and society was shaped, and what kind of different experiences can we observe than the rest of the society for the position of the Armenians in particular and for the non-Muslim minorities in general. While trying to find feasible ways of conducting a research and feasible aspects of their experiences to study, the first thing that would attract the attention of any researcher was the transition process from a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual empire to a nation state. Thus, the assessment of this critical process of transition and understanding different aspects of it would contribute to an effort to generate meaningful questions which would direct a researcher to study a feasible aspect of the subject to study.

In this respect, one of my professors at Istanbul University, Mehmet Ö. Alkan, offered me to study on an Armenian who became a deputy at the parliament, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan. This was interesting for him and for me because he seemed to sound like a Turkish nationalist in one of his speeches at the parliament quoted in Türk Parlamento Tarihi. The first impression motivated me to study on him. Furthermore, the

reason to focus on his life story wholly was that he lived between 1870 and 1949. This was the period in which one could experience the efforts and the ideological approaches to save the empire from disintegration, the process of the disintegration of the empire, the emergence of different nationalisms, their formulations of their identities and expectations, their activities including Turkish and Armenian nationalisms, the violent encounters of nationalisms of different social groups in the empire including the deportation of the Armenians during the World War I which might be important for the life of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the Turkish War of Independence and the traumas that the society passed through, the foundation of the Turkish Republic and lastly the single-party rule and its approach to the non-Muslims which came to become minorities in the new context. It would be a contribution to have an overview of this process of transition from the empire to the nation-state in the life story of an Armenian personality. While his election as a deputy among the minorities in the single party era seemed to be already promising, the period he lived through consolidated the suggestion to study his life story.

As it can be expected for all scientific researches, the initial impressions are just the motivations to conduct the research. Thus, the first impression would of course be unfolded throughout the research process and the broad questions needs to be reduced to narrower ones. As an extension of the general and large questions for the conduct of this research, the major concern for me was to contribute to the limits and possibilities of different destinations for the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the process of transition to a nation state. This question was reduced in this study to a single spectacle of how the relationship or connection of an Armenian individual would be transformed to his community constituted by religious belongingness, his state, his society in general in his life story including serious ruptures in terms of these surroundings. The single spectacle of a life story may help us in understanding different aspects of the voyage of non-Muslims from the empire to the nation state. There are main 5 sub-questions to be answered in this study. The first is the channells through which a non-Muslim individual could surpass the communal ties in which the individual was born in a late Ottoman context. The second may be how a non-Muslim individual

could relate individually to the Ottoman realm and how the perceptions of such an individual about the state and the society could be framed. The third question is how the perceptions of such an individual could be shaped about the emerging nationalisms and what may the possible destinations for such an individual be. In relation to this question, how could one possibly went through these options and stuck to an option and which factors could affect the critical decisions for such an individual. As a last question, how the boundaries to move in for such an individual would be drawn in the formation and consolidation processes of the nation-state.

This attempt to write a short biography of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan basically has some shortcomings depending on the availability of the sources. There are be two main reasons for this scarcity of sources and obstacles to the availability of them. The first and the most serious one is the partial exclusion of the non-Muslims, especially Armenians, from the history of the Ottoman empire and Turkey due to nationalist bias of perspectives in history writing. This point shares a common ground with the centrality of the discussion on the “Armenian genocide” or the “Armenian question” as historical/political questions in the historiography of the Ottoman empire and Turkey. No deeper analysis of this issue will be presented in this work directly. The second reason is a more technical one which any researcher can face in Turkey depending on the regularization and availability of institutional archives, even newspapers. In any case, there are bits and pieces of information specifically on his life and, there are secondary materials that will shed light on the period he lived in, to map out a sensible biographical sketch. To be able to achieve the aim of giving clues to answer the questions formulated above by presenting the life story of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the biographical sources will generally be composed the surroundings of his life, the people, the institutions and the general framework of the period for the empire and later the republic.

In the first part, the period from the beginning of the 19 th century to his birth will be presented. As a background to the period he was born, the transformation that the Ottoman Empire and its society were passing through from the beginning of the 19 th

century onwards, the position of the non-Muslims in this period, the transformation in the Armenian community and the emergence of the Armenian Question will be handled shortly. To be able to give this background, secondary sources will be used.

For his early formation, his uncle Bedros Keresteciyan who grew him up after Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was 5 years old will initially be held for his possible influence in his childhood and in his youth. To be able to understand the mental map of Bedros Keresteciyan and as a character, his early formation, the institutions he worked and the circle of people and thoughts he might have been in contact will be presented with the help of secondary sources. Another component of his early formation was the schools he attended. In this respect, a brief analysis of these schools, Galatasaray Lycee and Robert College in the period, will be presented to be able to have an access to his mental formation. For these schools, no documentary record could be found in their archives. Even his date of his graduation, if he really did, from Robert College could not be followed in the graduate albums of Robert College at Boğaziçi University Library. Thus, an attempt at drawing a general picture of the education these schools could have offered in the period was made with secondary sources. After having drawn the general atmosphere for his childhood and youth in the Hamidian period up to 1890, the progress of the Armenian Question in this period especially with Berlin Congress of 1878 will be dealt with by using the secondary sources on the period.

Following this period, his early career in the Ottoman Bank, beginning suggestedly in the first 3 years of 1890's, after a 2 year long employment in the Ministry of Finance, will be presented. This presentation will include the position of the Ottoman Bank in the structure of empire and its institutional identity. A major gap regarding the scarcity of sources for this study was the Ottoman Bank archive which might have significantly contributed to our purposes of analyzing him in the Ottoman Bank context. However, this archive could not be used because it was closed for researchers with an unknown reason. Any attempts at having an access to the archive did not give a positive result. Thus, the only source for this part of his life was secondary, mainly the most comprehensive study on the issue by Edhem Eldem, *Osmanlı Bankası Tarihi*. In

addition, the political atmosphere of the latter Hamidian period, the emergence of Young Turk opposition and later the emergence of Turkish nationalism, and the progress of the Armenian Question in this period from 1890 to 1908 will be followed by using secondary sources.

The following II. Constitutional period was marked by his participation in the foundation of the Ottoman Red Crescent and as an accountant of this organization. Thus, the position of this organization, its activities and its institutional identity will offer us significant clues for his political stance and his future destination will be given in this part. However, this was done by using secondary sources on the Ottoman Red Crescent. Although a research in the archives of the successor association of the Ottoman Red Crescent, Kızılay, was not conducted, a personal file for him could not be found in the archive. For this period, the conditions in which the Ottoman Bank survived, the political developments of the period, the progress of the Armenian Question will be added briefly.

As another critical development for his life story, the changing position of the Ottoman Bank and his appointment to the highest administrative level with two other Ottoman subjects instead of the French and British administrators of the Bank with the participation of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I, will be covered. Additionally, the activities of the Ottoman Red Crescent in the war will be given in short on the background of the political and social transformations that the World War I introduced for the Ottoman state and society including the deportation of Armenians. The following period will open up another phase for the life story of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan with the his activities in the Ottoman Bank and the Ottoman Red Crescent which would bring him closer to the political and military elites of the future republic.

Lastly for the first chapter, the Turkish War of Independence, the consequent Lausanne Congress and his contribution to the negotiations, and the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association which was another organization very critical to be able to understand his political stance at the time and for his future destination will be

presented. As part of his life story, some primary sources were used for the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association. Another significant point in his life story was his first contact with Mustafa Kemal by giving the information that his ship would be hit by British torpedos was given depending on the account of Cemal Kutay and verified with an interview with the only person that could be reached, Berç Garo Şigaher, who had known him personally.

The second chapter begins with the general developments on the way to found the Turkish Republic. After a brief survey of these developments, an overview of the Kemalist phase in Turkish nationalism was presented shortly to be able to answer the questions of how Kemalism and its own interpretation of Turkish nationalism were shaped, and what the implications of Kemalist nationalism was in different spheres of life. Having dealt with Kemalist nationalism, an assessment of the position and treatment of the non-Muslims minorities in the newly founded nation state and in the single party period was given. The themes were the way non-Muslims turned into minorities, their legal status, the legal measures concerning the minorities and administrative and economic measures towards them. Lastly, the declining situation of the Ottoman Bank was presented. These were the last years of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan in the Ottoman Bank because he retired in 1927 due to his contributions to the efforts of Turkification of the personnel of the Bank as he himself argued in his resumé. For this part, only secondary sources were used.

For the following period of 1927-1931, the general political developments of the period towards the consolidation of the republican regime and its single party phase were given. Additionally, the general atmosphere for the non-Muslim minorities in the society was briefly touched upon. For this part of the life story of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the only information is that he worked in a cement factory (*Eskihisar Çimento Şirketi*) as a financial auditor for an unknown period.

The period beginning in 1931 was a period in which the single party system established itself as the political functioning of the Republic. The activities and the



speeches of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan at the parliament were presented as embedded in the general political, economic, social and international developments, and in the issues concerning the minorities in this period. This part of the study largely depends on a research of the records of the Turkish parliament in which all speeches of him were found, and on a research in the records of the Turkish press of the periods in which he was elected as a deputy, 1935,1939 and 1943. These primary sources were supported by secondary sources to be able to give a background for the general atmosphere of the period.

## **CHAPTER I:**

### **A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF BERÇ TÜRKER-KERESTECİYAN: THE FORMATIVE PERIOD**

This short biography will follow a chronological sketch starting with his family and community background and continuing with subsequent parts determined on the basis of the significant points in his life and in the history of the Armenian community and the Ottoman empire, then Turkey. It should also be noted that the biographical sources will have the limitations as mentioned in the introduction.

#### **1.1.The Background to His Formation:1839-1878**

The following part will aim at giving a background to the period he was born and raised as a child(1839-1878). Main references will be made, as short as possible to make an eligible ground to base his later formation, to the transformation that the Ottoman society passed through before this period, the relations between the Ottoman government and the non-Muslim communities (Ottomanism and reforms), the reform of the Armenian *millet* structure and lastly the emergence of the Armenian question and its internationalization.

The end of the 18 th century and the first quarter of the 19 th century was marked by a significant shift of power locus from the religious/confessional clergy of different *millets* (non-Muslim communities in particular), to an entrepreneurial-commercial elite with more secular political concerns and aims. Without dealing with the question of

profound transformations that the Ottoman society was subject to throughout the 17 th and 18 th centuries deeply, the main reasons can be shown as the dissolution of the estates, *timar* system and land regime, administrative transformation, transformation of the ruling elites, formation of different social interests (classes), the need for economic and political reorganization, and transformation of the religion-based organization. Additionally, the factors that are perceived to be the contributors to the cultural and political awakening may be the emergence of merchant classes, emergence of an intelligentsia, modern education, diffusion of enlightenment ideas, rise of ethno-linguistic consciousness, secular publications and the role of press and the consequent libertarian aspirations. For the part of the non-Muslim communities, the economic and political demands of new entrepreneurial-commercial elite and secular-minded intelligentsia were in conflict with their own church, the organization of their *millet* and the traditional Ottoman understanding of authority. The Serbian and Greek revolts of 1804 and 1821 were the most serious signifiers for the Ottoman ruling elite, with an additional aspect of the intervention of major European powers in these revolts, along these lines of transformation and a prospective solution<sup>1</sup>. The Ottoman government formulated a common secular sense of political belonging with the notion of Ottomanism in 1839 Tanzimat reforms in response to these developments. Ottomanism was the idea of regarding as Ottoman subjects all individuals living in the Ottoman territories regardless of their faith and language<sup>2</sup>. The reform edict of 1856, the municipality and *vilayet* laws and the Nationality Law of 1869 were later attempts of the Ottoman government at further integration of the non-Muslims to Ottoman political realm<sup>3</sup>.

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1 Ortaylı, İlber, İmparatorluğun En uzun Yüzyılı, 2001, İletişim Yayınları, p.: 59-89; Davison, Roderic, “Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response”, in Nationalism in a non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, ed. by: W. W. Haddad and W. L. Ochsenswald, 1977, Ohio State University Press, Columbus, Ohio, p.: 25-56 and Berkes, Niyazi, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, 1998, Hurst and Company, London, p.: 89-99.

2 Karpat, Kemal, “*Millets* and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era”, in Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, vol.:1, ed. by: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 1982, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York and London, p.: 162.

3 Ibid., p.: 163. See also: Shaw, Stanford, “The Origins of Representative Government in the Ottoman Empire: An Introduction to the Provincial Councils, 1839-1876”, in Studies in Ottoman and Turkish History, Life with the Ottomans, 2000, The ISIS Press, İstanbul, p.: 183, 231, Shaw, Stanford, “The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Reform Movement before 1876”, in *ibid.*, p.: 233-268; Davison, Roderic, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, The American Historical Review, Vol. 59, No.4, July 1954, p.: 844-864 and Davison, Roderic H., “The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the

The advent of Ottomanism, as a policy and as a framework for a secular and constitutional citizenship beyond any other directions of loyalty, was a pragmatic reaction of the Ottoman political elite to the increasing pressures both from the threatened internal integrity of the empire and from European powers<sup>4</sup>. Together with this pragmatic aspect of the reforms, it is crucial to underline that the reform edicts were promising an equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. This was a revolutionary change in terms of the established social balance between the two entities by shattering this balance to the detriment of Muslims. Thus, application of reforms created a kind of trauma for Muslims and consequent reactions from the ordinary people and the Muslim intelligentsia represented initially by *Yeni Osmanlılar* movement<sup>5</sup>. For the part of the non-Muslims, Davison argues that “the doctrine of equality faced formidable opposition from Christians of the empire who were leaders in the churches and the nationalist movements.”<sup>6</sup> It seems that there were considerable amount of obstacles in both parties (Muslims and non-Muslims) for the Ottomanist attempt at creating a community of Ottoman citizens to prove to be futile. Another aspect of this issue can be followed in the rising modern education to be able to construct an “Ottoman citizenship” around the idea of loyalty and emotional attachment to the homeland/Ottoman land (*vatan*).<sup>7</sup> In addition to all these efforts, there were bureaucrats and intellectuals referring to the idea of representation as a policy to generate loyalty from subject populations and to achieve a consequent territorial integrity. These ideas were culminated in various channels of representation such as provincial councils, municipalities, judiciary councils, *millet* reforms and their councils, and lastly the 1876 constitution (*Kanun-u Esasi*) and the short-lived parliament(1877-78), from 1840 to 1878<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, the acceptance of

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Ottoman Empire”, Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century, ed. by.: William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, 1968, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

4 Somel, Selçuk Akşin, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)”, Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi, ed. by: Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 91.

5 Ibid., p.: 97. See also: Berkes, 1998, p.: 201-222.

6 Davison, Roderic, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, The American Historical Review, Vol. 59, No.4, July 1954, 844-864, p.: 854.

7 Alkan, Mehmet Ö., “Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi Üzerine Bir Deneme”, Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi, ed. by.: Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 385.

8 Davison, Roderic H., “The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the Ottoman Empire”, Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century, ed. by.:

non-Muslims in the Ottoman bureaucracy was also a further step taken towards the idea of Ottomanism but this issue will be handled later in this chapter with a relevant emphasis in Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's life story. Finally, these efforts, partly pragmatic in nature, did not prevent the religious distinctions established earlier on turning into agents of change towards nationalism. The reform of the *millet* structures of 1860's even reinforced the distinctions and consciousness of distinctiveness<sup>9</sup>. As Davison points out “The non-Muslims' role in promoting change as channel, filter, and irritant, and in retarding change as buffer, were all in the end eclipsed when they took up the role of revolutionary nationalists. As nationalists, the non-Muslims were greater purveyors of change than ever before.”<sup>10</sup>.

While turning the focus from a general point of view to specific arrangements of the period from 1839 to 1878, the proposed reforms in the 1856 edict in the *millet* organizations should be covered with an emphasis on the Armenian *millet* reform. Up to the promulgation of the Armenian *millet* reform and its approval by the government in 1863, there were several steps taken to this end in the community. Without touching upon the major transformations that the Ottoman society as a whole was subject to, the impact of the Latin Catholic missionary activities headed by the Mikhitarist congregation from Venice and backed by France, and the Protestant missionary activities supported by Great Britain and US crystalized around modern schools, seminaries and publishing activities, need to be underlined. This impact was to convert many Gregorians to Catholicism and Protestantism and led the way to the formation of two new *millets* undermining the authority of the Armenian patriarchate. Additionally, they stimulated some linguistic and historical studies that would contribute to the ethnic/national consciousness of the young Armenian generations<sup>11</sup>. Another significant

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William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, 1968, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago .p.: 93-108. See also: Shaw, Stanford, “The Origins of Representative Government in the Ottoman Empire: An Introduction to the Provincial Councils, 1839-1876”, in Studies in Ottoman and Turkish History, Life with the Ottomans, 2000, The ISIS Press, İstanbul, p.: 183-231, and Shaw, Stanford, “The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Reform Movement before 1876”, in *ibid*, p.: 233-268.

9 Davison, Roderic H., “The *Millets* as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire”, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, vol.:1, ed. by: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 1982, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York and London, p.: 319-337.

10 *Ibid*, p.: 333.

11 Shaw, Stanford J. and Shaw, Ezel Kural, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 1997, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.: 125-126.

factor was the so-called *amira* class in the Armenian community. Barsoumian argues that “based on their economic capacity and their easy access to the Ottoman government, the *amiras* become for a while the unchallengable leaders of the Armenian *millet*.”<sup>12</sup> They exercised their power mainly over the center of the Armenian community, the patriarchate, significantly in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, their oligarchic power was considerably challenged by laity, so-called *esnafs*, and the young Armenian intellectuals educated in Western secular schools. This challenge took the form of an effective protest in Kumkapi in 1848 and resulted in an additional lay council in the organization of the patriarchate. Accelerated with the reform edict of 1856 after the Crimean war, a secular and vernacular literature initialized by a periodical *Masis*, the lay reformers got more powerful and the way to a new Armenian *millet* regulation/*nizamname* was opened. It was presented to the government and approved by the government in 1863. As a whole, the ratified regulation/*nizamname* represented a great victory for the laity. It vested the legislative authority of the *millet* in a representative assembly in which the lay participation was extensive<sup>13</sup>. Beside an interval from 1866 to 1869, it functioned until 1892. However, for the part of Ottomanist premises of the regulation/*nizamname* as “to preserve the nation in perfectly loyal subjection.”<sup>14</sup>, it did not serve as suggested both by the government and the Armenian leaders of the patriarchate. Somel argues in this respect that “Quite contrary, the weakening of the authority of the clergy led to the gradual strengthening of an ethnic notion of Armenian identity.”<sup>15</sup> Finally, the Armenian constitution may be said to have commenced a new era for the Ottoman empire as a whole. Thirteen years after its ratification, the experiment in constitutional government for which it had served as a basis extended to the whole population of the empire through the promulgation of the

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12 Barsoumian, Hagop, “The Dual Role of the Armenian *Amira* Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian *Millet* (1750-1850)”, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol.:1, ed. by: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 1982, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York and London, p.: 178.

13 Artinian, Vartan, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire (1839-1863)*, 1970, Ph.D. Thesis, Brandeis University, p.: 104.

14 Lynch, H. F. B., *Armenia: Travels and Studies, II: The Turkish Provinces*, 1901, London, p.: 448; cited in Davison, Roderic, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, 1973, Gordian Press, New York, p.: 133.

15 Somel, Selçuk Akşin, “Armenian Education and the Regime of Abdülhamit II”, an article submitted to the Turkish- Armenian Workshop at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1-4 March 2003, p.:4.

first Ottoman constitution in 1876<sup>16</sup>.

To be able to illustrate the picture for the Armenian community, the emergence of the Armenian Question needs to be covered in a nutshell. At the beginning, it should be noted that after the reform edict of 1856, the application of reforms, especially the promise of Muslim/non-Muslim equality in different spheres of life was not fully successful. This lack of success displayed itself in the increasing discontent expressed by ordinary and intellectual Muslims, and non-Muslims living in the provinces. The rapprochement and loyalty/harmony that was expected by the Tanzimat reformers did not take place. On the contrary, a clear tension emerged between Muslims and non-Muslims sometimes leading to violence. Even though one can not easily claim that Muslims were superior to non-Muslims in terms of their material conditions and in terms of the treatment by the local notables and the Ottoman officials, loss of psychological dominance over non-Muslims resulted in growing an uneasiness among Muslims<sup>17</sup>. Another significant aspect of the issue in the period was closely connected with the loss of territories from the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the Crimean war of 1855-56. As a consequence of these wars, a huge wave of Muslims from Balkans, Crimea and Caucasus, most of which were non-Turk Muslims in terms of ethnic origin, took refuge and settled in various regions of Anatolia under Ottoman authority<sup>18</sup>. Their migration and settlement in Anatolia among Christian populations also contributed to the Muslim/non-Muslim tension due to their previous negative experiences with their Christian overlords. The loss of psychological dominance over non-Muslims as a consequence of the Ottomanist policies led to a kind of atmosphere of solidarity among the Muslims. The additional tension created by this atmosphere aggravated the discontent which had already been existing due to the misrule of the bureaucrats and great landowners, and raids on cultivated lands by tribesmen, among non-Muslims especially Armenians of east Anatolian provinces who suffered from the misrule of the bureaucrats and great landowners, and raids on cultivated lands by tribesmen. Popular discontent eventually resulted in a rebellion in Zeitun in 1862 where

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16 Davison, Roderic, Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876, 1973, Gordian Press, New York, 134-135.

17 Akçam, Taner, İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu, 2002, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, p.: 68-76.

18 İbid., p.: 78.

Ottoman armed forces faced the harsh defense of the Zeitun Armenians<sup>19</sup>. This rebellion was the initial phase for the Armenians of Anatolia to be perceived by the Ottoman political elites as a subject group to leave apart from the empire sooner or later. Furthermore, it led to further awakening of nationalist feelings and desires among the Armenians of Anatolia. From this point onwards, the emergence of some revolutionary Armenian organizations ('Union of Salvation' and 'Black Cross Society' in Van, 'Protectors of the Fatherland' in Erzurum) can be observed in parallel with organized Armenian uprisings in Van and in Erzurum in the following two decades. These revolutionary activities mainly sprang up with the intellectuals and activists from Russian Armenia. Furthermore, the motivation of these organizations and the uprisings included both a sense of self-protection and political independence simultaneously<sup>20</sup>. The Armenians living scattered in Eastern Anatolia expressed their discontent also through the channels of their Armenian assembly created in 1863 which would absorb that within its structure because their leaders supported the status quo to maintain themselves in power. However, one should not undermine the fact that the Ottoman political machinery was also far behind in capacity to buffer the discontent with non-violent means and apply necessary reforms in these provinces. The Armenian intelligentsia was also splitted, one part working with the Young Ottomans, one part working for more nationalist aims by advocating independence for Armenians during 1860's although they all expressed the similar requests for reform in Eastern Anatolia with different channels and covers<sup>21</sup>.

In this line, the Armenian question arrived at a critical junction with the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78. The occupation of the Eastern Anatolian lands by Russian armies and their progress towards Constantinople from the Balkans brought the empire to the edge of a possible disintegration. As consequence of the outcome of this war, the Armenian leadership turned its face toward the Russians and was successful at including into the agreement of Saint Stefanos articles concerning the self- administration of the

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19 Barsoumian, Hagop, "The Eastern Question and the Tanzimat Era", Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times Vol.II, ed. by.: Richard G. Hovannisian, 2004, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p.: 200-201.

20 Nalbandian, Louise, The Armenian Revolutionary Movement, 1963, University of California Press, London, p.: 67-89.

21 Shaw, Stanford J. and Shaw, Ezel Kural, 1997, p.: 200-201.



Anatolian Armenians, including major reform measures that the Ottoman government was unable to realize, especially measures against the attacks of the Circassian and Kurdish tribesmen<sup>22</sup>. However, with the intervention of British diplomatic policies, the Saint Stefanos agreement became a dead letter and a Peace Conference met in Berlin. The Armenian church and other organizations sent committees to the conference and prepared some reports not to lose their gains in the Saint Stefanos agreement<sup>23</sup>. Article 61 of the agreement stipulated that:

“ The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will be periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the powers, who will superintend their application.”<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, the Berlin Conference meant to be a turning point for the relations between the Ottoman government and the Armenian community and “signified the institutionalization of tensions between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Ottoman ruling elite.”<sup>25</sup>. As Somel points out “ The presence of Armenian church dignitaries at the Congress of Berlin was probably considered by the Sublime Porte, whether justly or unjustly, as an implicit expression made by the leaders of the Armenian community to separate their political future from the rest of the empire.”<sup>26</sup>. The inclusion of the Great European Powers in the Armenian Question and their political concern in protecting the Christians under Ottoman authority in general seemed to render their position more suspect both in the eyes of the Ottoman administration and of the Muslim populations. Finally, “ One may clearly observe the fact that after 1878 Ottoman-Armenian relations clearly deteriorated, at least at the level of leadership.”<sup>27</sup>

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22 Hovannisian, Richard G., “The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire”, Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times Vol.II, ed. by.: Richard G. Hovannisian, 2004, Palgrave Macmillan, New York,p.: 207-208.

23 Akçam, Taner, 2002, p.: 83-84.

24 Hurewitz, J. C., Diplomacy in the Near East and Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1535-1914, 1956, Princeton-New Jersey, Vol. II, Ch. I, p.: 190 cited in Akçam, Taner, 2002, p.: 84.

25 Somel, Selçuk Akşin, 2003, p.: 1.

26 Ibid., p.: 1.

27 Ibid., p.: 1.

## **1.2. Bedros Keresteciyan: A Significant Figure in Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's Formation**

Having shown the historical circumstances into which he was born and spent his childhood, a very important component of his formation needs to be illuminated. His uncle, Bedros Keresteciyan (1840-1909), raised Berç Türker-Keresteciyan after 1875 because his father (Mıgırdiç Efendi, manager of Customs office of Constantinople/*İstanbul Gümrüğü Şube Müdürü*) died when he was five (he was born in 1870) as he himself addressed in his short resumeé. Furthermore, it can be assumed that Bedros Keresteciyan influenced his formation to a considerable extent because he was not married and took care of his nephew, Berç Türker<sup>28</sup>. He says that:

“My uncle, the author of the dictionary of etymology and the manager of the Translation Office of the Finance Ministry/*Maliye Tercüme Kalemi Müdürü*, became a father for me in the full sense. Because he was not married, he raised me as his own son, he sent me to school, he hired teachers of Turkish language and music at home for me, and he himself could read and write in ten languages, and because he was specialized in financial and economic affairs, he himself taught me in these fields. After graduating from schools, he had me taken into the Finance Ministry, and having stayed there for two years, he had me appointed to the Ottoman Bank.”<sup>29</sup>.

The most extended information on Bedros Keresteciyan could be found in Kevork Pamukçiyân's volumes of “Contributions to History from the Armenian Sources” (*Ermeni Kaynaklarından Tarihe Katkılar*<sup>30</sup>) and his article on Bedros Keresteciyan in “AnaBritannica<sup>31</sup>”. He received his primary education in İzmir at Mesrobyan School. Then, he continued his education in Paris (at Muradyan College which was a Mikhitarist school) and London. His major areas of specialization were finance and linguistics. He

28 Türker (Keresteci), Berç, *Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı*, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

29 Ibid., “Amcam, İştikak Lügat kitabı müellifi ve Maliye Tercüme Kalemi Müdürü Bedros Ef. Keresteciyan, bana tam bir babalık etmiştir. Kendisi evli olmadığından, beni kendi evladı gibi büyütmüş, beni mektebe yollamış, evde Türk lisanı ve musiki hocaları tutmuş, ve bizzat kendisi on lisan okur yazar, maliye ve iktisadi işlerde ihtisas kesb etmiş olduğundan, bana hocalık etmiştir. Mektepleri bitirdikten sonra, beni Maliyeye aldırılmış ve orada iki sene kaldıktan sonra, beni Osmanlı Bankasına tayin ettirmiş.”

30 Pamukciyan, Kevork, *Ermeni Kaynaklarından Tarihe Katkılar*, 4 Volumes, 2003, Aras Yayıncılık, İstanbul.

31 Pamukciyan, Kevork, “Bedros Keresteciyan”, *AnaBritannica*, vol.XII, p.:204.

was well acquainted in French, English, Arabic and Persian. After his return to Constantinople, he worked as editor at of the newspaper *Tercüman-ı Ahval* as editor and also published some articles in another newspaper *Basiret*.<sup>32</sup> He worked as manager at the External Communications Office of the Sublime Porte(*Babıali Harici Muhaberat Kalemi Müdürlüğü*) up to 1890<sup>33</sup>. After 1890 to his death in 1909, he was the manager of the Translations and External Communications Office of the Finance Ministry (*Maliye Nezareti Tercüme ve Harici Muhaberat Kalemi Müdürlüğü*). His major work is “*Quelques materieux pour un dictionnaire etymologique de la langue turque*” published in London in 1912 ( Some Materials for the Etimological Dictionary of the Turkish Language/*Türk Dilinin Bir Etimolojik Sözlüğü İçin Bazı Malzemeler*). Furthermore, he prepared an etimological dictionary of the Armenian language and it was published in 1945<sup>34</sup>.

Based on the assumption that Berç Türker-Keresteciyan could have been considerably influenced by his uncle, there is need to touch upon Bedros Keresteciyan's world view with reference to the newspaper in which he worked and published articles, and the positions he occupied in the bureaucracy. Firstly, the newspaper *Tercüman-ı Ahval* for which he worked as editor for an uncertain period should be discussed. This newspaper was published by Agah Efendi and İbrahim Şinasi<sup>35</sup> who appeared for a short while<sup>36</sup>. It was known as the first newspaper published by Ottoman Turkish/Muslim intellectuals without any support from the government, and financed independently. In a polemic with the semi-official newspaper *Ceride-i Havadis*, which was owned by an English, *Tercüman-ı Ahval* appear to be proud of being a non-official and private newspaper owned by a Muslim<sup>37</sup>. Agah Efendi, who was the owner of the newspaper from the beginning to the end (1862-67), was an official in the Office of Translation of the Sublime Porte(*Babıali Tercüme Odası*). The *Tercüman-ı Ahval* was a paper which introduced journalism as a respectable occupation, and promoted public opinion, values

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32 Ibid, p.:204.

33 Pamukciyan, Kevork, “Atatürk'ü Ermeniler de Sevmişlerdi”, *Biyografileriyle Ermeniler (Ermeni Tarihinden Tarihe Katkıları-IV)*, 2003, Aras Yayıncılık, İstanbul, p.: 276.

34 Pamukciyan, Kevork, “Bedros Keresteciyan”, *AnaBritannica*, vol.XII, p.:204.

35 See: Ebuzziya, Ziyad, *Şinasi*, ed. by: Hüseyin Çelik, 1997, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul.

36 İskit, Servet, *Tercüman-ı Ahval ve Agah Efendi*, 1937, Ankara, p.:12.

37 Ibid, p.:28.

of European enlightenment and freedom of expression<sup>38</sup>. Another conspicuous characteristic of this newspaper was its writers' consciousness about the significance of language in shaping the public opinion and its contribution in creating a new literary language which was close to vernacular<sup>39</sup>. It should be mentioned that most of the writers of *Tercüman-ı Ahval* were coming from the Translations Office of the Sublime Porte, including Agah Efendi, Mehmed Şerif, and Namık Kemal<sup>40</sup>. It seems that Bedros Keresteciyan's affinity with the newspaper and that circle of people originates from his post in the Office of The External Communications Office of the Sublime Porte which must be institutionally connected to the Translations Office. It is also understandable that they published a lot of translations of articles from European newspapers and encyclopedias, based on their affinity with European languages and their aim at introducing European way of thinking to the public. Even though Kevork Pamukçiyen claims that he was the chief editor of the newspaper and worked in its publication for an uncertain period, the only monograph on the newspaper by Servet İskit never mentions him. Finally, *Tercüman-ı Ahval* was ceased to be published after Agah Efendi moved to Paris in 1867 together with Namık Kemal and Ziya Bey, all of them Young Ottomans/*Yeni Osmanlılar*<sup>41</sup>.

To this effect, there should be a possible intellectual connection of Bedros Keresteciyan to the *Yeni Osmanlı* movement. However, one can not clearly map out a homogeneous and original *Yeni Osmanlı* thought but perhaps some common political traits. It can be stated that a critical discourse was produced especially as a reaction to the the oligarchy of bureaucracy<sup>42</sup>. The notion of liberty (*Hürriyet*) was generally employed by them as an ideal denoting a freedom from monarchic and bureaucratic oligarchy and promoting the idea of constitutionalism and representation, but without a clear and consistent theoretical basis<sup>43</sup>. They were still in the mental bondages of the

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38 Ibid, p.:12.

39 Koloğlu, Orhan, "Basın (Osmanlı Basını: İçeriği ve Rejimi)", *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.1, 1985 İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.:76,

40 İskit, 1937, p.:23,27.

41 Ibid, p.:41.

42 Ortaylı, İlber, "Bir Aydın Grubu: Yeni Osmanlılar", *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.6, 1985, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 1702.

43 Mardin, Şerif, "Yeni Osmanlılar ve Siyasi Fikirleri", *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.6, 1985, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.:1701. See an extended version of this discussion: Mardin,

idea of keeping the integrity of the empire. They were the initial proponents of the idea of Ottomanism and the idea of a common homeland/*vatan* for all Ottoman subjects. All in all, they based their arguments mostly on Islamic(*Şer'i*) principles and tried to reconcile them with European notions of constitutionalism and representation, which was obviously not an easy attempt. Lastly, masonry was another component of most of their identities<sup>44</sup>. However, it is not known whether Bedros Keresteciyan was also a mason.

Another newspaper in which Bedros Keresteciyan published some articles was *Basiret*. This newspaper was published by Basiretçi Ali Efendi between 1870-78, and also for a short period following the Young Turk revolution of 1908<sup>45</sup>. Mainly, there were two tracks of views published in this newspaper. The first is one which was produced by people like Polonyalı Hayreddin and Mustafa Celaledin Paşa who were of Polish origin and left from Austria-Germany and Russia following the unsuccessful revolution of 1848. They brought with themselves European romanticist nationalistic ideas and introduced them to the Ottoman intellectual circles. They also contributed to the advocacy of the Prussians by the newspaper and Basiretçi Ali in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which influenced the palace circles towards a German sympathy because the newspaper was read in these circles<sup>46</sup>. The other track was composed of the writers like Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Ali Suavi, Namık Kemal and Suphipaşazade Ayetullah trying to voice a conservative Turco-Muslim intellectual reaction to the Muslim/non-Muslim equality which was perceived as working for the part of the non-Muslims. They were advocating a reform more of a balanced character between Muslims and non-Muslims and a way to achieve this aim with more participatory and constitutionalist notions<sup>47</sup>. In general, the newspaper seems to have defended both the idea of Ottomanism(*İttihad-ı Osmani*)and Islamism(*İttihad-ı İslam*). Ottomanism was employed as a pragmatic tool to keep the internal integrity of the empire with reference to

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Şerif, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 2000, Syracuse University Press, New York.

44 Mardin, Şerif, "Tanzimat ve Aydınlar", *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.1, 1985, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.:46.

45 Yerlikaya, İlhan, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasi Hayatında Basiret Gazetesi*, 1994, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Van, p.: 56-62.

46 Ibid., p.:56-67.

47 Ibid., p.:68-80.

nationalism spread among non-Muslim communities. On the other hand, Islamism was a political tool to keep the Muslim populations of the empire especially against Panslavic tendencies of Tzarist Russia<sup>48</sup>. Although Kevork Pamukçyan says that Bedros Keresteciyan published some articles in *Basiret*, an unpublished M.A. thesis<sup>49</sup> on that newspaper that presents a thematic index of all articles on literature and culture does not include any reference to any work written by Bedros Keresteciyan. One reason for this may be the existence of numerous unnamed articles among which some may belong to Bedros Keresteciyan. Another reason may be that Bedros Keresteciyan did not use his original name but a nickname which cannot be found out.

Besides these newspapers, it is necessary to focus on the bureaucratic positions Bedros Keresteciyan held, first as the manager of the External Communications Office of the Sublime Porte (*Babiali Harici Muhaberat Kalemi Müdürlüğü*) from the 1860's to 1890, and finally as the manager of the External Communications and Translations Office of the Ministry of Finance (*Maliye Nezareti Harici Muhaberat ve Tercüme Kalemi Müdürlüğü*) up to his death in 1909. Non-Muslims were accepted to the Ottoman bureaucracy after the emergence of the reformist Tanzimat elite and the measures taken towards Ottomanism and egalitarianism through the 1839 and especially 1856 edicts<sup>50</sup>. In the case of the Armenians, the Greek Revolt of 1821 provided them with opportunities in acquiring new bureaucratic positions as a loyal component of the society<sup>51</sup>. Non-Muslims participated largely in civil bureaucratic positions and in the administrative and representative councils of the provinces with sizable non-Muslim populations<sup>52</sup>. The distinctive feature of non-Muslim officials in the bureaucracy was their cultural westernism and their acquaintance in western languages, especially in French. They seem to have held the positions that were created with the reforms like

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48 Ibid., p.:102-121.

49 Kurt, Ali, *Basiret Gazetesinin Edebiyat ve Kültür Yazılarının Sistematik İndeksi (1870-1878)*, 1999, İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, unpublished M.A. thesis.

50 Findley, Carter V., *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire- The Sublime Porte 1789-1922*, 1980, Princeton University Press, Princeton-New Jersey, p.: 205.

51 Findley, Carter V., "The Acid Test of Ottomanism: Acceptance of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Bureaucracy", *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, vol.:1*, ed. by: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 1982, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York and London, p.: 341.

52 Ibid., p.: 343. See Krikorian, Mesrob K., *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire 1860-1908*, 1977, Routledge, London and Çark, Yunacunt, *Türk Devleti Hizmetinde Ermeniler 1453-1953*, 1953, İstanbul, for the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic.

translation offices, communications and councilar offices, and those positions that could not be occupied by the traditionalistic segment of the Muslim elite due to their lack of knowledge in Western culture and affinity with Western languages<sup>53</sup>. Especially, the Galatasaray Lycee(*Mekteb-i Sultani*) for Muslims and European colleges for non-Muslims paved their way to the Ottoman bureaucracy, more specifically towards Foreign Correspondence and Translations Offices(*Harici Muhaberat ve Tercüme Kalemi*) for both parties to be initially trained<sup>54</sup>. Thus, Findley argues that the non-Muslims formed an intermediary position between the modernist western educated Muslim elite and the traditionalistic Muslim elite. Added to this position that is defined as intermediary, the shared cultural westernism valued by the modernist Muslim elite brings them into patterns of acceptance and promotion in the bureaucracy by the westernist elite that can be described as patron-client and patrimonial household relationships. This situation was a reflection of the imperfect rational systematization of bureaucratic promotion<sup>55</sup>. To be able to illustrate the position of non-Muslims in the Ottoman bureaucracy two explanatory points need to be expressed. The first is the issue of the reformers' trust in the non-Muslims and the critique they received because of the suspicion on them due to nationalist separatism. The second point is that the non-Muslim officials' minds were confused due the rising nationalism in their respective communities. This split of minds and attitudes among the non-Muslim officials and towards them seem to be culminated in the reign of Abdülhamit II, especially with respect to the Armenians in 1890's<sup>56</sup>. Even though political developments after 1870 created conditions that developed mutual distrust between the non-Muslim officials and the westernist Muslim elite, the non-Muslims still occupied a significant portion of the Ottoman civil bureaucracy and even held some ministries between 1878 and 1919<sup>57</sup>. Compared to the decline of Ottomanist and egalitarian ideals in the Ottoman empire, the relationship between non-Muslimism and westernist Muslims within the administration, noting the weak rational systematization of the bureaucracy, can be regarded relatively successful in the way to create a cosmopolitan environment where

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53 Findley, 1980, p.: 207.

54 Findley, 1982, p.: 374, 354.

55 Findley, 1980, p.:207-209.

56 Ibid, p.: 208-209, 218.

57 Findley, 1982, p.: 356.

Ottomanism and egalitarianism could be experienced to a certain degree. However, this cosmopolitan environment within the bureaucracy would consolidate the overall loyalty of non-Muslim populations<sup>58</sup>.

At this point, a brief analysis of Bedros Keresteciyan's formation, his relationships and his possible world view might help us in understanding the early formation of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan. Looking at the education he received in İzmir (Mesrobyan school, in Paris (Muradyan College) and London, it seems that he was raised in the Armenian community but received a Western education. In the period of his education in Paris and London, he might have had a contact with some of the future Ottoman elite. Additionally, it can be assumed that he developed a secular ethnic consciousness of a distinctive Armenian identity in Mkhitarist Muradyan College, since Mkhitarist schools were well developed in terms of scholarly works on Armenian language, history and culture, and also in difusing an Armenian patriotism to the students<sup>59</sup>. However, his life after returning to the empire does not give us an obvious clue of a nationalist/political Armenian patriotism but his work on an etymological dictionary of Armenian language might have originated from the scholarly discipline, developed at the Muradyan College as a non-political aspect of Armenian patriotism. His acceptance to the Ottoman civil bureaucracy in the Foreign Correspondence and Translations Offices should depend on a possible early established relationship with an Ottoman official, Armenian or Muslim, and on his acquaintance with Western languages as well as Ottoman (his knowledge of Arabic, Persian and his extended knowledge of Turkish was as far as to write an etymological dictionary of Turkish). His extended knowledge of Ottoman language was important because a significant portion of non-Muslim officials were not well-versed in Ottoman so much that some of them could not even write their resumeés correctly. This interest in Ottoman language is reflected directly to Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's formation by his uncle by hiring teachers of Turkish language and music at home. Possibly on the basis of his relationship to the reformist Muslim bureaucrats, he became editor in *Tercüman-ı Ahval* and published articles in

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58 Ibid, p.: 365.

59 Oshagan, Vahe, "Moden Armenian Literature and Intellectual History from 1700 to 1915", Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times Vol.II, ed. by.: Richard G. Hovannisian, 2004, Palgrave Macmillan, New York,p.:142-144.



*Basiret*. As a consequence, he had a close contact with the people composing the Young Ottoman movement. However, it is not possible to claim that he was an active member of any of the factions of the Young Ottomans, and the research literature does not mention his name as part of this movement, nor are his ideas and contributions to *Tercüman-ı Ahval* and *Basiret*. In the confines of the sources available, one can suppose that he might have contributed to these newspapers in terms of literary editorship due to his extended knowledge of Western languages and on Ottoman language. He might have published articles about linguistics or he might have published translations of newspaper and encyclopedic articles from Western sources. Lastly, he might have contributed to the press through diplomatic news that he had from his office that most of others could do, too. In terms of his view on political questions of the time, his social networks and his occupation implies that he would have opted for constitutionalist Ottomanism with references to egalitarianism and representation. However, this is merely a speculation since there is no clue of his political writings or activism neither in the Ottomanist movement and newspapers nor in the Armenian organizations. It seems that he chose spending his time more on his academic studies and prepared etymological dictionaries of Turkish and also of Armenian languages which should be very time and energy consuming. He most probably has not taken part in Armenian revolutionary activities, since he could keep his position in the Ottoman bureaucracy up to his death (1909), indeed throughout the reign of Abdülhamit II where relations with Armenians clearly deteriorated. It can be argued that cosmopolitan Ottomanism rather than Armenian nationalism determined his worldview, some aspects of which may have been inherited to Berç Türker-Keresteciyan in his early formation.

### **1.3. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's Education: 1878-1893**

To be able to illustrate the period from 1878 to the beginning of the 1890's where Berç Türker-Keresteciyan received his education, it seems necessary to look at the background of the Hamidian regime and its policies, and the Armenian Question. After the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78 and the Congress of Berlin, Abdülhamit II and his loyal camarilla, turned their attention to the Muslim populations of the empire who now

constituted a large majority of the Ottoman population, i.e. close to 80 %. By modernizing infrastructure measures and investments in the regions largely populated by Muslims, and by creating opportunities of receiving modern education for Muslims, they aimed at creating a common identity around Islam<sup>60</sup>. The principle behind this fresh orientation towards Muslims was the idea of directing the loyalty of these subjects to the Sultan bore the title of Caliphate and who was identified with the state itself<sup>61</sup>. It was believed that education was a useful way to achieve this aim. The Islamization in the principles and curricula of schools, their strict control and disciplining, and the foundation of Tribal Schools/*Aşiret Mektepleri* refers to this attitude. Additionally, it should be noted that discontent and nationalist tendencies were about to emerge among the Muslim populations such as Albanians, Kurds and Arabs<sup>62</sup>. As a further notice, it was not that easy to create a common Islamic identity and loyalty based on this identity because the doctrines and experiences of Islamic life in the empire varied considerably. The Hamidian regime attempted at turning this diversity into a common understanding of Islam in line with Sunni-Hanefi Orthodoxy. However, the ideological tendency in this period towards creating an Islamic social cohesion did not mean that Ottomanism was abandoned totally but the political elite spent its energy more to increase the social cohesion among Muslim populations rather than heavily focusing on the problem of preventing Christian separatist nationalisms which were already at the peak<sup>63</sup>. Lastly to note, the Hamidian period was a period of deep suspicions and police surveillance that can be read as a reflection of the traumatic impact of the constant wars, territorial losses, internal discontent and violence, and partly a product of the paranoid character of the Sultan himself.

The Armenian Question, one of the main issues of the Hamidian period, is a part of his general picture. The Congress of Berlin meant the internationalization of the Armenian Question, the institutionalization of the tensions between the Armenian Patriarchate and the Sublime Porte and deepening of the distrust of the Ottoman ruling

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60 Çetinsaya, Gökhan, "İslami Vatandaşlıktan İslam Siyasetine", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, ed. by: Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 270-271.

61 Alkan, 2002, p.: 388.

62 Ibid., p.: 386-391.

63 Çetinsaya, 2002, p.: 271.

elite toward the Armenians. Although the Ottoman government was bound by the article 61 of the Berlin Congress to carry out reforms in Eastern Anatolia under the supervision of European powers, the daily conditions of the Armenians in the region did not improve, and intercommunal tensions increased<sup>64</sup>. The period after the Congress of Berlin was a process in which the Ottoman government initially tried to freeze the Armenian Question and then the question turned into an open violent conflict leading to terror. The political condition of lack of freedom and police surveillance had its impact on the Armenians, too. The critical threshold of remaining loyal and displaying it became clearly significant especially for the Armenians in the Ottoman bureaucracy who composed nearly one third of it<sup>65</sup>. At the end of 1880's, Armenians in Eastern Anatolia began to form revolutionary political organizations such as the *Armenakan* (1887/Van), the *Hnchakian* Party (1887/Geneva), the *Dashnaksutiun* Armenian Revolutionaries Federation (1890/Tiflis) whose aims were to educate masses, self-defense and revolutionary tactics of agitation and terror. Some of these organizations had Russian connections and socialist ideals in their programs, to be implemented following the economic and political liberation of the Armenians<sup>66</sup>. Terrorization and open violent encounter came to concrete terms in the incidents of 1890 which broke out in Erzurum and in Kumkapı. These two incidents alarmed the Sultan and the Armenian Patriarchate<sup>67</sup>. However, the Ottoman-Armenian relations deteriorated even further in the following years and decades.

Having discussed the influence of his uncle on Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the general characteristics of the education he received needs to be assessed to be able to uncover the underlying factors in his early formation. The first school he attended was the Galatasaray Lycee(*Mekteb-i Sultani*). This school “was founded in 1868 as a public *sultani* school, aiming the Ottomanist goal of providing education for both Muslim and non-Muslim pupils.”<sup>68</sup>. It offered an intercommunal education in line with the Tanzimat

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64 Hovannisian, 2004, p.:212.

65 Kırmızı, Abdülhamit, *II. Abdülhamit Dönemi (1876-1908) Osmanlı Bürokrasisinde Gayrimüslimler*, 1998, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, unpublished M.A. thesis, Ankara, p.: 87-91.

66 Nalbandian, 1963, p.: 67-132.

67 Hovannisian, 2004, p.: 218.

68 Somel, Selçuk Akşin, *The Modernization of the Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908- Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, 2001, Brill, Leiden, p.: 52.

ideals of Ottomanist pluralism<sup>69</sup> and it was supposed to accept half Muslim and half non-Muslim students which was not fully but mostly realized<sup>70</sup>. The curriculum was organized with mainly secular principles (natural scientific and utilitarian) with the idea of creating an Ottoman ruling elite of multi-religious origins and keeping the multi-ethnic population of the empire together. This school was founded with the collaboration of the French Ministry of Education. However, courses on natural sciences, law, philosophy and classical European languages such as Greek and Latin which were taught in French, were accompanied by courses such as Religion, Ottoman History, Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Literature, Geography and Calligraphy which were taught in Ottoman<sup>71</sup>. Similarly, the justification document for the Regulation of Public Education of 1869 stated the necessity for mixed education with the idea to “strengthen the mutual understanding and friendship among the children of different religious communities”<sup>72</sup>. Strikingly, the foundation of a mixed school with a secular curriculum led to a reaction both among Islamists and non-Muslim conservatives from religious circles, who become worried of losing their power and control over their communities<sup>73</sup>. Following the accession of Abdülhamit II to the throne, some measures were taken for a stricter control on the schools in line with the pan-Islamist ideology and for the indoctrination of the Islamic principles and elimination of contradictory elements to Islam from the curricula, including Galatasaray Lycee<sup>74</sup>. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's passage from Galatasaray Lyceé to Robert College was due to the increasing tension between the Armenians and the Ottoman government, and the rising activities of the Armenian revolutionary movements in Constantinople. Under these conditions, his uncle might have thought, that the Robert College was a safer enclave for non-Muslims than the Galatasaray Lyceé which as a public school was open to arbitrary government interventions, which could have an adverse effect on Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's education.

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69 Ibid., p.: 12; Alkan, Mehmet Ö., “İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyet'e Modernleşme ve Ulusçuluk Sürecinde Eğitim”, ed. by: Kemal H. Karpat, Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye'si, 2004, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul p.: 79-80.

70 Şişman, Adnan, Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi'nin Kuruluşu ve İlk Eğitim Yılları 1868-1871, 1989, Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul, p.: 19.

71 Somel, 2001, p.: 52-53.

72 Somel, 2001, p.: 88.

73 Alkan, 2004, p.: 112.

74 Somel, 2001, 180-182.

The second school to which he attended after Galatasaray Lyceé was the Robert College. This school was founded in 1863 as a Protestant quasi-missionary school in Constantinople. In addition to religious aims, missionary activities had economic, social and cultural aspects, leading to comprehensive changes among the targeted regions or populations. Among the vehicles of missionary activities, schools held a prominent place<sup>75</sup>. In the Ottoman empire, Armenians were the most promising group for conversion to Protestantism. From the first half of the 19 th century onwards, Armenian community entered the religious and cultural influence of Protestant missionaries. By 1845, the number of Evangelical Armenians reached 8000 which alarmed the Armenian Patriarchate. This was the product of the schools that they began to establish from 1834 onwards in those regions where the Armenian population was dense<sup>76</sup>. In order to explain the increasing interest of the Armenian community in these Protestant schools, one should consider the demand for high quality modern secular education among the Armenian middle class<sup>77</sup>, which could not yet be offered by the Armenian community schools or by the Ottoman state schools. In 1846, Evangelical Armenians announced the formation of the First Evangelical Armenian Church of Constantinople. Then an imperial edict was issued in 1847 establishing a separate *millet* for the Evangelical Christians of the Ottoman empire<sup>78</sup>. In the Protestant schools, together with English, the language of instruction was Armenian at the first classes, since the students were all Armenians. Additionally, the publications in Armenian in the Protestant printing press occupied the largest place<sup>79</sup>. Having drawn a picture of Armenian-Protestant relations roughly, it should be noted that Robert College was in fact not a strict Protestant missionary school, but stood just in good relations and collaboration with them<sup>80</sup>. The curriculum of Robert College was heavily secular in content<sup>81</sup> and positivist and liberal in character<sup>82</sup>. The profile of the students was heavily non-Muslim, where Armenians

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75 Kocabaşođlu, Uygur, Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika- 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluđu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları, 1989, Arba Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 21-24.

76 Barsoumian, 2004, p.:187-188.

77 Kocabaşođlu, 1989, p.: 177.

78 Barsoumian, 2004, p.: 188.

79 Kocabaşođlu, 1989, p.: 144-148.

80 Ibid., p.: 179.

81 Washburn, George, Cennetin Sonbaharı- Kolej Anıları (1863-1903), 2002, Atlantis, İstanbul, p.: 242.

82 Kocabaşođlu, 1989, p.: 222.

after Bulgarians numbered the most. The number of Muslim students was very few or none<sup>83</sup>. To be able to illustrate the picture for the Armenians at the time and at the school, George Washburn's memoir offers an insight. Washburn, who was the first director of the school, expresses that the increasing tension between the Armenians and the Ottoman government in 1880's was the product of the dullness of the Armenian revolutionary movements whose case was not the same as the newly independent Bulgarians but whose expectations were the same, and the inability of the Ottoman government in taking reform measures in the Eastern Anatolia. According to him, their attempt at alarming the Christian European powers was in vain. The atmosphere of terror and discomfort in Constantinople in the 1880's also decreased the number of the Armenian students of Robert College<sup>84</sup>. However, those Armenian families who did not give credit to the revolutionary movements continued in large numbers sending their children to Robert College “where the peaceful improvements of enlightenment were presented<sup>85</sup>”. He defines his college as a school where a peaceful coexistence among the students of these fighting nations such as Bulgarians, Armenians, Greeks and Muslims/Turks, where they met under equal conditions, which was a significant portion of education<sup>86</sup>.

At this point, a brief analysis of his early formation needs to be presented. The general structure, mentality and the position of the Armenian community in the Ottoman empire begin to display symptoms of need for further reform and a grand question for the Ottoman administration. Initially, the structure of the organization of the Armenian community transformed considerably from its previous traditional form with lay participation in the Patriarchate. In addition to this structural change, a mental change towards a more secular stance with an ethnic-national consciousness of Armenianness can be observed. Lastly, an Armenian Question emerges and gets institutionalized with the Berlin Congress in 1878. While such great changes take place in the Armenian community, the personal story of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was also affected in his childhood and youth by these. The increasing tension between the Ottoman

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83 Washburn, 2002, p.: 225.

84 Ibid., p.: 249-251.

85 Ibid., p.: 272.

86 Ibid., p.: 256.

administration and the Armenian community multiplied by violence, should have had an impact on him as an Armenian child and youngster. Although one can not argue that the split in the minds and identity of the Armenian people between the ethnic-linguistic-national consciousness of Armenianness, and belongingness to the Ottoman political authority and the overall Ottoman realm, urgently forced them to yield to either of the two, the members of the Armenian community needed to reevaluate their positions in line with the newly emerging conditions and look to the future along this reevaluation.

In this context, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's uncle Bedros Keresteciyan who should have already developed a secular consciousness of Armenian identity in his formation and his parallel belongingness to the Ottoman realm with his positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy, the newspapers he worked for and the circle of people he was in close connection, reflects the newly emerging mental split beginning especially at the end of 1870's. In his reevaluation, it seems that he tried to keep his attachment to the cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman world to whose continuation he could owe keeping his position and interests, and to Ottomanist ideas in this line. For such people in the Armenian community, the end of the 1800's and the first decade of 1900's did not bring in a binary opposition between the two stances of mind and identity as the following period might have done so while the Ottoman world seemed to cease to exist. However, it should be noted that the atmosphere of suspicion and espionage of Abdülhamit II would accelerate the reevaluation of the positions of all Ottoman subjects towards a more secure position, not only the members of the Armenian community which had already been under focus at the time.

For the early formation of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the schools he attended attract attention. The first point to note is that he did not attend an Armenian community school. This point may display a lack of strong connection with the Armenian community in his childhood and youth. However, Galatasaray Lycee and Robert College were the schools where the cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman society was reflected so he had chances of having connections with Armenian friends and having education in Armenian language at Robert College. Having taken into consideration the identity of

his uncle and the schools he attended it seems that he should have experienced his childhood and youth at a certain distance to the Armenian community but with a secular Armenian identity. The critical point for his early formation is that this secular nature of his Armenian identity came into existence parallel with a cosmopolitan Ottomanness and a consequent attachment to Ottoman political authority and to the overall Ottoman realm. Thus, the secular nature of his Armenianness did not turn into Armenian nationalism.

#### **1.4.Early Professional Career of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan and the Period of Intercommunal Crisis:1890-1908**

Having established his early formation by expanding the pieces of information about his uncle and the schools he attended, it should be noted that there are not enough of details found to be narrated for his early formation to unfold more meaningfully and to have deeper insight into his life story. The problem in this regard can be put in such a way that the world surrounding him was tried to be highlighted while more details about his early formation might still take us out of his surroundings. In the following part, a short assessment of the latter Hamidian period will be presented. Additionally, the progress of the Armenian Question will be followed. Lastly, his early career in the Ottoman Bank after a 2 -year long employment in the Ministry of Finance will be given by references to the position and the institutional identity of the Ottoman Bank in the period. In the parentheses, it could not be found in Robert College records and the albums of graduates when he graduated or if he graduated exactly, and thus when he should have begun working in the Ministry of Finance and later in the Ottoman Bank. However, it can be fairly guessed that it should be at some point in the first 3 years of 1890's.

The beginning of the 1890's marks again a period of terrorism and counter terrorism. Abdülhamit II formed the local *Hamidiye* tribal gendarmes to put the local Kurdish tribes under military control, and also to help the army in suppressing the Armenian



uprisings in Eastern Anatolia. The major event shaking the empire and creating fresh reaction among the Western governments and public opinion towards the Armenian Question was the suppression of the Armenian resistance in Sasun region in 1893-1894<sup>87</sup>. In addition to this major event, an Armenian protest was organized in Constantinople in September 1895 that resulted in new a violent encounters among Armenians and Turks.<sup>88</sup> The bloody events of 1895 and 1896 in Anatolia and Constantinople proved that the central government was incapable of taking proper measures to keep its Armenian and Muslim subjects from being attacked by each other. These two years were violent to an extent which could nearly be described as an internal war in the Ottoman empire. The last blow to the relations between the Armenians and the Ottoman government came in August of 1896 with the raid of the Ottoman Bank by Armenian revolutionaries. This event contributed to the expansion of violence throughout the capital where especially Armenians fell victim. Despite all these events, the political and diplomatic result was a big disappointment for the revolutionary Armenians<sup>89</sup>. They were unable to gain any concrete political results and concessions from the Sublime Porte. The period after 1897 witnessed the exhaustion of the Armenian Question and, it lay dormant until the World War I although some violent encounters took place in a smaller scale in Sasun, Muş and Bitlis. Lastly to note, Armenian revolutionaries attempted at eliminating Abdülhamid II by a plot, supported by some other discontented segments of the society, but they failed<sup>90</sup>.

In the period in which Armenian revolutionary movements emerged and organized around some political parties, the educational modernization during Abdülhamid II produced in itself an opposition movement composed of bureaucrats, doctors, officers and writers, i.e. the Young Turks. They were harshly critical to the Hamidian regime with the liberal political thought of Western Europe that they were introduced in the modern Ottoman schools and in Europe<sup>91</sup>. The first organization came into being in the

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87 Shaw, Stanford J. and Shaw, Ezel Kural, 1997, p.: 203-204.

88 Hovannisian, 2004, p.: 221.

89 Eldem, 1999, p.: 231-239, Hovannisian, 2004, p.: 224-225, Shaw, Stanford J. and Shaw, Ezel Kural, 1997, p.: 204-205 and Nalbandian, 1963, p.: 176-178.

90 Hovannisian, 2004, p.: 226-230.

91 Hanioglu, Şükrü, The Young Turks in Opposition, 1995, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford, p.: 16-23.

Imperial Medical Academy as the Society of Union of Progress in 1889<sup>92</sup>. Roughly, three different ideas were advocated in the organization towards the common ideals of the proclamation of a constitution with an Ottomanist objective. The supporters of these ideas differentiated mainly in their ways to achieve their aim. Ahmed Rıza (in *Meşveret*) was voicing the incapability of the modernization efforts in sustaining the integrity of the empire and advocating reforms in political and social spheres, but he was more a conservative and moderate in his expectations<sup>93</sup>. Murad Bey (in *Mizan*) was harsher in his critiques than Ahmed Rıza but he was not a revolutionary in his approach, either<sup>94</sup>. Thirdly, Prens Sabahattin ( with *Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti*) as a prominent figure among Young Turks called for an Anglosaxon model of liberal ideals for a process of reform and fundamental social changes and political decentralization including the deposition of the Sultan<sup>95</sup>. Understandably, Abdülhamid II fought against these movements of thought and action by his police network and spies in the empire and in Europe, but he could not suppress them completely even though he prevented them from expanding<sup>96</sup>. As a response to these activities, Abdülhamid II played the cards of Islamism and Turkism respectively to delay an effective intervention of opposition and to strengthen the legitimacy for his rule<sup>97</sup>. However, “Abdülhamid's schools were producing an increasing number of bureaucrats, officers and intellectuals who, unlike most of the Young Ottomans and Young Turks who preceded them, came from the lower classes , were not related to the existing Ruling Class establishment, and were willing to change the system by force if necessary to achieve their ends”<sup>98</sup>. Especially in Macedonia and Salonika, lower level officers were composing the core of this second wave of opponents to the regime in the Committee of Union and Progress. Additionally, Abdülhamid II was not as powerful as before in getting information, policing and suppressing these people towards the end of his reign. At the end, a revolution took place in 1908 which was not planned and which did not depose the

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92 Ibid., p.: 20.

93 Mardin, Şerif, Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908, 1983, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 129-161.

94 Ibid., p.: 63-103.

95 Ibid., p.: 213-218.

96 Hanoğlu, Şükrü, Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük 1889-1902, 1986, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 124-139.

97 Shaw and Shaw, 1997, p.: 258-259.

98 Ibid., p.: 263-264.

Sultan. Abdülhamit II had to recall the parliament and to give up most of his power. This revolution opened the period of CUP rule<sup>99</sup>.

Furthermore, it seems necessary to address the emergence of Turkism and later Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman empire. The initial impulse for the emergence of a Turkic consciousness and rationale among Ottoman intellectuals comes from European orientalist studies of the history of the Turks before Islam and on Turkic languages<sup>100</sup>. Beginning with the introduction of these studies to Young Ottomans in Paris, the initial impact was transferred to the following generations of intellectuals with their additional studies on language and history<sup>101</sup>. This awareness of Turkicness was multiplied with the huge influx of non-Ottoman Turks into the empire after the Crimean war, and the arrival of non-Ottoman Turkish intellectuals from Russia and Central Asia who were also interested in creating contacts and a cultural unity with the Ottoman Turks, such as İsmail Gasprinski, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Hüseyinzade Ali and many others<sup>102</sup>. Despite the Turkic sentiments beginning to be rooted among the intellectuals, Turkish nationalism was not a proper political option because it directly contradicted with the Ottomanist ideals. The non-Muslim and non-Turkish Muslim populations of the empire still occupied a considerable place in the population of the empire and Abdülhamit II tried to suppress political Turkism even though he shared similar sentiments<sup>103</sup>.

Having graduated from Robert College, Bedros Keresteciyan had his nephew taken into the Ministry of Finance where he himself was working at the beginning of the 1890's. This pattern of acceptance to the bureaucracy well fits in the general schema drawn above for the Ottoman bureaucracy where imperfect rational systematization of acceptance and promotion permitted such incidences. As Berç Türker-Keresteciyan himself pointed out his uncle had him appointed to the Ottoman Bank after spending two years in the Ministry of Finance. He had already been taught by his uncle in the fields of finance and economics and received a Western secular education with a

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99 Ahmad, Feroz, The Young Turks- The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914, 1969, Calderon Press, Oxford, p.: 1-13.

100Kushner, David, The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908, 1977, Frank Cass, London, p.: 7-10.

101Ibid., p.: 10-11.

102Ibid., p.: 11-14.

103Shaw and Shaw., 1997, p.: 262.

knowledge of various Western languages such as English, French, Italian and some German<sup>104</sup>. The question of why Bedros Keresteciyan had his nephew appointed to the Ottoman Bank from the Ministry of Finance where he himself was working (1890-1909) may be answered with two main reasons. The first can be the vulnerability of the state bureaucracy to arbitrary interventions of Hamidian spies and informants, and which could take place in such a bureaucracy where patronage played a significant role. These characteristics of the regime and the bureaucracy created even greater risks for the Armenians when their relations with the Ottoman government turned into an open violent encounter. Secondly, the Ottoman Bank was an institution which was half European (English and French) and half Ottoman in character<sup>105</sup>. This would guarantee a safer position for Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's career where arbitrary interventions of the government to its personnel were less of a possibility and where he would have more chances of promotion and maybe also a better payment.

At this point, an assessment of the nature of the Ottoman Bank in the establishment of the Ottoman empire would be useful. It was initially founded as an English enterprise in 1856, as a trade bank<sup>106</sup>. However, beginning as a small trade bank, it expanded to have a leading role in the Ottoman finance market up to 1863. The Ottoman Bank succeeded to become a state bank (from *Banque Ottoman* to *Bank-ı Osmani-i Şahane*), and to enlarge the scope of its operations and increase its reputation by acquiring powerful privileges, for those each similar institution was competing harshly in 1863. From this point onwards, the Ottoman Bank consolidated its position as to no other institution of the same kind could challenge<sup>107</sup>. Ottoman Bank functioned as a bank of emission, a state bank carrying out the financial operations of the government and a trade bank with a highly developed market base. This three-partite function of the bank did not create controversies, reversely secured its place on stronger grounds. In an assessment of its nature in the Ottoman empire, its most interesting characteristic should be mentioned that the institution was both the Ottoman state bank and a private English-

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104Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

105Eldem, Edhem, Osmanlı Bankası Tarihi, 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 5.

106Ibid., p.: 52.

107Ibid., p.: 12.

French company. This institutional identity produced some ambiguities and sometimes difficulties in dealing with its legal identity and its dependencies. Besides a discussion of its Ottomanness, its supranational position gave it a critical and skeptical stance because it tried to keep its function of being the intermediary of state financial operations and its goal of gaining profit in a certain distance from each other<sup>108</sup>. Another aspect to its nature was the profile of its clients. The Ottoman Bank was in relation with a segment of Ottoman population which was mostly integrated to the rising capitalist economic system of the late 19 th and early 20 th century. The urban elite of the empire, which was still marginal but growing and composed of bureaucrats, merchants, entrepreneurs, and urban workers, officials, craftsmen and professionals, was the main axis of its client profile<sup>109</sup>.

Following the appointment of Sir Edgar Vincent as the general manager of the Bank in 1889, the Ottoman Bank began to acquire a real trade profile, and consequently a network of branches were established and personnel in line with this impulse<sup>110</sup>. This was the time frame in which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan entered the Ottoman Bank. As he himself pointed out in his resume, he began to specialize in script, accounting and currency operations branches by working ten hours a day<sup>111</sup>. To be able to understand the nature of the Ottoman Bank, its employment policies need to be uncovered. In essence, the Ottoman Bank was an institution which did not have a nationality. Additionally, Eldem argues that the Bank always saw political intervention as a threat to its proper functioning and autonomy as a responsible institution to its shareholders and as a private bank loyal to a criterion of rational profitability<sup>112</sup>. However, it is clear that the only level of employment that was subject to national criterion was the highest administrative level of the Bank. The general manager and its deputy were always English or French reflecting the share of the two nations in the Bank. From the level of branch managers to the lowest level servants, the Bank did never apply a policy of employment depending on a criterion of nationality or ethnicity.

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108Ibid., p.: 5-6.

109Ibid., p.: 2.

110Ibid., p.: 416.

111Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

112Eldem, 1999, p.: 413.

This does not prevent the emergence of certain patterns of employment, ranging from conscious preferences to the conditions forced externally. In any way, the Bank personnel reflects a variety of nationalities and ethnicities that could not be observed in any contemporary European bank. To describe a general and rough pattern, it can be said that the top level officials and most of the branch managers were Europeans. The middle level officials including some branch managers, were mostly non-Muslim (Armenians, Greeks, Jews and Christian Arabs) Ottoman subjects. At the bottom of the hierarchy, the number of Muslim Ottoman subjects was strikingly high who were performing any service including couriers, guards and doorkeepers<sup>113</sup>. A comparison of the proportions of different populations of the empire, and those of the Bank personnel shows that the picture was clearly in favor of the non-Muslim subjects<sup>114</sup>. This pattern of employment can be understood as a product of these backgrounds (Western language skills especially French, accounting and banking education, and culturally western orientation) that was required for the occupations in the Bank, and such backgrounds could be acquired mainly by the non-Muslims<sup>115</sup>.

During this period Ottoman Bank encountered two major crises, related to the Armenian Question. These were the crisis of 1895 and the raid of the Bank by Armenians. The first crisis originally emerged in London stock market in 1895, which then began to influence the stock market of Galata soon. This crisis situation was directed to the Ottoman Bank by a campaign claiming its responsibility in this crisis. This campaign of organized attacks at the Bank included the support of some Armenian nationalist committees those aiming at shaking the foundations of Ottoman Bank which was the state bank of the empire<sup>116</sup>. At the end of this crisis, although the Bank secured its place, it had to retreat to a more defensive position by decreasing its investments and credits in the empire with an additional sense of self-possessedness. The second development was a raid organized by the Armenian nationalist committees targeting the Ottoman Bank on the 26 th of August 1896. This raid was one of the seven attacks organized by these groups in Constantinople aiming at the weakening of the city is trade

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113Ibid., p.: 413-415.

114Ibid., p.: 417-418.

115Ibid., p.: 415-416.

116Ibid., p.: 165-169.

and finance, which would lead the lower classes to rise against the government. The Ottoman Bank was targeted because it did not represent only the Ottoman state, but also the European powers which would be alarmed on the Armenian Question. This was a move which greatly surprised the public in and out of the empire. This event stimulated a reaction among the Muslim population of the city and a lot of Armenians were massacred in the streets of Constantinople. It also created a wave of sympathy to the Armenian Question and an equal anger towards the repressive Hamidian regime, and also a condemnation to the anarchic and violent methods that the Armenian aggressors used<sup>117</sup>. To refer to the nature of the Ottoman Bank in the Ottoman empire, this event displays the intermediary position of the Bank between these two worlds. After this event, the Bank took some measures for its Armenian personnel due to its increasing worry concerning the future awaiting for them. The Armenians working in the Bank for a certain while would be sent to some safer places such as Egypt, Bulgaria and Cyprus, and the newcomers would be sent to their places of birth or to the USA with the financial support of the Bank<sup>118</sup>. However, the Bank did not need to change its policies of employment and this precaution was not needed in the long run, and Armenian officials kept on working in Constantinople and in other cities<sup>119</sup>. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan probably was sent to Cairo in these years because he mentions that he worked as the manager of the Cairo branch of the Bank<sup>120</sup> even though it is not known when he was in Cairo. Concerning the Bank's attitude towards the Hamidian regime, it can be argued that it had a negative one due to its arbitrary administration and measures. This negative attitude did not usually reflect a political concern but depended on the inefficient administration of the government funds and the constant demand of short term debts from the Bank<sup>121</sup>.

For this period of his life, the first thing to mention is his acquisition of his professional skills most probably in finance and accounting. It can be argued that the Ottoman Bank could be one of the most appropriate institutions to develop professional

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117Ibid., p.: 231-237.

118Ibid., p.: 238.

119Ibid., p.: 423.

120Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

121Ibid., p.: 240-241.

skills in these fields. Furthermore, the Ottoman Bank provides him with a cosmopolitan environment with its personnel and institutional identity including Ottoman and western aspects. This can be evaluated as the continuation of a contact to western civilizational sphere which had already begun in his education. This was also valid for his professional life in which he could learn western/modern ways of performing his job and also dealing with Ottoman subjects and more importantly institutions. When the Hamidian regime is concerned, it can be assumed that he should not have developed an emotional attachment to his rule but still he should have kept his loyalty to the Ottoman state in general and his ideological orientation to Ottomanism. The first reason is that his uncle was still working in the Ministry of Finance up to his death in 1909. the second reason is that the existence of the state was also in his interests for him to keep his position although the Ottoman Bank was not an Ottoman institution but functioning in its territories. He should not have given credit to the disintegration of the empire to an unknown configuration of political units also by assuming that he did not adopt Armenian nationalism in a cosmopolitan Ottomanist environment he experienced in his early formation. Concerning the developments between the Armenians and the Ottoman empire, his reconstruction of an anecdote he experienced during the raid of the Ottoman Bank by some revolutionary Armenians in 1896, shows that he presented these revolutionary Armenians as the tolls of the Tsarist Russia and the imperialist westerns powers. However, this was obviously a reconstruction of a past event strictly in line with the perception of the minorities in the single party period as instrumental in the conspiracies of foreign powers. It can be argued that he was not an Armenian nationalist which can be justified again with a retrospective maneuver that he would participate in the highest administrative councils of the Ottoman Red Crescent from its foundation in 1911 onwards. Another deduction can be made out of his participation in the Ottoman Red Crescent that corrects our previous assumption that he did not develop an emotional attachment to the Hamidian rule and he was close to a fragment of Unionist circles which could not be followed with the available sources.



### **1.5.II. Constitutional Period and the Ottoman Red Crescent:1908-1914**

As it was stated in the previous part, his early career in the Ottoman Bank provides us with clues of his surroundings supported by retrospective deductions from his later lifetime. In this part, the general political atmosphere of the II Constitutional period, the Union and Progress party and its rule, its relations with Armenian political organizations and the progress of the Armenian Question, the experience of the Ottoman Bank in this period and more critically his early participation in the Ottoman Red Crescent will be presented. The most crucial part of the story seems to be his participation in the highest administrative councils of the Ottoman Red Crescent which presents an initial clear political stance.

At this point, an outline of the general atmosphere from the Young Turk revolution of 1908 to the beginning of the World War I needs to be presented with an emphasis on the Armenian Question. The revolution was welcomed by nearly all segments of the society including non-Muslims and their nationalist political organizations. The new atmosphere was an atmosphere of freedom, and a praise of constitution and parliament was in the rise<sup>122</sup>. This atmosphere also witnessed a mushrooming of a huge number of political and civil organizations and publications. However, the reform measures expected from so different quarters and mostly contradicting each other could not be realized. Reversely, events such as the uprising of March 31 and the Adana events, (where Armenians revolted and led to massacres among communities) were suppressed by violence. The optimistic atmosphere of 1908 and 1909 did not last so long<sup>123</sup>. Although the CUP constituted the majority in the parliament and had the power to direct the government, it can not be said that they were able to form a political authority of their own between 1908-1913. The general aim of the CUP was roughly to form a modern central state with an Ottomanist citizenship identity, which had a pragmatic aspect to be modified due to the conditions, reserved for the society. The CUP congresses of 1910 and 1911 displayed the failure of the Ottomanist political ideal in terms of

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122Ahmad, Feroz, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914", Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, vol.:1, ed. by: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 1982, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York and London, p.: 401.

123Kansu, Aykut, Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-1913, 2000, Brill, Leiden, p.: 1-11.

cosmopolitanism and universal participation into political life. The failure lies in the fact that the understanding of Ottomanism of the CUP and the aims of non-Muslim political organizations could not be harmonized, and a common frame could not be formulated for creating an Ottoman identity for all subjects to construct the political future together. The military and political interventions of foreign European powers and the shock of the Balkan wars increased the suspicion and hostility of CUP towards its remaining Christian subjects. As a further note, the influx of Muslim populations and military officials from the regions lost in the Balkans contributed to the hatred towards Christians, too. Finally, the CUP opted for a militarist Turkish nationalism following the coup d'etat of 1913. This shift in the ideological outlook was also accompanied by the rise in the number of Turkist associations and publications. The foundation of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* as a para-military state organization, working with a principle of Turco-Islamic synthesis refers to the nationalist transformation and underground experience of CUP<sup>124</sup>.

After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, the CUP and the Armenian Dashnak Party joined the elections in alliance, lastly in 1912. It should not be understood that there was full recognition of each other on both sides without any conflicts. The nature of this relationship had more of an alliance-tension character<sup>125</sup>. The common ground for them was the opposition to the former Hamidian monarchy and the idea of making use of the atmosphere of freedom<sup>126</sup>. However, the CUP saw the demands of non-Muslim political organizations for more autonomy and reform as a factor leading the disintegration of the empire, and understood Ottomanism not from a liberal perspective but as a means to maintain the dominance of the principal element of the empire (Muslim-Turk) and keeping the loyalty of other elements to this authority. On the other side, non-Muslim political organizations saw the atmosphere of the revolution and the Ottomanist premises behind it as a means to achieve their national aims of autonomy or independence. Due to these mutually incompatible approaches, a real political communication and future obviously could not be maintained for a time<sup>127</sup>. It should

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124Ibid., p.: 11-22.

125Akçam, 2002, p.: 131.

126Ahmad, 1982, p.: 401-403.

127Akçam, 2002, p.: 117-126.

also be mentioned that the Armenian community was not homogeneous in terms of political power locus. The Armenian Patriarchate, for instance formed a stance for defending the interests of the merchant community of Constantinople and its own traditional privileges, while the Dashnaks “represented the aspirations of the rising intelligentsia, the artisans and tradesmen of Anatolian small-towns and the agricultural communities”<sup>128</sup>. The Armenian Patriarchate was not happy with the new CUP approach to the religious communities and their privileges because they profited from the cosmopolitan environment of the empire<sup>129</sup>. The relations between the Dashnaks and the CUP began to decay after the territorial losses of the empire as a result of the Balkan wars and the inclusion of Russia into the question the. CUP was ready to perceive the Russo-Armenian relations with suspicion which increased after the Balkan wars<sup>130</sup>. The attacks and massacres of Armenian armed gangs in Eastern Anatolia against Muslim population and, the participation of Armenian officers and soldiers, most of whom were already Russian subjects, to the Russian army in the Eastern front became a last drop for the all-powerful clique of CUP to pursue a policy of ethnic cleansing against the Armenians of Anatolia after 1914. The outbreak of World War I and the entrance of Ottoman empire to the war in alliance with Germany against Russia, Britain and France marks the period in which nearly all Armenians of Anatolia were deported from their lands with huge number of losses due to massacres, pillages, war conditions, diseases and hunger<sup>131</sup>.

Returning to our topic, we need to clarify, the position of the Ottoman Bank in the period after the Young Turk revolution up to 1915 and World War I. In his resumé, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan mentions that he worked in the Cairo and İzmir branches of the Bank as manager<sup>132</sup>. However, it is not known when he worked in these cities and returned to Constantinople because the Ottoman Bank archives are closed for research. On the side of the Bank, the revolution created a kind of gladness among the high level administrators, even in Paris and London. They initially evaluated this revolution as a transition from an arbitrary personal monarchy to a more open regime. The encouraging

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128Ahmad, 1982, p.: 402.

129Ibid., p.: 402-403, 419.

130Ibid., p.: 423.

131Akçam, 2002, p.: 197-336.

132Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

messages that Young Turks gave and their peaceful attitude towards the increasing tension in the region were welcomed. The situation was welcomed to the extent that the Bank administration prepared plans of how to contribute to the Ottoman war efforts when an open conflict broke out<sup>133</sup>. However, the Bank's enthusiasm of the new regime did not last very long. The administrators of the Bank soon realized that the new government had the same deficiencies that the previous one had. The negligence in realizing financial reforms, the fact that competing state financial institutions destroyed each others, reform efforts, rising political instability, increasing nationalist violence, the tendency of the new leadership to increase its political control and to disregard the liberal principles of the 1908 revolution, all these factors turned the optimism of 1908-1909 into a total disappointment when multiplied with the disastrous situation of the Tripoli and Balkan wars. In 1914, the Bank found itself in such a financial chaos that would lead it to break off the relations with the government, while, ironically the Bank was in the hope of gaining back the rights and capacities that the former regime had taken away<sup>134</sup>. Up to 1911, the Bank did not face any charge to challenge its status. This challenge came with a measure in an agreement signed in February 1911. This measure was dictating the appointment of three Ottoman administrators to the Executive Committee of the Bank in convenience with the articles of the agreement of 1875. This was a serious blow over the autonomy of the Bank that was vital for it. Additionally, this was a sign meaning that the new government was ready to politicize this non-national bank and curb its sovereignty. However, the impact of this crisis was not destructive because the Bank utilized this occasion to display its patriotic attitude to the government that might easily put blames on the Bank by its non-national character open to cooperation with foreign powers. By appointing three Ottoman administrators to the newly created and totally symbolic Executive Committee under the full control of the committees in Paris and London, the Bank avoided a possible harm. In any case, this was a symbolic gain of the Ottoman/Turkish nationalist demands and a sign of the radical change in the attitude towards the Bank<sup>135</sup>. When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I, English and French officials of the Bank fell into the position of being

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133Eldem, 1999, p.: 245.

134Ibid., p.: 249.

135Ibid., p.: 423-424.

citizens of belligerent countries. The Bank was under the threat of being confiscated but this did not happen. The general manager and his deputy had to leave the country until the end of the war and leave the administration of the Bank to the Ottoman administrators among those one was a Greek Orthodox (Cartali), one was a Catholic (Hanemoğlu) and one was an Armenian (Berç Keresteciyan)<sup>136</sup>.

Looking at Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, the period between 1908 and 1915 seems to be rather significant in his life story that gives us a clue of his identity and relations. In the third and last official foundation of the Ottoman Red Crescent (*Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*) in 1911, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was among the founding members of the society<sup>137</sup>. Thus, this institution will come under focus in line with our purposes. The first establishment of this organization goes back to 1869 as the Society for Assistance to the Wounded and Disabled as an attempt which remained futile<sup>138</sup>. However, the society was officially founded in 1877 again under the name of Ottoman Red Crescent (*Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*). However, at the end of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, the society was dissolved as its function had finished and its money was put into the Ottoman Bank<sup>139</sup>. The society founded for the second time officially in 1897 with the Greco-Ottoman war. The end of the war again terminated its existence<sup>140</sup>. In 1911, the society was founded for the third and the last time. The society was initially not supposed to develop any political or para-military character<sup>141</sup>. As Ada points out “As a semi-official charity society with the majority of the leading figures and members having state affiliations, it was something to be expected that the Ottoman Red Crescent would be affected by political developments”<sup>142</sup>. It was obviously possible that the society included pro-CUP or CUP affiliated staff in its structure<sup>143</sup>. The Central Committee and its Executive Committee were responsible for governing the activities of

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136Ibid., p.:425.

137Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Salnamesi, 1329-1331Senesi, 1329/1913, Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekası Matbaacılık Osmanlı Şirketi, İstanbul ,p.: 50-52 cited in Ada, Hüsnu, The First Ottoman Civil Society Organization in the Service of the Ottoman State: The Case of the Ottoman Red Crescent (*Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*), 2004, Sabancı University, unpublished M.A. thesis, İstanbul, p.: 159.

138Ada, 2004, p.: 23-24.

139Ibid., p.: 25-26.

140Ibid., p.: 26-27.

141Ibid., p.: 27.

142Ibid., p.: 27.

143Ibid., p.: 27, 33-34.

the Ottoman Red Crescent. Berç Türker- Keresteciyan was in the Executive Committee as the honorary cashier, the only non-Muslim member. He entered the Executive Committee in 1918 and in 1924 as the honorary accountant<sup>144</sup>. There was another prominent Armenian figure, Diran Kelekyan, in the Central Committee only up to 1915, because he died during the deportations. He was the editor of the newspaper *Sabah* and he was an Ottomanist intellectual. He also participated in many pro-CUP organizations such as *Milli Müdafaa Cemiyeti*<sup>145</sup>. Until the foundation of the republic, the society played important roles in the war of Tripoli, Balkan wars, World War I and the war of Independence<sup>146</sup>.

Most of the founders and administrators of the Ottoman Red Crescent were graduates of Military or Civil Medical schools<sup>147</sup> where the Young Turk movement also originated and organized as an opposition party against the Hamidian regime. That is why, many members of the society were members or the affiliates of CUP by taking part in some of its organizations or having some personal or political links<sup>148</sup>. However, there were some exceptional characters who did not sympathize to the CUP government like Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha who was sent to diplomatic mission by CUP government when he was the president of the society<sup>149</sup>. Even though most of the people in its Executive Committee were not politically very significant people and did not occupy high positions in CUP government, it can not be claimed that they did not have a political character. They at least had obvious affiliations with the CUP. In addition to this pro-CUP character of the society, the rising Turkish nationalism began to be a significant characteristic of its members within the context of the period, too. This was an observable tendency in the ideology of CUP from Ottomanism to Turkish nationalism, especially after the Balkan wars<sup>150</sup>.

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144Ibid., p.: 30-33.

145Akşin, Sina, *100 Soruda Jön Türkler ve İttihat Terakki*, 1980, Gerçek Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 230 cited in Ibid, p.: 32.

146Ada, 2004, p.: 36.

147Ibid., p.: 125.

148Ibid., p.: 113-124.

149Ahmad, Feroz, *İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914*, tr.: by: Nuran Yavuz, 1995, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 60 cited in Ibid., p.: 30.

150Ada, 2004,p.: 125.

Furthermore, while there were 44 non-Muslim and foreign members in the society out of 66 during its foundation in 1877, 17 out of 100 non-Muslim and foreigners took place among the founding members in 1911<sup>151</sup> which can be evaluated with the decrease in the number of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects and the continuing ideological dissolution of Ottomanism. In terms of the occupation of its founders, doctors occupied the highest place and the number of state affiliated (members of the dynasty and bureaucrats) people were also attracting attention. In this respect, the member profile displays an elite and state dominated character, on the other hand it turns more into a civilian one at the provincial level<sup>152</sup>. An assessment of the leading figures shows that they shared some common characteristics which were idealism, patriotism, previous opposition to the Hamidian autocracy, and later attachment to the rising Turkish nationalism with CUP affiliations, and were graduates of schools which offering modern education<sup>153</sup>. Lastly, it had a semi autonomous position vis-a-vis state, and as an establishment it maintained its international connection to the Red Cross organization but at the same time it mainly worked as an extension of the military sanitation administration<sup>154</sup>.

For this period of his life story, the most significant thing was his participation in the highest administrative councils of the Ottoman Red Crescent beginning with the foundation of the organization in 1911. This was an expression of a clear political attitude. It can be deduced from his participation that he had close connections with Unionist circles but it could not found which possible fragment or people he had connections. In addition to a possible connection, he should have adopted at least some of the common characteristics of the founders of this organization. These may be idelism, patriotism, a previously developed opposition to the Hamidian regime and an early acquisition of connections to western/modern civilizational aura. Moreover, he should have had chances of to be introduced to the emerging Turkish nationalism and its proponents just before his participation in this organization or during his participation. However, one can not easily speculate on his adoption of Turkish nationalism

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151Ibid., p.: 37-38.

152Ibid., p.: 40.

153Ibid., p.: 124-126.

154Ibid., p.: 127.

necessarily in this period although the signs of a coming rupture with the Ottomanist ideals seemed to be beginning to be felt. This speculation should be limited to the possibilities of tracing his position after the foundation of the republic with the previously acquired connections to the future Turkish nationalist political and military elites in a context of more consolidated political future possibilities. It should also be noted that his professional background he developed in the Ottoman Bank should have played a role in his participation in this organization. This would not have been obviously a strong factor if it had lacked a certain distance or opposition to Armenian nationalism.

#### **1.6. World War I: Berç Türker-Keresteciyan as a Director of the Ottoman Bank**

After a period in which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan acquired a certain stance in terms of political considerations by participating in the highest administrative council of the Ottoman Red Crescent, another interesting period was opened in his life story with the World War I. In this part of the study, the participation of the empire in the war, the deportation of Armenians of Anatolia and its tragic consequences, the position of the army and Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's changing position in the Bank administration, and the role of the Ottoman Red Crescent in the war with the place of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan in the organization.

Although the CUP government was not completely willing of joining the World War I due to the damages of Tripolitanian and Balkan Wars, the ambitious plans of Enver in particular and some of German-educated officers of the army dragged the Ottoman empire into the war, in alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary and against Britain, France and Russia<sup>155</sup>. The main motivation behind the decision to enter the war was to keep the territorial integrity of the empire against the imperialist ambitions of major European powers, openly aiming at partitioning its territories sooner or later<sup>156</sup>. Added to this motive was another ambition of Enver and some people of his circle to gain the lost territories in the Balkans back and to establish a possible Pan-turanist relationship

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<sup>155</sup>Shaw, 1997, p.: 310.

<sup>156</sup>Ahmad, Feroz, Turkey- The Quest for Identity, 2003, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, p.: 63.



with the Turkic peoples of Russia, Persia, and Central Asia. In the decision to take side with the Germans, the friendship between the two states during the Hamidian period, especially at the level military elites, the reluctance of Britain and France to come to terms with the Ottomans prior to the war, and the Russian threat for the Eastern Anatolian territories were also decisive<sup>157</sup>. Ottoman armies fought at various fronts under the conduct of both Ottoman and German generals such as Galicia, Rumania and Macedonia in Europe, Caucasias in the northeast, Iraq and Iran in the southeast, Syria and Egypt in southwest and Gallipoli in the northwest<sup>158</sup>. The Ottoman army scored major success in the defense of Gallipoli (1915) and in Caucasus thanks to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia. In southern fronts Ottoman armies were defeated and the army in Bulgaria was about to be defeated. The very possible attack of Allied forces towards Constantinople from Thrace signed the turning point for the Ottomans to accept the defeat<sup>159</sup>. In October 1918, the armistice of Mondros was signed with Britain among Allied powers. Even though this document did not mean a total submission of the empire to Allied powers, it included very flexible articles that gave a large enough space of maneuver to the victorious parties for the occupation of Ottoman territories very soon<sup>160</sup>.

During the war, the ideology that was promoted by the state was principally pan-Islamism and Ottomanism and not Turkish nationalism. Although one can observe an increasing awareness of nationalism in CUP circles, they could not decisively affect the government policies especially in foreign policy<sup>161</sup>. However, the ideas of “country and nation”(“*vatan ve millet*”), even though they were obscure in the minds in terms of boundaries, gained a widespread voice in the society during the second constitutional period and crystallized during the series of wars and Muslim migrations that followed it<sup>162</sup>. The period of war also transformed the Ottoman society to a considerable extent when the preceding second constitutional period was included. Ahmad argues that “By

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157Shaw, 1997, p.: 310-312.

158Tunçay, Mete, “Siyasal Tarih 1908-1923”, *Türkiye Tarihi 4- Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980*, ed. by.: Sina Akşin, 1997, Cem Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 46.

159Ibid., p: 51.

160Ibid., p.: 55-59.

161Ahmad, 2003, p.: 67.

162Ibid., p.: 73.

its very dynamic, war became the most all-encompassing phenomenon of a country's situation, the dominant process to which all other social, political, economic and cultural processes were subordinated, and which, directly or indirectly, affected all members of society.”<sup>163</sup>. Beginning with the second constitutional period especially after 1913, the idea of incorporating the Ottoman economic domain into the capitalist system with its own national bourgeoisie began to be applied by CUP government. The war accelerated the process of the formation of a Muslim bourgeoisie. In addition, the war also helped to produce a small working class in the factories that had been established under German auspices for the purpose of war production. Lastly, wartime conditions generated a major occasion for the women to take part in public life more actively than before<sup>164</sup>.

During the war, another significant development was the massive deportation of Christian elements, Greeks and Armenians, from Anatolia. Especially for the Armenians, this process marked the end of the existence of this ethnic population in Anatolian lands. The only Armenian populations which were not subject to deportation was the Armenians in Constantinople and Izmir. However, it should be noted that the beginning point for deportations was the arrest of more than 2000 Armenian, intellectuals and elites in Constantinople on April 24/25 1915, by the CUP government<sup>165</sup>. Following the Balkan wars and major territorial losses, the Ottoman administration turned its face towards Anatolia. Together with the influx of Muslim refugees from Balkans to Anatolia emerged the sentiment of fear of a total annihilation and a feeling of hatred toward the Christian populations of Anatolia as internal enemies. The CUP government stuck to the idea that the only reliable element in the empire was the Turco-Muslim populations of Anatolia<sup>166</sup>. Although they did not propagate an open Turkish nationalism, the conviction to get rid of the “alien”/Christian elements of Anatolia was getting ripe. The Armenian political organizations began to demand a kind of autonomy in the 6 provinces of Eastern Anatolia from the end of 1912 onwards, and

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163Ibid., p.: 71.

164Ibid., p.: 72.

165Akçam, 2002, p.: 228

166Yerasimos, Stephanos, Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Ermeni Sorunu, 2002, Tübitak Matbaası, Ankara, p.: 10-11.

this demand was obviously perceived as a step toward Armenian independence and a process of disintegration. In this period, a reform project offering an autonomous status for this region was prepared by Russia and six major powers of Europe, and CUP government had to accept this in March 1914<sup>167</sup>. Under these conditions, the entrance into the war was a way to avoid the application of this a plan and a way to solve this problem in a radical way. Even though it can not be argued that the process of ethnic cleansing of the Christian populations of Anatolia was planned much before the war, the formation of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* to fight the internal enemies and the perception of the Christians elements as traitors by CUP government especially after 1913 shows that the future of relations between the government and the Christians would not end up in a friendship<sup>168</sup>. The attacks of the Armenian troops supporting the Russian army, the uprising in Van (1915), the perception that an overall Armenian uprising might be coming in Anatolia and the atmosphere of panic that was created by the critical process of the confrontation in Gallipoli, and Russian attacks in the east might have triggered the process for the elimination of the “internal enemy” which meant the decision to deport the Armenians from Anatolia except for Constantinople and Izmir, and the extermination of great part of them during the deportations<sup>169</sup>. The elimination of Armenians continued up to 1921. While the process of the transformation of a multi-national empire into nation states is a universal historical process, the Armenian Question within the Ottoman context emerged as the most tragic part of the struggle between peoples during the dissolution of a multi-national empire. This process can be interpreted neither as a reaction on the side of the Ottoman government to suppress the uprisings and punish the traitors, nor as process of a racist elimination of a population on the side of the Ottomans resulting from their barbarian traits<sup>170</sup>.

With the entrance of the Ottoman empire to the war, the Ottoman government began to demand more financial support from the Ottoman Bank. The administrators of the Bank realized that the government was entering into an adventurous process which would not be able to be held in acceptable boundaries by an institution like the Ottoman

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167Ibid., p.: 11.

168Ibid., 11-12.

169Ibid., 13-15.

170Ibid., p.: 7-8.

bank. The resistance on the side of the Bank to meet the financial demands of the government fully was not acceptable for a state in war. This situation would in the end raise the question of the non-national or non-Ottoman character of the Bank. The only way for the high level administrators was acting without attracting the attention of the government and to evade its nationalization. The highest level administrators of the Bank (Nias, Steeg and Dupuis), who were from “wrong” nationalities, would leave their positions to their Ottoman colleagues with the beginning of the war in 1914. These were Cartali, Hanemoğlu and Keresteciyan. The appointment of these Ottoman officials to the highest positions up to the end of the war solved most of the problems between the government and the Bank<sup>171</sup>. However, this did not mean that some serious tensions and conflicts did not emerge. The relations went on in a sincere fashion despite all difficulties of the war time conditions for the government and thus for the Bank, with a special effort of keeping a kind of *modus vivendi*. However, the general harmony was to be shaken in the middle of 1916<sup>172</sup>. The idea of founding a bank that could be trusted in applying national economic policies was being shaped in government circles for some years. At the end of 1916, it seemed that the Bank would soon loose its ties with the state that it had by compromising its privilege of emission after 1925 and yielding to war time conditions<sup>173</sup>. The position of the Bank in the eyes of the CUP government was transformed by the appointment of Ottoman officials to the highest ranks but its foreign character (British and French capitals) still referred to an enemy element in line with the advises of the allied Germans. The only way for the government to overcome this apparent problem was to form a new private bank under strict state control. In 1917, the *Osmanlı İtibar-ı Milli Bankası* (Banque Nationale de Credit) was founded and had the privilege of emission for the period after 1925<sup>174</sup>. An interesting anecdote mentioned by Eldem was a discussion on the decision of internal borrowing of the government in 1918. The Bank took part on several levels in this process, and the agreement for internal borrowing was signed by the government, the *Düyun-u Umumiye* administration, and the Ottoman Bank. One of the members of the Executive Committee, Nuri Bey gave a patriotic speech and offered that the Bank should buy

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171Eldem, 1999, p.: 303-304.

172Ibid., p.: 323.

173Ibid., p.: 330.

174Ibid., p.: 331-333.

1.000.000 liras of state papers. While the general manager Cartali was offering a 100.000 liras paper to buy, Ali Cevad Bey and M. Hanemoğlu increased the amount to 200.000 liras. Lastly, Keresteciyan was supporting enthusiastically Nuri Bey in his patriotic feelings but by considering the liquidity needs of the Bank, he offered the highest purchase of state papers, 300.000 liras<sup>175</sup>. At the end of the war, the foreign administrators of the Bank returned and took their positions back. The former English and French administrators of the Bank presented their feelings of gratitude to their Ottoman colleagues due to their loyalty and determination. Things seemed to be somehow normalized for the Bank after the war in the empire<sup>176</sup>. However, a new phase of war and a new regime were waiting for the Bank.

The above-mentioned atmosphere of crisis, the attitude of considering Christians as traitors, and the policy of deportations affected the Ottoman Bank to a considerable extent. Following the decision of deportation of Armenians, some news began to arrive at the Bank headquarters that some of its officials were to be moved to some remote parts of the empire from Erzurum, Samsun, Mersin, Antep, Kayseri and İskenderun. The administration of the Bank tried to avoid the damage of these relocations, and after serious efforts on the side of the government they managed to reach some compromises. The Bank was given a month time to send its officials from the provinces where deportations would be applied to other branches of the Bank where deportations were not enforced. Armenians working in those branches of the Bank, located at more secure provinces including Constantinople, were not moved<sup>177</sup>. The Bank faced similar situations for its English, French, Italian officials who were perceived as enemy elements and had to leave the empire during the war. Additionally, some of Muslim officials who were fit for warfare were called for to join the army. As a consequence, the Bank had to cope with these serious problems of stabilizing its personnel to function properly<sup>178</sup>.

During World War I, the Ottoman Red Crescent organized itself in accordance with

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175Ibid., p.: 346-347.

176Ibid., p.: 349.

177Ibid., p.: 426-427.

178Ibid., p.: 428-429.

war conditions. The Executive Committee, of which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was a member, decided to gather once a week and kept on its activities in this manner<sup>179</sup>. It should be mentioned that Berç Türker- Keresteciyan who was the honorary cashier in the committee initially, was brought to the position of honorary accountant instead of Hamit Bey who became the Deputy Chairman. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan contributed considerably to all financial operations of the society<sup>180</sup>. The incomes and expenses of the society were organized under ordinary (*alalade*) and extraordinary (*fevkalade*) budgets to adapt to war conditions. A bureaucrat-inspector praised the perfect organization of its accounts and balance sheets while investigating its accounts in 1923<sup>181</sup>. This should be interpreted as the accounting knowledge and discipline of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan as a financial expert which he gained while working at the Ottoman Bank. Furthermore, the Ottoman Red Crescent worked with all of its facilities and capabilities in all fronts of the war where Ottomans fought. The society formed hospitals, assistance stations offering food, shelter etc.. It helped to combat diseases both for the military and for the public, in the investigation and transportation of the lost and wounded soldiers<sup>182</sup>. Among the activities of the Ottoman Red Crescent, there were also contributions to an Armenian orphanage in Constantinople and to the 'Center for Helping the Armenian Migrants' (*Ermeni Muhacirlerine Yardım Merkezi*) which was founded to help the migrants to return to their former homes. The society helped the Armenian migrants who moved to Constantinople, and organized health care, provided medicine, clothing, food and hygienic conditions<sup>183</sup>.

With his participation in the Executive Council of the Ottoman Red Crescent and his following responsibility as the accountant of the organization, he had already presented a stance towards the political and military elites of the time and consolidated this stance with his success in his responsibility during the war. Another significant event of this period was the deportation of Armenians and its tragic consequences. During the deportations, he was among the 3 highest administrators of the Ottoman Bank appointed

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179Akgün, Seçil Karal and Uluğtekin, Murat, *Hilal-i Ahmerden Kızılaya*, 2002, TDV Yay., Ankara, p.: 188.

180Ibid., p.: 189.

181Ibid., p.: 194.

182Ibid., p.: 198-204.

183Ibid., p.: 230-231.

to that position as an Ottoman subject instead of foreigners, British and French administrators. There are mainly 3 points that can give us clues of the framework in which he might have developed his perspective on this issue. As it was mentioned before, it could be deduced from the anecdote he told at the parliament that he had an explanation of the Armenian nationalism as part of a conspiracy of foreign powers and some Armenians were instrumentalized by these imperialist visions. Additionally, in his reconstruction of the event, he referred to a dichotomy expressed by one of the guerrillas between the Armenians of Turkey in servitude to Turks and other Armenians. This reconstruction might have included a defensive position for the Armenians of Turkey in the single party era by justifying their loyalty to the Turkish state with a past event. In the same speech he told this anecdote, he called out to the Armenians of Hatay and advised them to embrace to Turks to have a happy and secure future. These two points were in fact retrospective deductions but there is another point that displays us his stance as mentioned before: his participation in the Ottoman Red Crescent as one of the most prominent figures at the highest administrative levels. These 3 points helps us in explaining his attitude towards Armenian nationalism. However, his approach to the deportations still remains unanswered even with the illustration of these 3 points. Lastly to note, having reserved the unanswered question of his attitude to Armenian deportations and its consequences, he should have adopted a position which would secure his position with his connections in the age of clash of nationalisms even the Turkish one was carrying an Islamic tone during the war. This may be the period in which he developed his understanding of the political future of the country and the different social groupings in it further due to rising nationalisms. It can be assumed that this was a continuation of the previous period in which he was introduced to Turkish nationalism and its proponents although there is not a clear evidence of his adoption of Turkish nationalism in this latter period.

### **1.7.Turkish War of Independence and Berç Türker-Keresteciyan: 1919-1923**

This was the period in which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan arrives at a point where he

would decisively consolidate his political attitude under the newly emerging conditions of War of Independence. His early acquired attitudes would come to concrete terms with his role in the existence of the Ottoman Red Crescent, the anecdote about his first contact with Mustafa Kemal by informing Mustafa Kemal's lawyer that his ferry would be hit and lastly his position in the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association. In this part, the phase of War of Independence in the formation of the Turkish nation state, the difficult and changing position of the Ottoman Bank vis-a-vis the new uncertain political atmosphere, the contribution of the Ottoman Red Crescent and the share of Berç-Keresteciyan-Türker and the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association will be presented.

At the end of World War I, Ottoman empire set to be dismantled by the victors. The ruling circles close to the palace were willing to accept the dictates of the Allies and guarantee the sultan-caliph to reign. However, the CUP rule, despite its failures in a number of fields, had created “a Muslim counter-elite and a nascent bourgeoisie that was willing to fight for the gains it had made, and to create a new patriotic state”<sup>184</sup> in Ahmad's words. The organizations of Defense of Rights Association (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk*) were local bodies articulating local demands although there was not a clear notion of “nation” and “homeland/*vatan*” to embrace. Despite all heterogeneity of demands and expectations of the Anatolian resistance organizations, and in spite of the ambiguity concerning the political authority among different locuses of power, the attacks of Greeks in May 1919 in Western Anatolia stimulated a broader resistance that soon became “national”. Mustafa Kemal, who was sent as a military inspector with large authorities to the Ninth Army in the Eastern provinces, came to play a crucial role in mobilizing different segments of the Muslim populations of Anatolia around a common aim<sup>185</sup>. He used his authorities to organize a resistance against the Allied forces and against the Greeks. The major problem was to direct the heterogeneous resistance forces to a specified political goal and to establish a political authority in Anatolia which would constitute an alternative and legitimate power against the government in Constantinople. The latter authority at the beginning did not support the resistance in

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184Ahmad, 2003, p.: 75.

185Ibid., p.:75.



Anatolia in a certain period of confrontations and was also under British pressure following the occupation of Constantinople<sup>186</sup>. However, some figures in the government in Constantinople, especially after Damat Ferit's office of Grand Vezirate, sometimes even the government itself, and some organizations such as the *Karakol Cemiyeti* supported the resistance in Anatolia. The proclamation of the Amasya protocol which became crystallized in a National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*) and the gathering of congresses in Erzurum and Sivas with a wide base of participation from Anatolia, were the initial steps towards the articulation of resistance on a common basis<sup>187</sup>. Some further steps were taken to gather the irregular military forces scattered all around Anatolia and convert the National Militias (*Kuva-yı Milliye*) and some other local forces into a regular army. The Turkish war of independence was fought in three main fronts<sup>188</sup>. These were the western front against Greek invasion which was the most critical one, the eastern front fought against the newly formed Armenian Republic and this confrontation ended with the agreement of Gümri and later consolidated by the agreements of Moskova and Kars in 1921, the southern front was against the French armed forces but this front was closed after a brief military encounter and largely by diplomatic negotiations<sup>189</sup>. Besides, while the battles began to be fought in Anatolia and the resistance was organized to a considerable level, the political power games were being played between the Anatolian Kemalist resistance movement and the government in Constantinople. In this atmosphere of ambiguous political sovereignty, a parliament was gathered in April 1920 in Ankara after the closure of the last parliament in Constantinople. This parliament also proclaimed a constitution in 1921<sup>190</sup>. The period between 1919 and 1921 was a period of articulation and overtaking of the resistance in Anatolia as opposed to Constantinople, militarily and politically. Towards the end of the year 1920, the second phase of the war was opened which was the decisive and bloody part against Greeks in the western front. The battles of İnönü I and II, the Sakarya Battle and lastly the Great Offensive/*Büyük Taarruz* in the summer of 1922 marked the end of the war with the defeat of the Greeks<sup>191</sup>. Greeks were all expelled from Anatolia and

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186Tunçay, 1997, p.: 60-68

187Shaw, 1997, p.: 343-349.

188Tunçay, 1997, p.: 69-75.

189Ibid., p.: 68-69.

190Shaw, 1997, p.: 349-352.

191Ibid., p.: 357-364.

Eastern Thrace and the British forces also had to leave Constantinople with the armistice of Mudanya in October 1922. However, it took almost a year after the war for peace to be established fully with the Lausanne Peace Conference which resulted in a peace treaty in July 1923<sup>192</sup>. In Lausanne treaty, five problems were solved except the problem of Musul which was left to League of Nations/*Milletler Cemiyeti*. The others were the status of the traits (an international supervision was accepted), the border of Thrace( the 1913 border was accepted with Greece and Karaağaç was left to Turkey as a war reparation), liquidation of the external debts/*Düyun-u Umumiye* (it was decided to be paid by the Asian successors of the empire by annual payment in French francs) and the capitulations (abolished but Turkey accepted not to change the customs rates for five years of transition period). This treaty was the signifier of a new regime under Mustafa Kemal which came to concrete terms with the proclamation of the Turkish Republic on the 29 th of October in 1923<sup>193</sup>.

The Turkish war of independence inevitably created a difficult situation for the Ottoman Bank. The gradual replacement of the branches of the Ottoman Bank in the newly emerging nation-states which seceded from the empire was an indicator of a fresh threat with the confrontation between Greeks and the Turco-Muslim resistance forces in Anatolia. This was perceived as a continuation of a process of getting wiped out of its domains of banking activities and losing its market<sup>194</sup>. The major problem for the Bank along with this new threat, was the ambiguous character of the interplay between the Anatolian movement and the government in Constantinople over political and military domination. The Bank had to play with this power games carefully because the situation worsened with the rupture of communication between Anatolia and Constantinople. Thus, the Bank tried to come terms with the local powers in Anatolia and create a kind of *modus vivendi*<sup>195</sup>. However, the Bank was damaged by the war conditions in various places in Anatolia due to the invasion of Greeks and the uncontrollable attacks of disorganized forces of Anatolia<sup>196</sup>. The damage was easily repairable according to the

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192Tunçay, 1997, p.: 75-79.

193Ibid., p.: 79-81.

194Eldem, 1999, p.: 353-354.

195Ibid., p.: 354-355.

196Ibid., p.:355.

Bank reports. An interesting indicator of the involvement of the Bank in the interplay between Constantinople and Anatolia was a special account which was recorded in the category of treasury accounts for the “Kemalist forces” at an equal level with the government in Constantinople. This shows that the Bank took the resistance forces seriously and began to accept it at a similar status with the Constantinople government<sup>197</sup>. Among the scarcity of financial resources for the resistance movement, the low amount of credits that the Ottoman Bank offered were significant for the movement. That is why, the newly established government in Anatolia tried to keep good relations with the Bank. The Ottoman Bank managed to keep its relations with both the Constantinople and Ankara governments with a relatively riskless interplay. This attitude would guarantee a place in a possible new regime in the future. Their attitude was simply a reflection of pragmatism and foresight. The Bank could grasp the proceeding of the power balances well enough to adapt itself to them safely<sup>198</sup>.

Furthermore, the Bank could keep the cosmopolitan nature of its personnel after the damages and inconsistencies of World War I. A comparison of the personnel lists of 1906 and 1920 shows this fact obviously<sup>199</sup>. However, this cosmopolitan configuration of its personnel would be challenged with the end of the successful Turkish war of independence by changing considerably the demographic distribution over the territories where the Bank functioned. Despite all the pragmatic and riskless interplay of the Bank during the war, the new regime would not necessarily display the same attitude towards the Bank in line with the newly emerging policies and perspectives to be applied by a sovereign power<sup>200</sup>.

As it was a process of facing the dangers of war conditions and ambitious interplay between Anatolia and Constantinople over political and military authority for the Ottoman Bank, a similar situation needed to be dealt with by the Ottoman Red Crescent. Although the similar uncertainties and war conditions were valid for the Ottoman Red Crescent together with the Ottoman Bank, the institutional identity of the Ottoman Red Crescent and its position vis-a-vis the Constantinople government, Anatolian resistance forces and later the Ankara government was significantly different.

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197Ibid., p.: 355-356.

198Ibid., p.: 356.

199Ibid., p.: 429.

200Ibid., p.: 430.

Firstly, it was an institution where patriotic sentiments, sometimes even Turkish nationalism, were determining in comparison with the Ottoman Bank as more of a cosmopolitan institution. Secondly, Ottoman Red Crescent openly supported the Kemalist resistance forces in Anatolia and transferred most of its material power to Eskişehir in 1920 by managing to remain functioning inspite of the pressures of the war conditions and of Constantinople government. Especially Damat Ferit government's frequent and repressive investigations to be able to close down the society, the Ottoman Red Crescent did not display enough of deficiencies to be closed down by the government<sup>201</sup>. In this successful arrangement of the society, Berç Keresteciyan-Türker played a significant role by systematizing the accounts perfectly without any deficit<sup>202</sup>. The Ottoman Red Crescent functioned all over the areas subject to war conditions with its full performance. It was working, mentioned as an extension of military sanitation administration before, as a part of the armed resistance forces in Anatolia<sup>203</sup>. With the appointment of Dr. Adnan Adıvar as the Minister of Health in the first parliament in Ankara, the Ottoman Red Crescent came into full contact with the parliament and thus the Ankara government<sup>204</sup>.

As a significant point for his life, the anecdote of informing Mustafa Kemal that his ship would be hit by British torpedos in his trip from Istanbul to Samsun needs to be mentioned because this was the first point where he had a contact to Mustafa Kemal. This anecdote appeared in a periodical published by Cemal Kutay. He argued that Berç Türker-Keresteciyan gave the information to the lawyer of Mustafa Kemal, Sadettin Ferit Bey, that his ship would be hit by British torpedos when he got out of the Bosphorus to the Black Sea, without referring to any source. Sadettin Ferit Bey asked the president of the Ottoman Red Crescent of the time, Hamit Bey, if Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was a trustful person and was replied very positively. After quoting this anecdote, Kutay continued that it was proved that Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was a trustful and patriotic personality with his invaluable contributions to the War of Independence in the Ottoman Red Crescent. He also said that Atatürk gave a surname, Türker, to whom was Berç

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201 Akgün and Uluğtekin, 2002, p.: 269-271.

202 Ada, 2004, p.: 83.

203 Akgün and Uluğtekin, 2002, p.: 252-269.

204 Ibid., p.: 271-274.

Keresteciyan before 1934 as a kindness due to his patriotism. Kutay finished with an argument that neither Mustafa Kemal nor his lawyer Sadettin Ferit Bey mentioned from whom they got this information. However, Mustafa Kemal just mentioned about this information that his ship would be hit but did not prefer leaving the sea way not to lose time although he believed in the information. Thus, Kutay showed no source for this anecdote<sup>205</sup>. The verification of this anecdote, which was told in many of the secondary sources touching upon Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, came in an interview with Berç Garo Şigaher on 26 th of May 2005. He was the only person that could be reached in the Armenian community who had known Berç türker-Keresteciyan personally. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was his father's friend and he knew him in Büyük Ada in İstanbul while he was ateenager from 1947 to 1949. In these years, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was at rest at the age of 77 in his house after his parliamentary activities ending at the end of 1943. Berç Garo Şigaher verified the anecdote above by claiming that his father heard the anecdote from Berç Türker-Keresteciyan himself. The rest of the information Beç Garo Şigaher gave was already found in other sources<sup>206</sup>.

At this point, the Lausanne Conference and the consequent treaty needs to be covered. The significance of this treaty originates from two reasons. The first is that this was the treaty that put an end to the grand Armenian Question of more than 40 years both for the European powers and the newly emerging Turkish republic. The second is that a Turco-Armenian Friendship Association/*Türk-Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti* was proclaiming a say in the name of all Armenians by sending telegrams to Mustafa Kemal, as the head of the parliament, and to İsmet İnönü, as the representative of the Turkish delegation at Lausanne. These telegrams were stating a complete sense of loyalty to the Turkish parliament and its leader, and a consent on the part of Armenians of Turkey to the Lausanne delegation to discuss their cause in line with the fate of the Turkish state<sup>207</sup>. During the discussions on the Armenian Question, the question of an Armenian homeland in the eastern Anatolian and Cicilian territories led to harsh

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205Kutay, Cemal, "Samsun Yolunda Mustafa Kemal'e vapurunun batırılacağını kim haber vermişti?", in Tarih Konuşuyor, cilt: 1, no: 4, Mayıs 1964, 277-281.

206The interview with Berç Garo Şigaher on the 26 th of May 2005.

207Öke Mim Kemal, "The Responses of Turkish Armenians to the Armenian Question, 1919-1926", in Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1912-1926), 1984, Boğaziçi University Publications, İstanbul, p.: 73 and p.: 89-90.

quarrels and especially Lord Curzon was voicing the Armenian claims of a homeland. However, İsmet İnönü replied him with a long historical speech and later stated that the territories mentioned in the National Pact/*Misak-ı Milli* did not include a large group of Armenians and thus an Armenian homeland was not matter of discussion on these territories<sup>208</sup>. The Turkish delegation, represented by İsmet İnönü, was mostly adamant on the unity and sovereignty of Turkey although the question of Musul would be left to future negotiations under the supervision of League of Nations. That is why, any parties arguing for an autonomy or independence for Armenians in the mentioned territories were not successful and this question was not mentioned in the treaty<sup>209</sup>. In fact, this question was mainly solved on the battlefield during the Turkish war of independence and several treaties (Gümri, Moskova, Ankara) were signed with the Armenian republic in 1920 and 1921. The political interventions of the Armenians, especially from diasporan organizations such as Ligue Internationale Philarmenienne, could not be successful in their endeavour<sup>210</sup>. The articles concerning the minorities in Turkey were including non-Muslim communities which were Greeks, Armenians and Jews together and without exceptional articles<sup>211</sup>.

To add another dimension to the issue, the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association/*Türk-Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti* needs to be highlighted. There are two reasons to focus on this organization. Firstly, this organization tried to display the loyalty and consent of all Armenians to the delegation at Lausanne by a telegram sent to İsmet İnönü. Secondly, Berç Keresteciyan-Türker was part of this organization. Depending on a newspaper published on the 20 th of April in 1923, it is understood that he was the honorary president of the organization at the time as well as his membership to the secular council of the Armenian Patriarchate. He sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal as a member of the secular council of the Armenian Patriarchate and the honorary president of the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association with Artin Musodicyan who was a retired member of the secular council of the Armenian Patriarchate. In the telegram, they were stating that the Armenians would join the elections as the children of the

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208Bilsel, Cemil, Lozan, Sosyal Yayınlar, İstanbul, p.: 272-273.

209Ibid., p.: 278-280.

210Öke, 1984, p.: 80.

211Ibid., p.: 83-84.

homeland/*evlad-ı vatan* organized for the replacement of dismissed deputies and support the candidates of the Defence of the Rights Party/*Müdafaa-i Hukuk Fırkası* which was the locus of Mustafa Kemal's political will<sup>212</sup>.

The Turco-Armenian Friendship Association was firstly established as an alumni society of the Karabetyan College (*Karabetyan Sultanisi*)<sup>213</sup>. The founder of this school was Bedros Zeki Karabetyan, who established a school for girls in 1907 and for boys in 1908. While his profession was initially linguistics, Karabetyan acted as a higher bureaucrat during the Hamidian period. He published an Ottoman-Armenian and an Armenian-Ottoman dictionary, and later he worked as a teacher and director of the schools he founded. During the final part of his life, Karabetyan participated in the General Assembly of Turkish Language (*Türk Dil Kurultayı*) which was organized in line with Atatürk's directions<sup>214</sup>.

The organization was founded, as mentioned above, as the Alumni Organization of Karabetyan College (*Karabetyan Sultanisi Mezunlar Cemiyeti*) in 1919<sup>215</sup>. The regulation (*nizamname*) published in 1922 tells us that the founders of the organization were two graduates of Karabetyan College, Ömer Aziz and Nubar Tozan<sup>216</sup>. Another document published by Mim Kemal Öke stated that the organization was founded by the young Turkish and Armenian graduates of the school. However, later in the same document, the founder of the organization is mentioned as a young Turkish man who was an active supporter of the resistance movement in Anatolia. This man was serving in another way by trying to clarify the patriotic feelings of a community which was perceived as enemy of Turks in Constantinople, which should be Armenians, in the field of actions by founding such an organization<sup>217</sup>. In the regulation, Bedros Zeki Karabetyan is announced as the natural founder (*müessis-i tabi*) of the organization<sup>218</sup>. It seems to be

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<sup>212</sup>İkdam, 20 Nisan 1923, No: 9374.

<sup>213</sup>Öke, 1984, Appendix I, p.: 93.

<sup>214</sup>Pamukciyan, Kevork, "Bedros Zeki Garabedian", in Biyografileriyle Ermeniler (Ermeni Tarihinden Tarihe Katkıları-IV), 2003, Aras Yayıncılık, İstanbul, p.: 222.

<sup>215</sup>Öke, 1984, p.: 73.

<sup>216</sup>Türk-Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi, 1339-1341, Cihan Biraderler Matbaası, İstanbul, p.: 3.

<sup>217</sup>Öke, 1984, Appendix I, p.: 93.

<sup>218</sup>Türk-Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi, 1339-1341, Cihan Biraderler Matbaası, İstanbul, p.: 3.

that, the main motivation behind the foundation of this organization was to channel the patriotic feelings of the graduates of this schools into concrete actions, especially following the defeat in World War I and the occupation of Constantinople by the victors<sup>219</sup>. It is also stated that the Armenian founders and members of the organization were considering the Armenians with the Turks, not separate. Furthermore, the same Armenians were disinterested in the nationalist and separatist Armenian revolutionary movements and perceived these as unfortunate endeavors. The organization aimed at getting into contact with the supporters of the Anatolian movement in Constantinople and support the movement through the channel of Karakol Society(*Karakol Cemiyeti*) by smuggling arms, ammunition and money, despite the threats of the Armenian nationalist forces<sup>220</sup>.

The view of the organization concerning the Armenian deportations and massacres was completely in line with those Young Turks who made these decisions and applied them. For these Armenians, the decision of deportation was a self-defense on the side of the Ottoman state in the middle of a war against the treachery of the adventurous nationalist Armenians, when the Ottoman people and the state were vulnerable to foreign aggression. They perceived the actions of Armenian nationalist forces as an oppression of Armenian to Armenian, and stressed that they saw these nationalist forces exactly as Turks regarded them. The document underlined that the aim of the organization was to give an opportunity to the Armenians who had been discredited by the mistakes of the nationalist Armenians to show the reality that they were clear from any treason<sup>221</sup>.

The Alumni Society of Karabetyan College/*Karabetyan Mezunlar Cemiyeti* was turned into the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association during the Conference of Lausanne in December 1922. As mentioned before, they sent two telegrams, one to Mustafa Kemal to express their loyalty to the parliament in Ankara and to him as the leader, and one to İsmet İnönü to display their consent and gratitude as the only defender

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219Öke, 1984, Appendix I, p.: 93.

220Ibid., p.: 94.

221Ibid., p.: 95-96.



of the rights of Armenians at Lausanne. They were also claiming to be an organization that was composed of the most authorized members of the Armenian community in transferring the consent of all Armenians<sup>222</sup>. In his resumeé, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan says that he sent a letter to the Morning Post newspaper published in Britain during the Lausanne Conference. The latter one was a request directed to Lord Curzon stating that the Allies should leave the protection of the Armenians of Turkey to the Turkish Government, and European powers should not engage in this issue, anymore. Keresteciyan claimed that this letter created a discontent among the European political circles, and the Paris Committee of the Ottoman Bank criticized the letter. However, he does not mention about the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association of which he was the honorary president for an uncertain period. The letter he argues that he sent to Morning Post should not have been in the name of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan or as a director of the Ottoman Bank but more possibly in the name of the president of the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association. It is interesting that he mentions about this letter and the reactions to it after stating that he was one of the founders of the Ottoman Red Crescent and that he had been a member of its Executive Committee for 20 years. Following this statement about the Ottoman Red Crescent, he says that he worked as much as he could during World War I and the War of Independence as a Turkish citizen by referring to the testimonies of many of his friends. In the same line, he says that he was not interested in politics and he never joined a political party<sup>223</sup> although it is certain that he was not an apolitical character, taking into consideration those institutions he worked for and where he stood as an Armenian.

In a brief analysis of the regulation of the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association published in 1923, two critical parts attract attention. The first part is the 'Goal of the Association'(*Cemiyetin Maksad ve Gayesi*). In this part, it is mentioned that:

“**Article 3:** the association is a scientific, technical, economic and literary council of friendship. Its goal and direction is to work for the continuation of a real sincerity between the Turkish and Armenian communities, and to bring into existence a future generation which will work in the service for the benefit

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<sup>222</sup>Ibid., p.: 89-90.

<sup>223</sup>Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

of the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly by making efforts in scientific and technical fields.

To make publications, to open schools, hospitals and student pensions for the purpose of the progress and development of the youth. It is going to work for the emergence and continuation of a real friendship between the Turkish and Armenian people by scientific and social means such as helping all the people in the solidarity of schools for needy and sending equal number of students from each communities to Europe.<sup>224\*</sup>

Three main observations can be done on this article. The first is that they stress their aim of creating a friendship and sincerity between the Turks and the Armenians. This stress comes out of the belief that the two communities lived together for centuries and their destiny should not develop in separate paths. This understanding clearly states the attitude of the organization pertaining to the political future of the Armenians of Turkey. This statement was made in such a conjuncture where the opposite might be a threat to their existence and future positions in Turkey. The second is that the organization demonstrates a strict loyalty to the government in Ankara by accepting it as sovereign and as the center of political authority to serve for. The last observation is that the organization emphasizes the promotion of scientific and educational development. However, we do not know to what extent these objectives were realized.

The other significant part of the regulation is about the Criterion for Membership/*Azalık Şeraiti*:

“**Article 10:** It is obligatory for the people who want to be a member of the association to possess the following conditions.

A- To be a subject of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

B- To be attested of not being in the service of the movements against the interest of the homeland.

C- To be in good manner and to have the recommendations of 2 members of the association.<sup>225\*\*</sup>

For this part of the regulation, two points need to be underlined. The first one is that the name of the country and the regime of the state were still not clarified at the time and they had to refer to the people living under the authority of the government in

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<sup>224</sup>Türk-Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi, 1339-1341, Cihan Biraderler Matbaası, İstanbul, p.: 3-4.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid., p.: 5-6.

Ankara, whose boundaries were still not clear, as the subjects of Turkish Grand National Assembly. The second is that they were reflecting a sense of loyalty to the political authority of the government in Ankara requesting to be attested of not being in the service of the movements against the interest of the homeland(*Memleket*). This point is important because they also claimed to be one of the supporters of the Anatolian movement during the war and they take this dedication as a point of reference to their legitimacy and prestige as an organization.

## CHAPTER II:

### BERÇ TÜRKER-KERESTECİYAN AND THE REPUBLIC:

#### 2.1.The End of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's Professional Career and the Emergence of the New Regime: 1923-1927

From this point onwards, the focus of narration will be enlarged in accordance with the aims of the study. Although the period will be covered in more detail especially on the issues concerning the non-Muslim minorities, this does not mean that all aspects of the period will be presented. The scope of the chapter needs to be confined to the main points and sometimes details of the period to lay a background to Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's life and to understand the framework determining the possible destinations he might have taken.

For the period of early Republic; the process of the transformation of the Association for the Defense of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia(*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) into People's Party(*Halk Fırkası*) was the indicator of the main axis of the future political power locus<sup>226</sup>. Shortly after having announced that the elections would be renewed, the proclamation of 9 dictums in the April of 1923 demonstrated Mustafa Kemal's will to turn the association into People's Party(*Halk Fırkası*)<sup>227</sup>. For the renewal of election, Mustafa Kemal spoke to the people of Istanbul and made a call to

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226Tunçay, Mete, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931), 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 40-49.

227Ibid., p.: 44-45 and 49.

support the Association for Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia and accused those people who were pleased with the loss of power of this organization which had been working for the completion of the vital rights of the homeland<sup>228</sup>. Following this speech, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan as the honorary president of the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association and a member of the secular council of the Armenian Patriarchate and Artin Musodicyan as a retired of the same council sent a telegram sent to Mustafa Kemal. In this telegram, they announced that the Armenian community would join the elections as the children of the homeland(*evlad-ı vatan*) and support the candidates of the association<sup>229</sup>. In this strictly controlled election, the candidates of the organization won almost all the seats in the parliament except few independent deputies who would join People's Party later<sup>230</sup>. In September 1923, People's Party was founded and then the Republic was declared on 29 th of October 1923, together with the new configuration of the parliament. Mustafa Kemal became the President, Fethi (Okyar) Bey the chairman of the parliament and İsmet İnönü became the Prime Minister and the head of the Party organization which covered all Defense of Rights Association branches<sup>231</sup>.

One of the initial concerns of the new republic would be to tackle with the problem of the Caliphate. Although the Sultanate was abolished in 1922, the abolition of the Caliphate was delayed due to its use in the internal and external issues of the period<sup>232</sup>. The tendency to abolish the Caliphate in the government was producing a focal point of criticism towards the personalization of the political power around Mustafa Kemal and thus a criticism of despotic rule<sup>233</sup>. However, Mustafa Kemal and the government had sufficient political power to abolish the Caliphate and it was abolished in March 1924<sup>234</sup>. This can be evaluated as the continuation of a process of identification of the political will with the personality of Mustafa Kemal dating back to 1922<sup>235</sup>. Simultaneously with

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228Ibid., p.: 46-47.

229İkdam, 20 Nisan 1923, No: 9374.

230Tunçay, 1999, p.: 49.

231Ibid., p.: 52.

232Ibid., p.: 70-72.

233Zürcher, Eric Jan, Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi, 1999, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 243-244.

234Tunçay, 1999, p.: 88-91.

235Ibid., p.: 91.

the abolition of the Caliphate, a new constitution was prepared and put into action in May 1924. Without noticing the content of the constitution, Tunçay argues that this constitution was not applied and remained on paper<sup>236</sup>.

At this point, the opposition movements against the need to be covered in short. The critical group to the radical component led by Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü in People's Party began to organize around Hüseyin Rauf Bey and formed another political party called Progressive Republican Party/*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* with 32 deputies at the parliament in November 1924. The opposition party was defending a more liberal and smooth evolutionist stance in the application of reforms. The threat created by an opposition party was soon felt by the leaders of the majority party.<sup>237</sup> The explosion of the Kurdish discontent as an armed upheaval in Diyarbakır in February 1925, the so-called Şeyh Said rebellion, gave the opportunity of suppressing the opposition in the country by using power to the President Mustafa Kemal and the radical segment of his party. *Takrir-i Sükun* was proclaimed which would give the government for two years to ban any institution and publications that were considered to be detrimental to the public order. As a last measure to deal with the opposition and the Kurdish upheaval, the Courts of Independence/*İstiklal Mahkemeleri* were used. With the help of these courts, Kurds and press were suppressed, and the Progressive Republican Party was expelled from the political scene in line with the authorities provided by the *Takrir-i Sükun* Law<sup>238</sup>.

The period of *Takrir-i Sükun* created the proper conditions for the introduction of new reforms. The abolition of religious orders and schools, new dress code with the radical/symbolic change in hats, largely translated private law from Swedish code and penalty law from Italian code, the acceptance of the European calendar and some other legal reforms in many other minor fields could be achieved with the availability of authorities in the government provided by *Takrir-i Sükun* law and Courts of Independence/*İstiklal Mahkemeleri* those would buffer any resistance to the reforms.<sup>239</sup>.

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236Ibid., p.: 92-94.

237Ibid., p.: 104-111.

238Ibid., p.: 134-155.

239Ibid., p.: 253.

In this line of reform process, the radical and authoritative nature of the application of reforms could be easily used by the possible underground opposition organization. This was well understood by the government with an additional aspect of public discontent legitimizing a possible opposition attempt although legitimate public channels of voicing the discontent were not open. Depending on the assassination attempt to Mustafa Kemal in İzmir in June 1926, the living Unionists and the old members of the Republican Progressive Party at the parliament were investigated, arrested, some of them were imprisoned and some of them were executed again by using the same mechanisms of *Takriri-i Sükun* and Courts of Independence<sup>240</sup>.

### **2.1.1. Kemalist Phase in Turkish Nationalism:**

The assessment of the emergence of the Kemalist version of Turkish nationalism can begin with with the international environment in which it began to be initially shaped. Kemalist nationalism was born in the anti-imperialist atmosphere of the end of the World War I<sup>241</sup>. Ideologically, it had the chance of benefiting from the contradiction between the British capitalism and Soviet socialism in terms of shaping its boundaries of generating legitimacy by rejecting both categorically<sup>242</sup>. The process of formation of nation states after the World War I was also another international factor that would contribute to the emergence of Kemalist nationalism, especially during the War of Independence as a precursor of a nation state and in the early years of the Turkish Republic as the consolidation of the new nation state<sup>243</sup>. Lastly, it was one of the revisionist movements after the World War I<sup>244</sup>. In these respects, it was fitting into the general international trends so it was not authentic and contradictory in this period as just one of many emerging nationalisms. However, it had certain aspects identical to itself in comparison to the other emerging nationalisms, nation states and their regimes. Firstly, it did not produce and support any pan movements, for example pan-Turkism or

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240Tunçay, 1999, 166-175.

241Kazancıgil, Ali, "Anti-empyralist Bağımsızlık İdeolojisi ve Üçüncü Dünya Ulusçuluğu Olarak Kemalizm", in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Kemalizm*, ed. by: Ahmet İnel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 236-239.

242Ibid., p.: 240.

243Oran, Baskın, *Atatürk Milliyetçiliği*, 1990, Bilgi Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 33.

244Ibid., p.: 35.

pan-Turanism<sup>245</sup>. Secondly, it was not imperialist but anti-imperialist basically and it was peaceful and defender of the status-quo after the revision of the World War I conditions had been done<sup>246</sup>. Thirdly, it did not have a totalitarian character and an order of pluralism in the political sphere was kept as an ultimate end although it had an authoritarian character in revising the internal structure<sup>247</sup>. Fourthly, it did not propose to form a hegemony of a certain class but more a classless unified society with stratas whose interests would not conflict<sup>248</sup>. Fifthly, it did not use paramilitary organizations in the application of reforms and in the indoctrination of its ideology<sup>249</sup>. Lastly, the state kept the party under control and not vice versa in its single party regime up to 1945<sup>250</sup>.

At this point, the predecessors of the Kemalist nationalism need to be shortly presented. It can be said that Kemalist nationalism used the cumulation of unsuccessful experiences which were the outcomes of the answers given to the question of 'how to save the empire' beginning from the middle of the 1800's with Young Ottomans and it gave a more successful answer out of the empire. Young Ottomans should have contributed to the emergence of nationalism by bringing in the idea of homeland (*vatan*) that well offered a basis to the idea of nationalism<sup>251</sup>. After the Young Ottomans, Kemalist nationalism had also a heritage of strong Westernism and Turkism, in the creation of a national industrial class and ideologically Turkish nationalism, from the Young Turks. In this respect, it can be said that Kemalist nationalism succeeded in synthesizing the eclectic experiences of the Young Turk era as diverse directions of belongingness towards a national one if assessed very superficially<sup>252</sup>. Among the

245Yıldız, Ahmet, “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene” Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938), 2001, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 107-111.

246Kuyuş, Ahmet, “Yeni Osmanlılardan 1930'lara Anti-empyalist Düşünce”, in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet İnel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 247-252.

247Köker, Levent, “Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük: Modernleşme, Devlet ve Demokrasi”, in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet İnel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 108-111.

248Parla, Taha, Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları, Cilt 3, Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u, 1995, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 216.

249Uyar, Hakkı, Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1998, Boyut Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 378-380.

250Tunçay, 1999, p.: 331.

251Mardin, Şerif, “Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi”, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi, ed. by: Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 49.

252Zürcher, Eric Jan, “Jön Türkler, Müslüman Osmanlılar ve Türk Milliyetçileri: Kimlik Politikaları, 1908-1938”, in Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye'si, ed. by: Kemal H. Karpat, 2004, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 285-286.



predecessors of Kemalist nationalism was Ziya Gökalp and his formulation of nationalism/Turkism. Mainly, Ziya Gökalp's cultural Turkism and his formulation of a solidarist national bourgeoisie. However, Kemalist nationalism did not conform to the distinction of culture/*hars* and civilization/(*medeniyet*) as a response to the broad question of Westernism, 'what to take from the West', as justifying the introduction of western civilization but not culture. Kemalism was more radical in its response to this question and offered to take it as a package without any distinctions<sup>253</sup>.

Having drawn the general international picture in which Kemalist nationalism was born and assessed its predecessors shortly, a brief presentation of the internal ingredients and sources of Kemalist nationalism. For the part of the peasant masses of Anatolia, it can be said that a notion of homeland (*vatan*) and a nationalist sentiment was not developed and the masses were tired of long pace of successive wars. However, there were some major reasons for them to take part in a nationalist independence struggle. The first one was that the enemy was from a different religion, orthodox Christian Greeks and the threat of Gregorian Armenians in the eastern regions. Secondly, there was fear of losing their lands to the non-Muslim minorities. Thirdly, the Courts of Independence (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) was a major factor for them to participate in the war although not very willingly. Lastly, the fact that mainly the War of Independence was fought in different regions by the organization of Kemalists of the diverse local military forces as local/regional defense encounters<sup>254</sup>. For the part of the local notables, the consciousness of nationalism was not developed as for the peasant masses. They were also reluctant because they were not so powerful and in opposition to the irreligious Unionist and irregular National Forces (*Kuvay-ı Milliye*). However, they were also willing to take the place of the non-Muslims and to participate in decision making processes<sup>255</sup>. When the intelligentsia is concerned, it was a propertied class but an administrative one. Thus, it was a petit bourgeoisie which was above all classes and largely western educated. Although this part of the society was also had an anti-imperialist stance, it was obviously not an anti-westernist one, contrarily, they were

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253Parla, Taha, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm*, 1999, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul,p.:

254Oran, 1990, p.: 66-71.

255Ibid., p.: 72-75.

admirers of western civilization because they did not experienced a political imperialism. Additionally, the administrative intelligentsia did not have a real connection to Marxism and did not witness a strong and established Marxist socialism, yet<sup>256</sup>. As a significant source of Kemalist nationalism, some characteristics of Mustafa Kemal himself needs to be shortly given. His own characteristics were of course largely shaped in a similar context but he was significant because the leader cadre of the War of Independence was not as strong as his own personality. He was well aware of the fact that the period was period of nationalisms and nation state formations. In addition, he was a realist in his perspective and a pragmatist in practice of different periods and conditions as a strategist. He also had a strong belief in organization not surprisingly as a soldier. Lastly to note, he had an ambition for power in an independent nation state from the west and whose direction would be towards the west in all spheres of life<sup>257</sup>.

In this part, a discussion of the implications of Kemalist nationalism in political economic and cultural realms will be assessed. The first implication of Kemalist nationalism was political independence. This meant to be independent from the western victorious powers of World War I and to form an independent nation state by fighting against the internal non-Muslims minorities, Greeks in the west and Armenians in the east. In fact, the war of Independence was mainly fought against the Greeks, less against Armenians in the eastern border<sup>258</sup>. However, independence in the Kemalist nationalism was to be independent first politically and later economically to be able to achieve the civilization of the west without conceding from sovereignty, as forming a nation state. In the process of having independence, Kemalism gained a pragmatic nature due to the oscillation between the democratic pluralist understanding to satisfy the masses and the urgent realities that might lead to a total loss of independence. However, Mustafa Kemal was well aware of the fact that there was a wide variety of ethnicities in Anatolia and he had to use religion as a source of legitimacy for a society which did not have national emotional belongingness but more a religious cohesion as an *ümmet*<sup>259</sup>. For the part of the international environment, there was a rapprochement between Kemalists and Soviet

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256Ibid., p.: 84-88.

257Ibid., p.: 91-97.

258Tunçay, 1999, p.: 20-22.

259Yıldız, 2001, p.: 98-100.

socialism as a point of international alliance. It would later be observed that these alliances with Islam internally and with Soviet socialism internationally could be violated after political independence was gained and the international environment changed in nature<sup>260</sup>. In this period, Kemalist nationalism was justified mainly with the notion of national sovereignty (*ulus egemenliđi*) and populism (*halkçılık*). National sovereignty was functional for the participation of the peasant masses and the local notables at the theoretical ideological level. However, this notion was in fact a means to form the independent nation state. Furthermore, its content shifted with the foundation of the republic towards the sovereignty of elites rather than the masses and the local notables. The second notion of populism was again an ideological instrument towards the introduction of nationalism towards the peasant masses and the local notables. However, the content of this notion was also transformed towards the nation under construction<sup>261</sup>.

The second implication of Kemalist nationalism was westernization/modernization in all spheres of life. The main axis of westernization was provided by the change of regime to a republic in which the relationship between the state and the religion/Islam was abolished and republicanism was the political framework of the nation state and formed the basis of any further westernist reforms. In the socio political realm, westernization meant to be secularization as the basic political principle of the nation state. Westernization was achieved by etatism and populism in the socioeconomic realm. Lastly, the reforms were functional in the sociocultural field to transform the society towards the contemporary western civilization by suppressing popular Islam. The approach of Kemalist nationalism towards all these westernization efforts would be elitist reformism and anti-pluralism. The shift of theoretical national sovereignty from the masses and the local notables to the elites would lead to the application of reforms from top to down in the way elites proposed and in spite of the traditional cultural traits of the masses<sup>262</sup>. In this respect, secularization as the political principle of the nation state was functional in the elimination of the remnants of the old regime which might

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260Oran, 1990, p.: 132.

261Ibid., p.: 133-139.

262Tunçay, Mete, "İkna (İnandırma) Yerine Tecebbür (Zorlama)", in, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet İnel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 95-96.

be obstacles to westernization. However, secularization created a resistance in the society due to the way it was applied and did not give in the expected results. It meant to be a supervision of the state over religion and a resistance was crystallized in Menemen Incident. It also did not mean anything to the masses as what it meant to the elites and led to a major rupture between the elites and the masses. Additionally, it was perceived as a continuation of westernization which brought in gradual poverty with itself<sup>263</sup>.

At this point, there is need to cover how the new society was attempted to be formed after the bases of the old political heritage was demolished by republic/anism and secularization. The new society would be a unified/homogeneous nation on the basis of secular understanding. In this respect, secularization was also functional in the destruction of the old basis of the society. Kemalism attempted to take Islam under the auspices of reason by the justification that Islam was a reasonable religion. However, popular Islam was attacked and religious education was taken under state control with an anticlerical approach<sup>264</sup>. The question of how to form the new unified/homogeneous nation and its identity was answered with the employment of language and history. The new and national components of this new proposition fro society was the Turkish language to unify the society, to surpass the gap between the elites and the masses and to be able to achieve the exact rupture between the masses and the old Ottoman Islamic cultural background. The foundation of the Association for the Study of Turkish Language in 1932 and the formulation of the Language Theory of Sun were functional in the employment of Turkish language as a component of the new secular national identity. In terms of the historical aspect, the foundation of the Association of the Study of Turkish History and the formulation of the new Turkish history thesis were used. The aim was to give the masses a consciousness of Turkishness and honor them with the new Turkish history thesis. In this aspect of the formation of a new identity, the tone of the new thesis came closer to racism at some points while trying to form a secular Turkish identity by tracing Turkish history to Central Asian Turks and by trying to cut the ties of the society with its Ottoman Islamic ties. The distance between the new

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263Mert, Nuray, "Laikliğin ve Karşı Laikliğin Düşünsel Boyutu", in, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce-Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet Insel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 206-207.

264Zürcher, 2004, p.: 288-289.

Turkish identity and racism was decreased by the fascist racist tendencies in European international environment<sup>265</sup>.

The will to form a unified/homogeneous nation had two aspects. One was the ideal of a classless society in which the existence of different stratas was accepted but they would not be in conflict with each other. The other was the ideal of an ethnically homogeneous society. To be able to achieve these aims, Kemalist approach was shaped and applied by the centralist-elitist nation state in an authoritarian way by using People's Party and its organization as the ideological instrument. The experiences with the Kurdish discontent crystallized in Şeyh Sait rebellion and the experience of Free Republican Party demonstrated a common discontentedness could easily emerge in the society when the applications of the centralist-elitist nation state and the attempts to form a homogeneous nation were not accompanied with economic prosperity<sup>266</sup>. While trying to form a homogeneous nation by disregarding the ethnic variety of the society with elitist and anti-pluralist ways would distort the initial aim of a homogeneous nation. Furthermore, for the formation of a classless-unified society there was need to have a control over the local notables and the bourgeoisie with state interventions, and to prevent the public reaction with ideological precautions. However, the two aspects of the will to create a unified/homogeneous nation were not successful due to the rising power or hegemony of the sovereign administrative elites over the society<sup>267</sup>.

One of the most significant aspects of westernization/modernization was etatism and populism in the socio economic realm. The initial concern of the emerging Kemalist nationalism was to be independent from the capitulations that would largely limit the sovereignty of a politically independent nation state. The idea was similar to the general principle of being independent from the west but then reaching to its civilizational sphere in all aspects of life. Thus, the economic mentality of the political elites of the

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265Yıldız, Ahmet, "Kemalist Milliyetçilik, in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce- Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet İnel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 228-229.

266Ahmad, Feroz, "Kemalist Türkiye'de İdeoloji Arayışı 1919-1938", in İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme, by: Feroz Ahmad, 1986, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 215-217.

267Zürcher, 2004, 289-292.

newly founded nation state was not against capitalism, private ownership of property and entrepreneurship. However, there was a tendency to form and support the national industrial merchant class as opposed to the foreign element including the enterprises of non-Muslim minorities in 1920's. It should also be mentioned that foreign capital considerably could take place in the Turkish economic sphere in 1920's up to the establishment of a protectionist etatist economic mentality after the World Economic Crisis of 1929. Interestingly, deputies were also supported to establish industrial enterprises during 1920's<sup>268</sup>. After a period of discussions on the nature of etatism between 1929 and 1932, strict etatism was adopted theoretically and applied during the single party era. Etatism of the 1930's meant to be the nationalization of the economic activities especially in some symbolically significant fields such as railways, ports, electricity and some municipality economic services. In addition to nationalization, 1930's witnessed the participation of the state in the economic sphere by its own enterprises such as Sümerbank for textile and Etibank for mining, and by 5 year industrialization plans. The participation of the state in the economic field in such a way was to achieve economic development of the country which seemed to be crucial to be able to consolidate the republican regime and its principles by industrialization which could not be fully maintained by private enterprise<sup>269</sup>. An assessment of westernization in the socioeconomic realm demonstrates that Kemalist nationalism established its relationship with the economic mentality of socioeconomic westernization, with the idea of economic independence and later self-sufficiency, and the replacement of the foreign element in the economic sphere with the national one.

As the social aspect of westernization in the socioeconomic realm, populism was instrumentalized. Populism functioned as an ideological tool to prevent the class differences from being clarified among the society. In addition to this function of populism from Kemalist nationalism, it also helped some notions such as 'national duty', 'national conscience' and 'national spirit' to be explanatory instruments for the society under the conditions of expanding state authority. The foundation of Public Houses

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268Ahmad, Feroz, "Kemalizmin Ekonomi-Politiği", in İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme, by: Feroz Ahmad, 1986, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 257-259.

269Ibid., p.: 259-261.

(*Halk Evleri*) instead of Association of Turks (*Türk Ocakları*) was functional for the promotion of the idea of populism in the society. However, socioeconomic populism was not backed by practical means because laborer segment of the society could not receive an increasingly larger share of the national income and their organization was obstructed so they were kept under difficult conditions and under control. Furthermore, a national leadership cult was created as the 'Father of the Nation' beginning with Atatürk as a remedy for the ethnic variety in the society towards the creation of a homogenizing umbrella as an extension of the populist principle but it was not considerably successful. Thus, populism could not go beyond being an internal function of Kemalist nationalism<sup>270</sup>.

As a consequence of the contradiction of the attempts at independence and westernization, a question of identity came about for the political elites of the new republic. This question was urgently needed to be answered especially with 1930's. The first aspect of this question was to provide a basis of identity which would include originality/authenticity and superiority. This was mainly tried to be maintained by the new Turkish language and history theses as the sources of a fresh self-confidence and high honor which were touched upon before. The second aspect of the issue was radically dealt with by claiming that Turkish nation was coming from Central Asia but part of the West. This was a proper option for the elites because they carried a strong will to break off with the Ottoman heritage, the country did not have a political imperialist experience with the West and the society did not have elements of a national identity before the War of Independence that would maintain an appropriate basis<sup>271</sup>.

### **2.1.2. Non-Muslims in the Single Party Period:**

As a significant component of our understanding of the period, the approach to the non-Muslim minorities needs to be assessed. For this purpose, I will discuss issues such

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<sup>270</sup>Karaömerlioğlu, M. Asım, "Tek Parti Döneminde Halkçılık", in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce-Kemalizm, ed. by: Ahmet İnsel, 2002, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 279.

<sup>271</sup>Oran, 1990, p.: 250-260.

as non-Muslim subjects of the republic as minorities within the framework of citizenship; the legal framework for the treatment of the minorities and a short evaluation of the Lausanne articles dealing with minorities; legal measures adopted concerning the minorities; the events significant to understand the approach and the changes in this approach in time. These assessments will help us to make sense of the general atmosphere in which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was to become an 'Armenian' 'representative' at the Turkish parliament.

#### ***2.1.2.1. Non-Muslims as Minorities in the Republic of Turkey:***

At the beginning, a short assessment of the social memory of the Muslim society and the state will help us as an introduction to the issue by presenting the framework of perception of the self and others. The broad parameters set by the 'millet' system of the empire that provided a mild integration and a certain level of harmony were challenged by the separatist nationalisms emerging among the subject communities of the empire, by the huge influx of immigrant Muslims from the lost territories of the empire into Anatolia as well as Caucasus, and lastly by the series of wars fought at the end of the empire, Balkan wars, World War I and Independence war. These challenging developments would constitute the boundaries of the social harmony or tolerance as the heritage of the demise of the empire<sup>272</sup>. On the other side of the coin, the formulation of the new state and its regime as a nation-state and a secular/modern republic would lead its political elite to formulate a citizenship at the theoretical level as the last phase of a process which had begun with the 1839 edict. After having passed through a process when the new political/military leadership of the country needed to refer to religion/Islam as a source of generating legitimacy, the birth of the republic and the process of the consolidation of its regime and political leadership would replace religious belongingness with an ethnic/cultural interpretation of nationality(*milliyet*). The theoretical creation of a citizenship without necessarily ethnic references would remain on paper and, Turkishness would be used as a measure of belonging to privileged/proper citizen status. While Muslim but ethnically non-Turkic elements of

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<sup>272</sup>Belge, Murat, "Türkiye'de Zenofobi ve Milliyetçilik", in, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce-Milliyetçilik, ed. by: Tanıl Bora, 2003, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 181-192.



the republic, with the important exception of the Kurds, were assimilated to a Turkish identity without a significant resistance, non-Muslim minorities were forming the 'other' in the social memory of the ordinary people and most of the political elite. This attitude reflected itself also to the policies and treatment of the non-Muslims. Although they were not significant in number due to policies of ethnic homogenization before the republic and exchange of populations with Greece, they were left subject to assimilation/Turkification. The description of the requirements of citizenship were shaped around territory but not blood, while the cultural Turkification aspect of citizenship would be water-proof to the deceptive character of this territorial description on paper. This cultural assimilation aspect of the understanding of full citizenship would present the ethnic Turkish identity as the requirement and its cultural elements as a fixed menu prepared by the political elites of the period over non-Turkic Muslims and non-Muslims<sup>273</sup>.

#### ***2.1.2.2. Legal Status of the Non-Muslims in Turkey:***

In a nutshell, among the remaining non-Muslim communities in the country, Greeks, Armenians and Jews were accepted as legal minorities at the Lausanne Conference. Here, the larger criteria for determining the minorities in a country such as race, language and religion were not applied. Some smaller non-Muslim communities such as *Süryanis*, *Keldanis* and *Nasturis*, as well as the non-Sunni *Alevis*, which might have occupied a minority position if religion became the basic measure, were not acknowledged the legal status of a minority. These 'Lausanne minorities' received a status which provided them full citizenship without being subject to any discrimination, and certain rights of developing their cultural, religious and educational autonomous status already present before Lausanne. More importantly, these measures were subjected to the international supervision of the League of Nations. Among these measures accepted at Lausanne, article 42 guaranteed that family and private law for minorities would be formed and applied in line with their traditions. Such measures which would have prevented them from being assimilated and would have helped them

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<sup>273</sup>Yıldız,2002, p.:217-227.

keep their autonomous positions<sup>274</sup>. However, these measures would not be enough for them to be able to occupy a full citizen status due to internal nation-building efforts of an authoritarian single party regime and a lack of effective supervision of the international actors. In the following part, the legal measures and critical events for the minorities will be handled, and the approach of the single party regime to the minorities will be presented.

### ***2.1.2.3. Legal Measures of the Turkish Republic Concerning the Minorities:***

At this point, the first event to note is the population exchange between Turkey and Greece which was proposed at Lausanne with a special protocol. The process of ethnic homogenization in a certain territory in parallel with the formation of nation states and then nations out of the populations of the empire had already begun in the 19 th century. For the part of Anatolia that was left to the Turkish republic, its population was getting homogenized in terms of religious variation due to the wars and migrations of huge flux of Muslims from the lost territories of the empire towards Anatolia, and non-Muslim Greeks and Armenians from Anatolia to the exterior. This process was almost a violent, painful and sometimes bloody one for the people. At least, millions of people had to change their original settlements and lost their property, memories and sometimes their lives. The protocol signed between Turkey and Greece can be evaluated as the least painful and violent process of ethnic/religious homogenization policies. Approximately 1.2000.000 Greeks of Anatolia and 400.000 Muslims of Rumelia had to leave their places. As this exchange was a source of hopelessness and disorder for the people subject to migration, it transformed the social and political structures of the two countries<sup>275</sup>. To refer to a major and easily observable point for this transformation, the

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274Oran, Baskın, Türkiye'de Azınlıklar, Kavramlar, Teori, İç Mevzuat, İçtihat, Uygulama, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 61-80. See also: Kaya, Önder, Tanzimattan Lozan'a Azınlıklar, 2004, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul, Aydın, Zeynep, "Lozan Antlaşmasında Azınlık Statüsü", in Ulusal, Ulusalüstü ve Uluslararası Hukukta Azınlık Hakları (Birleşmiş Milletler, Avrupa Birliği, Avrupa Konseyi, Lozan Antlaşması), ed. by: İbrahim Kaboğlu, 2002, İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 209-218, Ürer, Levent, Azınlıklar ve Lozan Tartışmaları, 2003, Derin Yayınları, İstanbul and Bilsel, Cemil, Lozan-Citl II, Sosyal Yayınlar, İstanbul.

275Aktar, Ayhan, "Nüfusun Homojenleştirilmesi ve Ekonominin Türkleştirilmesi Sürecinde Bir Aşama: Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi 1923-1924, in Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 17-19. See also: Arı, Kemal, "Mübadele ve Ulusal Ekonomi Yaratma Çabaları", in Toplumsal Tarih, no: 68, Ağustos 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul,

entrepreneurship ability and experience in the country migrated with Greeks and Armenians those forming the largest part of the merchant and entrepreneur segment of the late Ottoman society. The exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey was a further step in the formation of a national/Muslim merchant entrepreneur class. Although a process of forming a Muslim bourgeoisie class was initiated by the Unionist from 1908 onwards, the new Muslim merchants were not capable enough to compensate the former class consisting of non-Muslims. This was also a process of elimination of a possibly challenging segment in the society powerful enough to buffer the rise of the bureaucracy and its authoritative shaping/civilizing vigor over the society<sup>276</sup>. This situation should have contributed to the consolidation of a single party regime without a major oppositional power and the identification of the state/bureaucracy with the party. Another significant repercussion in relation to the formation of a national bourgeoisie is the growth and development of the new class mostly by the direct support and guarantee of the state. Thus, this newly emerging class could not easily voice any independent voice to the policies of the regime<sup>277</sup>. Lastly to note, the need to eliminate the minority figures in the country was expressed openly at the parliament during the sessions on the exchange of populations and the motivation behind this was not only their identification with the 'other' baggage of their social memory but also the fear of intervention by the external powers by using the minorities<sup>278</sup>.

Having drawn the legal framework for the minorities at Lausanne, we observe the minorities renouncing their rights mentioned in article 42<sup>279</sup>. This article, dealing with

p.: 12-17.

276Keyder, Çağlar, "Kayıp Burjuvazi Aranyor", in Toplumsal Tarih, no:68, Ağustos 1999, Tarih Vakfı yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 5.

277Ibid., p.: 8.

278Arı, Kemal, Büyük Mübadele- Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç (1923-1925), 1995, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 17-25. On the same issue see also: Hirschon, Renée (ed.), Ege'yi Geçerken 1923 Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi, 2005, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul and Hirschon, Renée, Mübadele Çocukları, 2000, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul.

279"Madde 42: Türk hükümeti Müslüman-olmayan azınlıkların aile durumlarıyla kişisel durumları konusunda, bu sorunların, söz konusu azınlıkların gelenek ve görenekleri uyarınca çözümlenmesine elverecek bütün tedbirleri almayı kabul eder. Bu tedbirler, Türk hükümetiyle ilgili azınlıklardan her birinin eşit sayıda temsilcilerinden kurulu özel Komisyonlarca düzenlenecektir. Anlaşmazlık çıkarsa, Türk hükümetiyle Milletler Cemiyeti Meclisi, Avrupalı hukukçular arasından birlikte seçecekleri bir üst-hakem atayacaklardır. Türk hükümeti, sözkonusu azınlıklara ait kiliselere, havralara, mezarlıklara ve öteki din kurumlarına tam bir koruma sağlamayı yükümlenir. Bu azınlıkların Türkiye'deki vakıflarına, din ve hayır işleri kurumlarına her türlü kolaylıklar ve izinler sağlanacak ve Türk hükümeti, yeniden din ve hayır kurumları kurulması için, bu nitelikteki özel kurumlara sağlanmış

the private and family laws for the minorities was creating a semi-autonomous position especially for the religious establishment of the non-Muslim communities with a power of jurisdiction. They were about to keep their position in the empire. Prominent politicians and intellectuals such as İsmet İnönü and Yunus Nadi were perceiving article 42 like an acknowledgment of autonomy to the minorities. İsmet İnönü was expressing the need for the Turkification of the elements, which constituted a contradiction to Turkish sovereignty in the country, and their Turkification would also be for the benefit of these minorities themselves. Yunus Nadi stated that the position of the minorities was similar to their status in the empire, and this would threaten the integrity of the new republic. Nadi was openly calling for the renunciation of the rights in the article 42 by indicating the Jewish community as to take the initial step. This issue initiated a discussion among the intellectuals and the journalists which would created a public pressure and a repressive atmosphere over the minorities towards taking the step of renouncing their rights<sup>280</sup>. The leaders of the Jewish community declared their renunciation of the rights of article 42 in September 1925 and the Armenian and Greek communities followed the same way in October<sup>281</sup>. An article of Necmettin Sadık (Sadak) published at *Akşam* on 16 th of September 1925, claimed the possibility of the threat of a possible intervention of the stipulations of article 42 concerning international powers by using the international supervising of the articles of the Lausanne treaty while referring to the possible climate of suspicion between the state and the minorities, and the difficulties created by these rights under foreign guarantee for the minorities to become full citizens<sup>282</sup>. On the other side of the coin, in an article published Avram Galanti was at *Akşam* on 13 rd of October 1925, referring to the need for renunciation for the integration of the minorities to the society for the homogeneous nature of the society and to prevent a future isolation of the minorities<sup>283</sup>.

After the minorities renounced their rights stipulated in article 42, the government

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gerekli kolaylıklardan hiçbirini esirgemeyecektir.” in Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanakları, Belgeler, trans. By: Seha L. Meray, 2. cilt, 1973, AÜSBF Yayınları, Ankara, p.: 13.

280Bali, Rıfat N., Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945), 2001, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 62-63.

281Ibid., p.: 64-65.

282Ibid., p.: 66.

283Ibid., p.: 68.

took another legal step towards the elimination of the social organization of the minorities inherited from the empire. This was the new civil code accepted in 1926. This code was providing the government with the double-edged tool to legally Turkify the non-Muslim minorities by breaking their traditional resistance and taking them into a secular body of law totally under its own control, and removing the political interventions of the foreign powers by claiming to be the protectors of the minorities. Furthermore, this code was also giving the right to organize the private lives of all of its subjects to the newly established nation state. The Civil Code of 1926 can be evaluated as one of the most significant gains of the Turkish nation state and the Kemalists to hold the monopoly of power in the legal area over its subjects<sup>284</sup>. An additional legal measure against was the 159 th<sup>285</sup> article of Insult on Turkishness (*Türklüğü Tahkir*) in the Turkish Penal Code. This was generally instrumentalized during the campaigns to force the non-Muslim minorities to speak Turkish in public space. This article was a measure that would be used on a larger basis for the prevention of resistance to Turkification attempts on the side of minorities<sup>286</sup>.

#### **2.1.2.4. Administrative and Economic measures Towards the Minorities:**

As it was expressed while discussing the issue of exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey and its repercussion in the process of the formation of a national/Muslim bourgeoisie, nationalization of the economic sphere in Turkey went on in the early republican period. As Aktar points out, the new nation state was trying to form its 'own' capitalist class by intervening heavily in the capital formation of the firms especially the foreign ones while at the same time trying to attract foreign investment in

284Aktar, Ayhan, “Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarında Uygulanan 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları”, in Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.:110.

285“Büyük Millet Meclisi'ni veya hükümetin şahsı manevisini veya ordu veya donanmasını yahut Türklüğü tahkir ve tezyif edenler hakkında dahi bundan evvelki madde ahkamı tatbik olunur.”. (Bundan evvelki madde hükmü 158. madde:”Reisicumhura karşı muvacehesinde hakaret edenler veya Reisicumhur aleyhine tecavüzkarane neşriyatta bulunanlar, üç seneden aşağı olmamak üzere, ağır hapse konur.”). “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti kanunlarına sövenler, altı ayı geçmemek üzere hapis olunur ve otuz Liradan yüz Liraya kadar ağır cezayı nakdiye mahkum olur.”. in Koçak, Cemil, “Ayın Karanlık Yüzü: Tek-Parti Döneminde Gayrimüslim Azınlıklar hakkında Açılan Türklüğü Tahkir Davaları”, Tarih ve Toplum-Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Bahar 2005, no:1, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 148.

286Bali, 2001, p.: 527-528. For an extended discussion of this issue see also Koçak, Cemil, “Ayın Karanlık Yüzü: Tek-Parti Döneminde Gayrimüslim Azınlıklar hakkında Açılan Türklüğü Tahkir Davaları”, Tarih ve Toplum-Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Bahar 2005, no:1, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul.

the first years of the republic. Government intervention did not remain limited with the capital formation of the firms and their foreign character, the firms were also forced to use Turkish language in any kind of documentation and communication through the law introduced on the 26 th of April 1926 number 805. In addition, the state dictated them to prepare reports of their personnel concerning their identity to determine the character of their personnel policy and to force them to employ a minimum level of Turkish/Muslim personnel<sup>287</sup>.

With the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the employment of non-Muslims in the bureaucracy was *de facto* stopped. This *de facto* situation turned into a *de jure* one by the 4 th article of the Law of State Officials(*Memurin Kanunu*) introduced on the 18 th of March 1926 as number 788. By this law, among the requirements to be a civil servant, one was declared to be a Turk but it was not enough to be a citizen of the Turkish Republic. This law limited the employment in the civil service to the ethnic Turks and only to those non-Turk Muslims who were ready to be Turkified, while the rest of the non-Muslims were excluded<sup>288</sup>. Along the same line, non-Muslim minorities were recruited in the army without any problem up to 1939<sup>289</sup>.

For the part of the educational interventions of the new republic, a few words need to be consumed on the general approach to education and its functions. Mustafa Kemal was mentioning that education would be organized to create new generations that would have the ability to fight against the enemies of the Turkish independence, its personality and its national traditions. In line with this argumentation, the focus in education was on the unification and secularization of education. Religion was totally eliminated in the discourse on the education of new generations. It was well realized by the political elite determined to shape the society towards contemporary European civilizational domain that education was a useful tool to infuse secular and national doctrines and goals of the new regime. Education occupied a central place in the transition from *ümme*(religious community) to nation and in the construction of a nation with its national culture taught

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287Aktar, 2004, p.: 117-118.

288Aktar, Ayhan, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarında Uygulanan 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları”, in Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 110.

289Okutan, 2004, p.: 136.

in schools<sup>290</sup>. The legal reorganization of the schools by the law for the unification of education was an initial step towards structuring the minority schools in line with the aims of the regime. All the schools in the country were taken under the control of the ministry of education. The secularization of the school establishment and the curricula was valid for the minority schools, too. Another step was taken with a notice by the government that anything that could be against Turks, Turkish state and Turkish history would not be found in the curricula of these schools. In the following year, the government gave the authority to determine those teachers who would give Turkish language, Turkish history and Turkish geography courses. Following these steps, it was declared that the teachers in the minority schools need to be native Turkish speakers in 1927<sup>291</sup>.

To be able to illustrate the picture for the position of the non-Muslim minorities in the society, there are some important events to note. The first event came out of a murder of a Jewish girl (Elza Niyego) by a Muslim man (Osman Ratıb) in 1927 which was in fact an outcome of an unanswered love. The funeral of this young Jewish girl turned into a reaction of a whole community. This minority psychology was exaggerated in the press as a 'protest meeting against Turks' and a harsh reflex was presented against the Jews accelerated by an ongoing antisemitic propaganda<sup>292</sup>.

At this point, the position of the Ottoman Bank in these early years of the Turkish Republic needs to be presented to be able to follow the only piece of information about his life story for this period. Although the Ottoman Bank and the Kemalist resistance movement of the War of Independence which later founded the new republic, entered into a kind of symbiosis during the war, it was a big question for both parties to form a new mode of relationship under new conditions<sup>293</sup>. For the part of the republican government, there were 2 major questions which would shape their attitude and policy towards the Bank. The first one was the transformation of the state bank of the Ottoman Empire into the state bank of the new Turkish Republic on the basis of a will in the

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290Ibid., p.: 163-165.

291Ibid., p.: 167-169.

292Bali, 2001, p.: 109-131.

293Eldem, 1999, p.: 359.

political elites of the new republic to break off its ties with the former regime. The second problem was the anti-imperialist background of the same political elite which was the prominent part of the fight against the western imperialist powers in the World War I and in the War of Independence because the Bank was of British and largely French capital. These two major questions were producing a suspicion on the side of the government<sup>294</sup>. For the part of the Ottoman Bank, the new situation was ambitious, too. The Bank lost its state with the foundation of the republic and it lost most of its basis of operations and confined with the ideological and territorial boundaries of the new republic. They needed to find ways of creating a new *modus vivendi* with the state<sup>295</sup>. The government needed such a financial source and established organization at least until the foundation of a new national one because the financial exhaustion of the War of Independence and lack of a substitute institution forced them to think on the protraction of the agreement for emission which would end in 1925<sup>296</sup>. However, there was a strong suspicious perception in government circles against the non-national character of the Ottoman Bank which was shared heavily by the press. In March 1924, the Bank and the Ministry of Finance reached to an agreement to prolong the right of emission of the Bank under relatively good conditions for the Bank to survive without losing its status as a state bank<sup>297</sup>. This agreement did not mean the last step because the part of the government against the Ottoman Bank' non-national character and the press in the same line. They launched a campaign against the Bank depending on the claim that the Bank did not have enough of gold reserves in compensation of the money in circulation and its gold reserves were not in Istanbul but in Marseilles<sup>298</sup>. This process took a year and some major changes were made in the agreement to the detriment of the Bank which would simply reduce its position to an ordinary trade bank after a national bank for emission was founded. This was realized in 1931 by the foundation of the Central Bank of the Turkish Republic (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Merkez Bankası*)<sup>299</sup>.

In this process, the Bank was also more subject to pressure for credits more than

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294Ibid., p.: 359-360.

295Ibid., p.: 360-361.

296Ibid., p.: 360.

297Ibid., p.: 370.

298Ibid., p.: 373-375.

299Ibid., p.: 395-396.



before especially by the people who had ideological or personal links to the government. In one of these attempts, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was observed as a figure in between, the government and the Bank's interests. The Bank responded to a request for credit by İbrahim Bey for his new enterprise in Eskişehir, who was a reputable deputy of province of Ertuğrul, by stating the necessity of the guarantee of the Ministry of Finance. This statement by the Bank created a discontent in the government and Kemaleddin Paşa called Berç Türker-Keresteciyan to talk on this issue. Although Berç Türker-Keresteciyan stated that İbrahim Bey accepted to present a guarantee from the Ministry of Finance, Kemaleddin Paşa was very harsh in his speech. He was addressing the disappointment and disconfidence on the side of the government about this credit to İbrahim Bey just before the agreement over the Ottoman Bank was about to be approved at the parliament. His statements included very clear clues of the will to form a national-patriotic bourgeoisie which would support the state when needed as opposed to the foreign entrepreneurs and their non-Muslim collaborators. This attitude was well reflected in the agreement approved at the parliament for the future position of the Ottoman Bank as mentioned above. The artificial intervention of the political elites in the processes of giving credits was also a good example of the support given to the deputies to found new industrial enterprises that the new economic mentality of 1920's introduced. In addition to these conflicts with the position of the Bank which was alone and weak to keep its autonomous status in the new regime, one of the major concerns of the republican governments was the Turkification of the Bank personnel. This Turkification did not include only the increasing rate of employment of the Muslim Turkish people in the Bank but also their employment at the higher levels of the Bank. This aim was achieved in a gradual process especially by the efforts of Halid Ziya Bey<sup>300</sup>. In this respect, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, in his short resumeé written by him in 1935, argued that he worked for the employment of Turcophile personnel in the Bank and the Bank retired him early in 1927 due to his contribution to Turkification efforts after the appointment of some Turcophobe administrators to the Paris committee of the Bank. His reconstruction of this experience was overlapping with his mention of the reaction of the Paris committee to the letter he sent to the Morning Post newspaper

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300Ibid., p.: 431-436.

calling out to Lord Curzon for the disinvolvement of the European powers into the affairs of Turkey with her Armenian subjects, in his resumeé<sup>301</sup>. It should be reserved that he might well have been a proponent of Turkification in the Ottoman Bank but his reconstruction may also be a reflection of his effort for the the non-national character of the Ottoman Bank not to impact the perception of his own character in this period.

## **2.2.The Consolidation of the Regime 1927-1931:**

After the period of initial reforms introduced by the republican governments, personalization of the political power around the personality of Mustafa Kemal, the beginnings of the identification of the state with the parliament and People's Party without alternative locuses of power and the elimination of all oppositional attempts, the following period witnessed the continuation of these processes. *Takrir-i Sükun* Law that was instrumental in turning the government to an authoritarian single party administration from 1925 up to 1927 remained valid up to 1929 but on paper<sup>302</sup>. This law was invalidated by the government because Republican People's Party had already acquired a monopoly over political power and the regime of the country was officially declared to be single party regime in 1931 party congress<sup>303</sup>. The party and the state entered into a process of identification strictly.<sup>304</sup>.

In this period, the process of introducing reforms for secularization and modernization continued. The period that had begun in 1923 would change form and get more institutionalized with the People's Party congress in 1931 and the declaration of 6 principles of the regime as Republicanism(*Cumhuriyetçilik*), Nationalism (*Milliyetçilik*), Statism(*Devletçilik*), Laicism(*Laiklik*), Revolutionarism(*İnkılapçılık*), Popularism(*Halkçılık*) and the first party program in the congress. Along with these 6 principles significantly determining the boundaries of the regime to be stretched at most, this congress marked the beginning of established single-party regime with an

301Türker (Keresteci), Berç, Tercüme-i Hal Kağıdı, 27 Şubat 1935, T.B.M.M. Arşivi Personel Dosyası, Ankara.

302Zürcher, 1999,p.: 257.

303Tunçay, 1999, p.: 317-318.

304Zürcher, 1999, p.: 258-259.

authoritative character<sup>305</sup>.

Regarding the political participation of the minorities, Lausanne treaty gives the minorities the rights equal to the other citizens of the Turkish Republic. However, this was one of the realms that the Lausanne articles concerning the minorities were disregarded in practice. With the possible exception of one deputy, non-Muslims could not participate in any elections up to the elections for municipalities in 1930. With the addition of the will on the part of the leader of the Free Republican Party, Fethi Okyar to give candidacy to non-Muslims in İstanbul with the idea of non-discrimination of language, race and religion to the already existing discontent among the minorities, some prominent figures among the minority communities became candidates in the elections. The minorities largely supported Free Republican Party but no minority candidate could win any seat in the municipality councils in İstanbul. The candidacy of these minority figures, among whom Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was also present, created an opposition towards the Free Republican Party among the ranks of People's Party and in the Turkish press. However, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan argues in a letter he sent to Yunus Nadi that he did not know that he was included in the candidate list of the Free Republican Party and he got surprised and sad because of this incident. The support given by the non-Muslims to the Free Republican Party revealed that minorities were ready to take part in an oppositional movement. This experience made an impact on the policies of People's Party administration in 1935 general elections<sup>306</sup>.

### **2.2.1.A Brief Glance at the non-Muslim Minorities in the Society:**

For this period, the general atmosphere of tension between the non-Muslims subject to Turkification measures, and the state and the rest of the society continued. An exemplary event broke out from a publication in a Greek periodical *Hronika* in 1929. This publication was on the Turco-Greek war in 1922 and an expression in this journal (*agriyotera*) was translated as 'wild' although the director of the periodical explained

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305Zürcher, 1999, p.: 264-266.

306Bali, Rıfat N., "1930 Yılı Seçimleri ve Serbest Fırka'nın Azınlık Adayları", Tarih ve Toplum, Kasım 1997, no: 167, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 25-34.

this word as 'ambitious'. After a short investigation, the periodical was closed down. These events should show us the significant role of the press in channeling the discontent in the society towards minorities for which there had already been a suspicion among the Muslim majority. The closure of this periodical was based on the law article concerning the Insult on Turkicness(*Türklüğü Tahkir*) Law introduced in the Penal Code of 1926. Even the Elza Niyego case was referred to this article<sup>307</sup>. A recent study on the cases opened on the basis of this law was surveyed by Cemil Koçak as an outcome of an extensive archive research of the cases between 1928 and 1950. Although the documents do not show us enough of clues on what basis these cases were opened, the few examples include an insult on the Turkish flag and speaking of foreign languages in public instead of Turkish. These examples also show that some very arbitrary reasons could be created to open such cases. Koçak argues that the high number of cases opened against minorities can be linked to the campaigns to speak Turkish for non-Muslim minorities and foreigners and, the consequent daily atmosphere of the time created by the slogans towards this end. The number of the cases against non-Muslim minorities increased in time from 1927 to 1937 but a tendency not to accept the cases on the side of the judiciary can be observed after 1935<sup>308</sup>. This study can help us in highlighting the limits of the tolerance between the Muslim and non-Muslim people in the single Party Period which does not give us clues of idealizing the conditions of the time in terms of social harmony.

### **2.3.Berç Türker-Keresteciyan at the Parliament of the Single Party Regime:1931-1943**

As a parallel process launched in the political realm, policies of nationalization and secularization went on in this period. The first attempt was the gathering of the Turkish Language Assembly in 1932. A reform program was prepared to purify the language and the The Association for the Study of the Turkish Language/*Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* was founded. A theory *Güneş Dil Teorisi*/Language Theory of Sun claiming that all

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307Okutan, 2004, p.: 243-246.

308Koçak, Cemil, "Ayın Karanlık Yüzü: Tek-Parti Döneminde Gayrimüslim Azınlıklar hakkında Açılan Türklüğü Tahkir Davaları", *Tarih ve Toplum-Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Bahar 2005, no:1, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 147-208.

languages were the products of a unique language spoken in Central Asia, Turkish language was the closest one to this original language and all languages took shape by passing through Turkish<sup>309</sup>. In conjunction with this institution in language, the Association for the Study of the Turkish History/*Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti* which was founded in 1931 contributed to the works of the language association. On the secularization aspect of the reforms, Kemalists reforms in secularization were in progress by attacking the symbols of the popular experience of Islam such as dress, sacred sheikhs, tombs of spiritual saints and religious feasts. This progress was creating a considerable resistance among the society more than the discontent created by the abolishment of the Caliphate, religious private law, religious orders and religious schools<sup>310</sup>. It should be noted that the main axis of secularization towards popular Islam and nationalization towards Turkification of the language and history was heavily justified with the broader aim of integrating to the contemporary western civilizational sphere and being an equally equipped part of this family of nations. As a contribution to the stance of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan on this issue, there is need to refer to a speech of him. He had a conviction that Turkey decidedly turned his face towards western civilization which he expressed in a discussion on the weekly holiday<sup>311</sup>. This perspective was well fitting into the mental map of the political elites of the time as a goal of reaching the contemporary western civilization and into his formation by which he acquired an affinity to western civilization in the schools, Galatasaray Lycee and Robert College, he attended and the institution, Ottoman bank, he worked for.

In the process of the consolidation of the single party regime and the identification of the party with the state, the appointment of Recep Bey as the general secretary of the party was significant. He tried to strengthen the party organization and its doctrines. Additionally, he was aiming at bringing the party to a level where it could control the

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309Zürcher, 1999, p.: 276-277.

310Ibid., p.: 279.

311T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1935, İ:31, C:1, p.: 302-303, “Biz Cumhuriyetin teessüsünden beri Avrupalı büyük Devletler sırasına girdik. İktisadive ticari ve mali işlerimize bir hız verdik. Binaenaleyh biz de ekseriyetin kabul ettiği tatil gününü kabul etmeğe mecburuz. Şimdiki vaziyette işler mucibi teahhur oluyor, karışıyor. Bunun için haftanın her günü allhın günüdür, hiç bir fark yoktur. Yalnız söylediğim gibi hangi gün işimize geliyorsa ve hangi günü dünya ekseriyeti kabul etmişse o günü kabul edelim ve daima olduğu gibi Türkün yüksek seviyesini ve terakki arzusunu dünyaya bildirelim .

state mechanism and the government.<sup>312</sup> The congress of the party in 1935 marked another significant point for the future of the regime. A Council of Presidency/*Genel Başkanlık Kurulu* was formed, it consisted of the Party President, the Deputy President and the General Secretary and this was the highest organ of decision in the party. This council had the right to choose the candidates for deputies. This congress was the point where the party was largely identified with the state. The party could not be an independent and strong political organization having control over the government and the state mechanism as Recep Bey proposed but it became a part of the state. As a further step, Recep Bey was dismissed from his office in the party in June 1936 in line with the idea that did not see a separate party organization as necessary. İsmet İnönü was proclaiming the unification of the party with the state and the government in his speech on 18 th of June in 1936. The person who was the Minister of Internal Affairs would be the General Secretary of the Party and the governors would be the presidents of the party branches of the cities. The last step can be seen as the inclusion of the 6 principles of the party in the constitution in February 1937<sup>313</sup>.

At this point, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's views on the functioning of the state mechanism and the role of the Republican People's Party need to be presented very briefly. He mainly addressed some criticisms on the functioning of the bureaucracy and offers some advises on the state mechanism<sup>314</sup>. On the same line, he praised the

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312Zürcher, 1999, p.: 262-263.

313Koçak, Cemil, "Siyasal Tarih 1923-1950", *Türkiye Tarihi 4- Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980*, ed. by.: Sina Akşin, 1997, Cem Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 115-116.

314T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 204, "İlk bakışta böyle bir Conseil des experts yani tetkik heyetinin teşekkülü garib görülür ise de, Devlet mekanizmasının her noktasını daimi surette birer birer tetkik, etüd ve incelemek hususunda tecrübeli Türk ve bir iki ecnebi mütehassıslardan mürekkeb Ali tetkik heyetinin göreceği işler, yapacağı hizmetler çok faydalı ve çok yerinde olabilir. Yani hulasa olarak söyleyeyim ki, hızla giden Devlet gemisinin yolu üzerinde mali ve iktisadi engeller, hesapsız ve zarar verici işler bulunuyorsa, israf varsa arzettiğim konsültatif Ali tetkik heyeti yani İntelligence servisi Hükümetimiz nezdinde ikaz edici mühim bir teşekkül olabilir." and T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.12.1941, İ:20, C:1, p.: 129, "Sonra, asıl iş muhterem Ziraat vekilimize düşüyor; Vekilimiz çizmesini ayağına çekmeli, ata binmeli ve bütün erkanı ile bütün köyleri gezmelidir. (Gülüşmeler). Başka türlü, bürokratik surette bu iş bitmez?". For his criticism on nepotism in the employment of civil officials see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 18.5.1936, İ:64, C:1, p.: 123-124.

functioning of the Judiciary<sup>315</sup>, Police and Gendarmerie<sup>316</sup> by bringing in some ideas for the betterment of the conditions of the personnel of these institutions. More significantly, he touched upon the People's Republican Party and its function<sup>317</sup> at some points and he did not question its uniqueness and identification with the state but he said that he was content with this situation in this conjuncture. A last but important note about his views was on the penalty for the crimes against the state. He offered to increase the penalty for the crimes against the state<sup>318</sup> reflecting his state centered political view in line with the considerations of the political elites of the time who founded the new state and its regime, and who passed through a stage in which they faced a risk of losing their state.

The year of 1937 was the point where the political alliance which began during the Independence War between İsmet İnönü and Atatürk ended. The main reasons behind the collapse of this alliance were the constant interventions of Mustafa Kemal as the

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315T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1937, İ:64, C:1, p.: 239, “Bir memleketin adliyesi ne kadar mükemmel olursa o meleketin medeni seviyesinin yüksekliğini gösterir. Muhterem Adliye vekili bu mükemmeliyete varmak için bir takım önemli tedbirler aldılar, kanunlar teklif ettiler. Kendilerini tebrik ederim. Ancak, adliye mekanizmasını matluba muvafık surette yürütebilmemiz için hakimlerimize tevdi edilen çok ağır nazik vazifeleriyle mütenasib bir maaş haddi çizilmelidir. Bu bir nazariye değil, ameli bir esastır.”

316T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1938, İ:65, C:1, p.: 153, “Sayın arkadaşlar, Muhterem Dahiliye vekili, memleketimizin asayişini sarsılmaz surette temin etmiş olduğu için yurda büyük bir hizmet vermiştir. Bundan dolayı Türk yurtdaşı kendisine daima medyunu şükrandır. Yine muhterem vekilin himmetiyle polis ve jandarma teşkilatı mükemmeliyete ermiştir.”

317T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1937, İ:64, C:1, p.: 219-220, “Memlektimiz işlerinden bahsederken bir de C.H. Fırkasından bahsetmek isterim. Bu muhterem fırka Ulu şefimizin kurduğu yüksek bir siyasi fırkadır. Bu fırka, başka memleketlerdeki fırkalar gibi, siyasi münakaşalarla vakit geçirmez. Halk fırkası memleketimizin umumi kalkınmasına hadim mühim bir teşkilattır. Bugün bu fırkanın umumi sekreterliğini de dirayetle idare eden Dahiliye vekili acaba teşkilattan azami istifade ediyorlar mı? Ben diyorum ki, madem ki memleketimizin her tarafında yayılmış bu mühim fırka teşkilatı vardır, bütün fırka memleketimizin kalkınmasına, Devlet mekanizmasına, bilumum halkın yani esnafın, tüccarın, mükellefin, çiftçinin ve köylünün ihtiyaç ve dileklerine dair umumi sekreterliğe sık sık raporlar yollarsa muhterem Hükümetimiz çok müstfid olurlar. Bütün Devlet mekanizmasının her noktasını yani dahili, iktisadi, zirai, sıhhi, mali ve kültürel sahalardaki işleri yakından takip ederek muhterem Başvekaleti sık sık haberdar ederek vazifesini ifa eden bir heyetin teşekkülünü geçen sene bu kürsüden teklif etmiştim. Düşündüm ki bu nazik ve faydalı vazifeyi muhterem Halk partisi teşkilatı pek ala ifa edebilir ve sayın Hükümetimiz müstfid olurlar.bu milahazama dair, Muhterem Dahiliye vekilinin kıymetli düşünceleri nelerdir?”. See also: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23 and 17.3.1943, İ:3, C:1, p.: 27.

318T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 11.6.1936, İ:78, C:1, p.: 217, “Muhterem encümenden bir sual soracağım: Devlete karşı işlenmiş cürümler gayet ağır cürümlerdir. Bunlar için bazı cezalar konulmuş. Bu cezalar hangi esas üzerine konulmuştur? Sonra bunlar muhtelif şekilde ağır cürümler olduğuna göre, mesela vatan hainliği için üç seneden, on sene ağır hapis veya 200 liradan 500 liraya kadar para cezası gibi cezalarla karşılanamaz. Bunların herbiri için azami ve tek bir ceza olmalıdır.”

president into the activities of the governments headed by İsmet İnönü, the different views on the issue of the position of Hatay and, lastly and most importantly the different interpretations of etatist economic policies<sup>319</sup>. İsmet İnönü quit his position of Prime Minister for a short while to rest.<sup>320</sup> Atatürk passed away on 10 th of November 1938. The discussions over who would be the next President of the republic began before Atatürk's death. The group in opposition to İnönü's presidency could not find a strong candidate and İnönü was elected as the second President of the republic<sup>321</sup>. The election of İnönü as the President without great rivalries and fluctuations in the political scene gave signals of the continuation of the single party regime and the protection of the Kemalist reforms.<sup>322</sup> In the following days of his presidency, İnönü was declared to be the Unchanging President/*Değişmez Genel Başkan* of the People's Party and the National Chief/*Milli Şef* instead of Atatürk's title of Eternal Chief/*Ebedi Şef* in line with leader principles(*Führer* in Germany and *Duce* in Italy) in some of the dictatorships of Europe<sup>323</sup>. As an interesting and illustrating aspect of his speeches, a brief presentation of his speeches in which he addressed to the prominent political leaders of the time. He constantly expresses his praises and gratitudes to Atatürk before<sup>324</sup> and after his death<sup>325</sup> although he was not among the people who gave a speech just after his death while other non-Muslim deputies did. Additionally, in his first speech after the death of Atatürk and his election for the parliament for the second time which was at the beginning of the year 1939, he lists his praises and gratitudes with an order of being Turk, the existence of the National chief İsmet İnönü, the strong Turkish army, the valuable members of the Exalted Turkish Parliament, the head of the government Refik Saydam and lastly the Republican People's Party. Atatürk was not included in this list interestingly but a few sentences after these expressions, he refers to Atatürk as the

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319Koçak, 1996, p.: 24-35.

320Ibid., p.: 108-111.

321Ibid., p.: 139-141.

322Ibid., p.: 182-183.

323Ibid., p.: 164-170.

324T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 167, "...Türk ulusu dünyanın en bahtiyar ulusudur. Çünkü basında bu asrın en büyük şahsiyeti olan Atatürk vardır, çünkü onun yaratıcı ve yapıcı ilhamları daima bu memleketin yükselmesine bir temel teşkil etmiş ediyor (Alkışlar.)". It should be noted that numberless similar phrases can be observed in his speeches exalting Atatürk.

325T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23, "...On sekiz milyon Türk, asırların en büyük adamı olan Ebedi Şefimiz Atatürk'ün teslim ettiği şanlı inkilab ve Cumhuriyet bayrağının altında, muazzez Reisi Cumhurbaşumuzun yanı başında, şanlı Türk ordusu ile beraber yekpare bir cisim teşkil ederek hazır durmaktadır...".



greatest man of the centuries and as the Eternal Chief<sup>326</sup>. Before the death of Atatürk, he generally occupied the first place in praises and gratitudes<sup>327</sup>. He also expresses his gratitudes to İsmet İnönü before<sup>328</sup> and after he became the National Chief<sup>329</sup>. Lastly, he always included the governments and their heads, Celal Bayar, Refik Saydam and Şükrü Saraçoğlu in his praises and gratitudes<sup>330</sup>.

### 2.3.1.A Brief Glance at the non-Muslim Minorities in the Period:

At this point a brief survey of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's speeches concerning nation, nationality and the minorities need to be presented. He usually mentioned his views on Turkishness/nationality and nation<sup>331</sup> in lines in his speeches and the minorities aspect of the issue was not a large part of his speeches. He included in his description of the unique Turkish nation, the great transformation of Atatürk, the flag of the Republic under which the nation was united together with the President National Chief İsmet İnönü and the Turkish army. In his description, 18 million people living in the country were taken as Turks forming a unique piece called nation without any references to the religious, ethnic and linguistic variety of the people of the country<sup>332</sup>. He also referred to the reform/*inkilab* and the flag of the republic understandably, which were the two among the 6 principles of the regime, Republicanism and Revolutionarism or Reformism. Furthermore, he mentioned the National Chief as a significant complementary element of the nation in the context of rising leader cult which had begun in Turkey with Atatürk and continued with İsmet İnönü. Lastly in his description,

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326For his long speech of praises and gratitudes see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2C:1, p.: 23.

327T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1, p.: 189.

328T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1, p.: 189, "Çok muhterem İsmet İnönü, dünyanın en çalışkan Başvekilidir. Yanında kendisi gibi çalışkan Bakan arkadaşları vardır. Sayın Başvekilimiz on iki seneden beri Başvekalette bulunuyorlar. Bu 12 seneyi memleket hesabına gece ve gündüz büyük feragat içinde çalışmakla geçirmiştir."

329T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23, "Bahtiyarız; çünkü bütün Türk milletinin sevgi ve itimadını kazanan fazilet ve kudret timsali mücessemi ve bütün varlığını milletimizin yükselmesine hasreden ve çiftçi ve köylünün hamisi olan İsmet İnönü gibi alicenab, şanlı ve şerefli bir Milli Şefimiz vardır."

330For Celal Bayar see, T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1938, İ:66, C:1, p.: 186, for Refik Saydam see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23 and for Şükrü Saraçoğlu see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 17.3.1943, İ:3, C:1, p.: 27.

331See footnote: 325.

332T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1940, İ:56, C:1, p.: 283, at the end of another speech of him he says "Yaşasın milli vahdet Yaşasın kahraman ordu (Alkışlar)".

he stated the army among other complementaries of the nation which will be contextualized later in his emphasis on the financial support of the army and its significance in the insecure international environment of the period with references to the mental map of the political elites of the period. As an important detail on his emphasis of the army, his position in the Ottoman Red Crescent and its function in the tag of wars preceding the republic, he should have closely worked with the members of the army and connected to the circles of political and military elites founding the new regime. He also used the expression “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene”<sup>333</sup> which was used until recently as a cliché to exalt being Turkish referring to Atatürk's usage while praising the Turkish nation and being Turkish in some of his speeches<sup>334</sup>. Although this expression included in itself a sub-text of civic nationalist individual consent as a requirement to be part of a nation, it can not be claimed that it was applied in this line but by more cultural Turkification of the non-Turkic elements. As a contribution to his understanding of the nation and homeland/*vatan*, his speech on the Gallipoli battles gives some indirect clues with the space that sacredness of the homeland and the symbolic importance of the monuments for the martyrs died in Gallipoli occupied in his speech<sup>335</sup>. It is interesting that the symbolic importance of the Gallipoli battles still occupies a large space in the memories of the Turkish people accelerated with increasing interest in it for the construction of the memories of the current generations. Furthermore, he gives the number of Turkish martyrs as 55 thousand which seems to be a realistic one compared to the number of 250 thousand placed in the popular memory. As another important detail, he constantly underlines his faithfulness and love he felt to the homeland/*memleket*<sup>336</sup>.

333T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.5.1938, İ:64, C:1, p.: 134 and 30.1.1942, İ:33, C:1, p.: 172.

334See: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 31.7.1936, İ:81, C:1, p.: 317-319, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1, p.: 189, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23 and 10.1.1940, İ:23, C:1, p.: 44.

335T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 31.7.1936, İ:81, C:1, p.: 317-319, “...Çanakkale meselesini tatlıya bağlamıştık, fakat ruhumuzda, kalbimizde Çanakkale mevcuttu, yaşıyordu. Orada vatan uğruna kanını döken türk şehidlerin ruhları her gün bizi bekliyorlardı” and in the same speech “Bundan maada, Çanakalede şehit Mehmedçik için, Türklüğün şanı ve şerefi ile mütenasip muazzam bir abidenin inşası elzemdir. Türk yurddaşlarının iştirakiyle lüzumu kadar para tedarik edilebilir kanaatındayım. İngilizler Çanakkalede ölen askerleri için bir milyon İngiliz lirası sarfettiler ve koca bir mezarlık yaptılar. Acaba biz kendi toprağımızın üzerinde Türk şehidlerinin ruhunu ebediyyen izaz etmek için ve onlara layık güzel muazzam bir abide yapmamalı mıyız? Şimdi orada bulunan abide küçüktür. Türkiyenin kapısında yapılacak abide, 55 bin şehidin mübarek kemiklerini barındıracak yiğitlik ve fedakarlık abidesi olacaktır. (Alkışlar).”

336T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1, p.: 188, “Sayın arkadaşlar; Yukarıdaki maruzatım, bedbin bir arkadaşınızın sözleri değildir. Ben daima karşınıza çıktığım vakit kalbimde ve ruhumda,

The nationalization of the economy largely influenced the non-Muslim minorities in this period. With the law introduced on the 4th of 1932 number 2007, certain spheres of work life were prohibited for foreigners<sup>337</sup>. All these measures were indicating the determination of the political elite to replace the foreign and non-Muslim participation in the capital and labor markets by the Turkish/Muslim one. All in all, these early attempts at creating a national bourgeoisie was not successful. In a statistical study of 1937, the number of firms that had the right for export in the country was 1052 in which only 141 firms belonged to ethnic Turks and other 911 firms to members of non-Muslim minorities<sup>338</sup>. The ultimate step to deprive the non-Muslim minorities of their wealth and replace them with Turk/Muslim people was the *Varlık Vergisi* (Tax of Wealth) of 1942 that became highly destructive for the capital accumulation of the minorities during World War II. The most significant aspect of these attempts was that the newly emerging nation state and its republican regime did not see the economic activities of its non-Muslim subjects as properly 'national' although they were the equal citizens of Turkey according to the Lausanne Treaty and according to the Constitution of 1924<sup>339</sup>.

As a continuation of the suspicion inherited from the previous period of peace of wars, the non-Muslim minorities were not allowed to attend the military academies and thus were prevented from becoming officers in the army. In 1939, their military training with weapons was prohibited. Although they were recruited as reserve officers after 1940, they were not chosen to become regular officers, such as the Muslims were. This was a demonstration of distrust to the non-Muslims on the side of the political elite, a sentiment largely inherited from the Balkan Wars, World War I and Independence War experiences. At this point, the incident of *Yirmi Kura İhtiyatlar* needs to be mentioned.

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memleket merbutiyeti, ve yurd sevdasını taşıyım...".

337Aktar, 2004., p.: 121-125.

338Okutan, Çağatay M., *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, 2004, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 225-226. On the same issue see also: Koraltürk, Murat "Milli Türk Ticaret Birliği" in *Tarih ve Toplum*, no: 167, Kasım 1997, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 45-56, Koraltürk, Murat, "İstanbul Milli Sanayi Birliği" in *Toplumsal Tarih*, no: 68, Ağustos 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 18-23, Serçe, Erkan and Yetkin, Sabri, "Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Ege Bölgesinde İktisadi Hayatı Millileştirme Çabaları-I", in *Toplumsal Tarih*, no:68, Ağustos 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 24-29 and Keyder, Çağlar, "Kayıp Burjuvazi Aranıyor", in *Toplumsal Tarih*, no: 68, Ağustos 1999, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, p.: 4-11.

339Kili, Suna, *Türk Anayasaları*, 1982, Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 62.

Even though any trace of this issue could not be followed in the newspapers of the time, Rıfat N. Bali constructed a comprehensive narration of this story by using the memoirs of the recruited people. This was a decision to recruit non-Muslims who were discharged from military service, for the second time with 20 groups. This decision was estimated to begin to be applied in May 1941 during the World War II. It is understood that this was experienced by the minorities in a very negative way. They were sent to their places of military service under very bad conditions, served in various fields and were sometimes humiliated. They were also told that they would not be able to return to Istanbul and a fear of death dominated them. Finally, they were discharged in July 1942. Bali argues that the motivation behind the decision of the government might be that the non-Muslim minorities were perceived as the representatives of the *Beşinci Kol (Fifth Column)* activities in Turkey which refers to a deep suspicion over them<sup>340</sup>.

During the discussions on a change made in the Law of Associations (*Cemiyetler Kanunu*), Berç Türker-Keresteciyan gave a speech briefly touching upon the possible problems for minorities but largely on minorities (*ekalliyetler*)<sup>341</sup>. In his speech, he points out some of his worries about the application of the Law of Associations to the detriment of the minorities<sup>342</sup> and the Minister of Interior Affairs Şükrü Kaya answers

340Bali, Rıfat N., ““Yirmi Kur'a İhtiyatlar” Olayı”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, Kasım 1998, no: 179, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, P.: 260-274.

341T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 28.6.1938, İ:82, C:1, p.: 412-413, “Kanunda ekalliyetlerden bahsediliyor. Ekalliyet kelimesi kulaklarımıza çok çirkin geliyor. Ekalliyetler kelimesi bana, kapitülasyon zamanında ecnebi devletler elinde siyasi bir alet olan bir zümre gibi geliyor. Bunlar artık, rahmeti rahmana kavuştu (Gülüşmeler). Bizim Büyük Şefimiz Atatürk parlak ziyası ile, parlak siyaseti ile bunları bir hamur etti. Artık ekalliyet yoktur. Zaten bendeniz zahiren ekalliyete mensubtum, kalbim ve ruhum ekalliyet değil, Türktü. Binaenaleyh bu gün Atatürkün büyük siyaseti sayesinde bütün ekalliyete mensub olanlar da Türktür. Ekalliyetler için bu gün çok sayın Hükümetimizden rica ediyorum ki, Lozan muahedesinde zikredilen ekalliyet kelimesi artık büsbütün silinsin. Yine sayın Hariciye vekilimizden rica ediyorum, bunu bir vesile ile silsin. Türkiyede ekalliyet yoktur desin. Sonra patrikhaneler; onlar da ecnebi hükümetler elinde birer siyasi alet olmuşlardı. Yani din kuvvetiyle onlar hesabına ekalliyetleri körüklüyorlardı. Binaenaleyh şimdi bunlarda bu kanunla bir nizam altına sokuldu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti kanunları dahiline girdi. Bütün ecnebi ve medeni memleketlerde din, dünya işlerinden ayrılmıştır. Din siyasete karışmaz. Bunu için bu kanun çok mühimdir. Bundan dolayı ,bu kanunu bize getirdiğinden dolayı yine Hükümeti tebrik ederim.”.

342Ibid., p.: 412-413, he continues his speech and says that “Yalnız bir nokta var; papazlar yalnız kiliselerinde okuyacaklar. Çok iyi. Türkiyede bir Diyanet Riyaseti vardır. Bunların maaşlarını da Diyanet riyaseti mi verecektir? (Gülüşmeler). Bunları anlamak istiyorum. Bunu ciddi olarak söylüyorum. Yarın papazlar demesinler ki; maaşlarımız verilmiyor, biz de kiliselerimizi kapatıyoruz. Böyle bir mesele çıkmasın. Bunu nazarı itibare almalarını sayın Hükümetimizden rica ediyorum. Bir de İstanbulda Ermeni; Yahudi ve Rum hastaneleri vardır. Bunlr içinde alicenap Hükümetimiz geçenlerde Rum hastanesine 35 bin liralık bir kredi verdi. Teşekkür ederiz, o zaman bu münasebetle İstamat arkadaşımız da bu kürsüden teşekkür etmişlerdi. Ermeni ve Yahudi hastaneleri bğazlarına

him by assuring him of the application properly<sup>343</sup>. In his approach to the minorities, one can observe the traces of his definition of nation. He refers to the transformation of the society composed of different segments to a unique whole which was nation, by Atatürk's reform policies. Thus, he rejects a category of minorities/*ekalliyetler* in the unique whole of a nation. He offers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the government an attempt at erasing the expression of minorities in the agreement of Lausanne. He also argues that this expression was a product of the policies of Great European powers in using the minorities and their churches in diffusing their own interests by capitulations. However, with the reforms of Atatürk towards a unified nation and his policies of secularization ended the justification for the existence of a category of minorities. Moreover, he says that he was a minority member in appearance but he felt as Turkish by heart and sole. In his speech, he also requests a financial support for the Armenian and Jewish hospitals for them to pay their debts which may sound as the expressions of a minority representative but still he was not, when his speeches are analyzed overall. Maybe, it was just a request from these communities for him to sound at the parliament another example of which was not found in his speeches. This speech was a well done presentation of his stance on his identity, the newly formulated Turkish nation, the formulation of identity of the new regime for the society and the position of minorities in this picture.

In this period, a policy of strict inspection over the minority schools went on and several schools were closed by the accusation of religious propaganda. This strict inspection especially on the usage of Turkish as the language of instruction was enforced with a decision to charge Turkish assistant directors to each minority school. The government did not allow any insufficiency of teachers in these schools, it did not care for their declining financial conditions<sup>344</sup>.

In the sphere of language, the major step was taken by the introduction of Latin script

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kadar borç içindelerdi. Ali cenap Hükümetimiz bunlara da bir yardımda bulunamazlar mı? Bunu bilhassa rica ediyorum. Bu münasebetle Atatürkün daha çok seneler bizim başımızda bulunmalarını ve bizi böyle saadetler ve nur içinde yaşatmalarını diliyorum. Sizi de kemali sadakat ve hürmetle selamlıyorum (Alkışlar).”.

343Ibid., p.: 413.

344Okutan, 2004, p.: 167-169.

instead of Arabic in 1928. The rupture from the Ottoman/Islamic and Middle Eastern cultural realm was aimed to be achieved and it proved to be successful although not fully. Another significant change in this sphere came with the foundation of the *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti*/The Association of the Study of Turkish Language in 1932. The foundation of this association gave birth to a language theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*) to place Turkish among major civilizational language and to exalt the national language. Mustafa Kemal and the political cadre around him was well aware of the relationship between the emergence and consolidation of national belongingness and language. In this line, their understanding was to develop the study of Turkish language and spread it all over the country. Their conviction that the speaking Turkish was a precondition to be in the Turkish culture and thus Turkish domain would give the clues of the policies that they would apply for the usage of Turkish in speaking by the minorities. The usage of Turkish language by the minorities was occupying a central place in the Turkification of these minorities in the minds of the political elite of the time. To achieve this aim the government initiated campaigns to force the minorities to speak Turkish in public spaces with the considerable support of the press from 1924 onwards with intervals up to the World War II the pressure arrived at its peak. The minorities tried to resist these campaigns in some ways. However, this resistance did not end the campaigns and the counter resistance that sometimes led to public conflict over the usage of Turkish language<sup>345</sup>. On this issue, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan spoke about the usage of Turkish among the minorities while a campaign was launched by the government for the usage of Turkish in the public space by minorities again in 1937.<sup>346</sup> He offers the expansion of

345Bali, 2001, p.: 105-109 and 269-284.

346T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1937, İ:65, C:1, p.: 250, “Bir de muhterem vekilden anlamak istiyorum; Türk lisanının ana lisanı olarak yurdumuzda her ferd tarafından konuşulması için be gibi bir tedbir düşünüyor? Ekalliyetlere mensub olan meketb çocuklarına Türk dilinin ana lisanı olduğunu analatanlar mevcut mudur? Bu gün bilhassa İstanbulla gelen bir ecnebi bir Türk şehrine mi, yoksa eski Babil şehrine benzerbir yere mi geldiğini bir türlü anlayamıyoruz. Zira, buraya ayak basar basmaz sırf güzel Türk dilini işiteceğini zannederken, her kafadan birer lisan çıktığını görüyor ve şaşırıyor. Türk yurddaşı bu hali görüyor, içerliyor ve müteessir oluyor. Ancak, bu hal yalnız İstanbulda mevcut değildir. Memleketimizin muhtelif yerlerinde türkçeden gayri başka lisanlar ile konuşan bir çok yurddaşlara da tesadüf ediliyor. Yani demek istiyorum ki, Türk yurddaşı olup, Türk dilini bildikleri halde konuşmamak saygısızlığında bulunanlar yalnız ekalliyetlere mensub olanlar değildirler. Geçenlerde, 40 seneden beri İstanbulda yaşamış olan ve gazetecilik eden, fakat Türkçe bilmeyen bir Fransız gazetecisine sebebini sormuşlar: <<Hayret etmeyiniz demiş. Türkçe öğrenmeye ihtiyaç duymadım da onun için öğrenmedim. Türkiyede bulunduğum 40 sene içinde kendi dilimle konuşamayacağım bir kimseye rast gelmedim. Hatta ilk zamanlarda, türkçe kelimeler kullanmağa çalıştım, fakat muhtablarım daima bana fransızca cevap verdiler. Binaenaleyh türkçe öğrenmeye ihtiyaç duymadım>> demiş. İşte, meleketimizde türkçe öğrenmek ihtiyacını yaratmalıyız ve bunu da

this campaign to the minority schools and requests from the Minister of Education to create a need to use Turkish. More importantly, he gives the framework of his understanding of citizenship. Beyond living in the same country, the proper citizen must appropriate to oneself the Turkish homeland/*vatan*, thought, language, culture and ideal/*ülkü* according to him. Furthermore, this proper citizen needs to express all these appropriations for which s/he will be awarded by love and sensitivity. As a last point, it can be argued that he was a Turkish citizen fully assimilated to the points he raised for the proper citizen and defends the assimilation of the non-Muslim minorities to acquire full citizenship. Although he did not speak about the treatment of non-Muslim minorities in this period, it can be assumed that he was in line with the assimilationist measures introduced by the single party regime towards an end to achieve a culturally unified/unique nation.

A very significant phase for understanding the approach to the minorities and their treatment, was the events of 1934 in Thrace against the Jews. These events had a background which can be followed easily. The first thing to note is that the anti-semitic atmosphere created by the press especially by a periodical called *Milli İnkılap* was a major step towards such incidences. The government did not prevent this periodical from spreading an antisemitic atmosphere although they declared that antisemitism was contradictory to the Turkish national culture. As a second phase of the process towards the events in Thrace, the government formed the *Trakya Umumi Müfettişliği* (General Inspectorship for Thrace) after they did the same in the eastern regions. This temporary organization was proclaimed to aim at reconstructing these regions. However, it was interesting that in the regions that this organization functioned, non-Turk Muslims in the east (Kurds) and non-Muslims in Thrace (Jews) formed the significant part of the population. Additionally, there were other destroyed regions in western and central Anatolia that needed urgent reconstruction. The reason behind the functioning of this organization in these two regions was openly explained in the *İskan Kanunu* (Law for

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muhterem Maarif vekilinden bekleriz. Türk vatanını, düşünce, dil, kültür, ülkü itibariyle benimseyenler kendilerini göstermelidirler. Hüsnü niyetle yurdu benimseyen ve yurddaşlık sıfatını tam manasında anlayan ve kabul eden yurddaşlar, gösterecekleri hüsnüniyetin sevgi ve hassasiyetle karşılanacağından emin olabilirler. Bu mesele bir milli arzu ve öz saygı meselesidir.”

Settlement) introduced on the 14 th of June 1934 number 2510<sup>347</sup>. The government declared the settlement policies to resettle the non-Turkic elements from Thrace, largely populated by Jews, and Eastern Anatolia, largely populated by Kurds, to predominantly Turkish regions as a policy aiming at the creation of a society that spoke one language, that thought and felt in the same way. In the same line, Armenians remaining in the inner parts of Anatolia were forced to migrate to Istanbul at the beginning of the year 1934. This law provided the Ministry of Internal Affairs(*Dahiliye Vekaleti*) with the justification of the removal of Armenians and the authority to resettle other groups of people in line with their cultural orientation towards Turkish culture. The general mental framework behind the formulation of these policies can be explained with 3 main reasons. The first is the ethnicist approach towards the settlement in the country, the second is the strategic security concerns due to the settlement of the 'suspicious' elements along the borders of the country and the third and the most illustrative one is the motive to assimilate these populations by forcing them to forget their non-Turkish identity in the regions largely inhabited by Turks. Another explanatory reason can be the functionality of the minorities as scapegoats in time of economic crises while Jews of the region were very powerful economically. Although one can not find a clear evidence that the events after the introduction of this law in Thrace was linked to this law and to a government participation and thus responsibility, the events were not an outcome of a sudden outburst in the society against the Jews. The Jews in the region, beginning from the city of Çanakkale and spreading to others cities of Thrace, were boycotted, attacked physically, their buildings were looted and some Jewish women were raped. According to the reports of the British embassy sent to London, approximately 7000 or 8000 Jews had to migrate from Thrace to Istanbul under very difficult conditions. The responsibility of the government in these events mainly stems from its silence towards the spread of anti-semitic propaganda, its silence to the complaints coming from the Jews of the region due to the first signs of these coming events and its reluctance in

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347“Madde 1: Türkiye'de Türk Kültürüne bağlılık dolayısıyla nüfus oturuş ve yayılışının, bu kanuna uygun olarak, İcra Vekillerince bir programa göre, düzeltilmesi Dahiliye Vekilliğine verilmiştir. Madde 2: Dahiliye Vekilliğince yapılp İcra Vekilleri Heyetince tasdik olunacak haritaya göre Türkiye, isakn bakımından üç nevi mıntıkaya ayrılır. 1 numaralı mıntıklar: Türk Kültürlü nüfusun tekasüfü istenilen yerlerdir. 2 numaralı mıntıklar: Türk kültürüne temsili istenilen nüfusun nakil ve iskanına ayrılan yerlerdir. 3 numaralı mıntıklar: Yer, sıhhat, iktisat, kültür, siyaset, askerlik ve inzibat sebepleriyle boşaltılması istenilen ve iskan ve ikamet yasak edilen yerlerdir.” in Okutan, 2004, p.: 252.



investigating the guilty of these events by reducing it to a sudden unwarranted violence of few people<sup>348</sup>.

An additional difficulty for the Armenians of Turkey was coming with the disputes over Hatay. Especially in the process of Hatay's joining in Turkey accelerated in 1938 which sometimes witnessed violent intercommunal encounters, the situation in Hatay came to affect the Armenians of Turkey. The worry among the Armenians of Turkey was increased by the insistent and aggressive news published in the Turkish press against the Armenians of Hatay that they were ready to attack the Turkish element in Hatay. Although it was not known whether the news was correct, the Armenians of Turkey declared that they performed their task of demonstrating the correct way to the Armenians of Hatay most of which migrated from Turkey by a speech of Patrik Naroyan. Additionally, he stated that the Armenians of Hatay was not overwhelmed by French propaganda and displayed their loyalty and gratitude to the National Chief İsmet İnönü, to the government of the Turkish Republic and to the Turkish nation by the telegrams they sent to the Patriarchate in Istanbul. However, this speech did not obviously reflect the critical aspect of the issue which was the fear among the Armenians of Hatay from an intercommunal violence. This fear led them to massive migration Hatay soon after this speech was delivered and just before the Hatay Republic joined in Turkey, and the migrations also continued later on. On this issue, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan delivered a speech strictly in the same line with the speech of Patrik Naroyan but before him in May 1938 while the dispute was warming up. He expressed his views in his speech he called out to the Armenians of Hatay<sup>349</sup>. The

348Aktar, Ayhan, "1934 Trakya Yahudi Olayları ve Türk Milliyetçiliği", in Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 71-99. See also: Beşikçi, İsmail, Kürtlerin Mecburi İskanı, Komal Yayınları, 1977, İstanbul; Kirişçi, Kemal and Winrow, Gareth, Kürt Sorunu, trans. By: Ahmet Fethi, 1997, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul; Karabatak, Haluk, "1934 Trakya Olayları ve Yahudiler", in Tarih ve Toplum, no: 146, Şubat 1996, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul; Levi, Avner, "1934 Trakya Yahudileri Olayı: Alınmayan Ders" in Tarih ve Toplum, no:151, Temmuz 1996, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul and Toprak, Zafer, "1934 Trakya Olaylarında Hükümetin ve CHF'nin Sorumluluğu" in Toplumsal Tarih, no: 34, Ekim 1996.

349T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1938, İ:68, C:1, p.: 264-265, "Şimdi bendeniz görüyorum ki Fransız Hükümeti aynı çarlık Rusyasının yaptığı rezil siyaseti (Alkışlar) tutarak yine böyle bir kaç ermeniye para kuvvetiyle kandırarak Hatayda bulunan ermenileri iğfal etmek istiyorlar. Onlara hitab ediyorum ve diyorum ki, nasıl ki çarlık Rusyası ermenileri iğfal etti, mahvetti, aman diyorum, sakın ha, bu iğfale siz de kapılmayınız, sarılınız Hatay Türklerine, sarılınız ve bunu bilmiş olunuz ki, yarın eğer kahraman Türk ordusu gelib (Gelecek sesleri şiddetli alkışlar) sizi kurtarır ve emniyet tesis ederse ona da sarılınız. Benim yaşım ikmale varmıştır, ben size vasiyet ediyorum. Burada, Türkiyede yaşayan

interesting point was that he quotes an anecdote from his experience during the raid of some Armenians guerrillas to the Ottoman Bank in 1895 as a lesson to the Armenians of Hatay<sup>350</sup>. In addition to his call to the Armenians of Hatay, his reconstruction of this event in the anecdote shows that he explains the emergence of revolutionary movements and separatism among the minorities, specifically Armenians, with the intervention of foreign powers by using their coreligionists in the Ottoman empire for their imperialist visions.

As it was mentioned in the process of nationalization of the economic sphere in Turkey, *Varlık Vergisi*/Tax of Wealth occupies a significant place. Although it can be evaluated as a part of this process, the concrete reasons behind the introduction of this law the way it was applied need to be presented briefly. The major concern for the government was economic because the mismanagement of the economy under the conditions of World War II forced them to take emergency measures. Especially with the increase in the expenditures for defense, the government found the solution to provide the compensation of these expenditures by increasing the supply of currency in huge amounts. This strategy led to a very inflationist environment and the government thought of dealing with the drastic rise of prices by taxing the extraordinary gains during the war. Among the segments of the society those gained during the war more than

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ermenilerin saadetine varacaksınız, diyorum. Ey Hatay ermenileri! Ben bu gün varım, yarın yokum, size söylüyorum ki dünyanın en büyük milleti Türktür. Türke sarılan mesud olur ve yine Fransız Hükümetine hitaben söylüyormu ki, Türk sabırlıdır, Türk merddir. Bir sene, bir buçuk senedir sabrediyor. Fakat eğer Türkün sesini böyle kibarca, samimice dinlemek istemiyorsanız, Türkün sesi Türkün topunun ağzından gelecektir. Sonra öyle diplomatik vasita ile teati edilen notalar, Türkün kılıcı ile imza olunacaktır. (Bravo sesleri, sürekli alkışlar).”

350T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1938, İ:68, C:1, p.: 264, “İkincisi de; 1895 Çarlık Rusya bir takım serserileri, ihtilalcileri İstanbula yolladı. Bunlar Osmanlı Bankasını bastılar. Bendeniz yukarı katta yemek yiyordum. Aşağıda bir gürültü kopmuştu. Benim yanımda odacım Sivaslı Babik vardı. Beni aradı. Bayrak çekilen yere çıktık. Burada muhafaza ediliyorduk. Bir çeyrek sonra ihtilalcilerden bir herif geldi, bir elinde bomba, bir elinde de revolver vardı. Bayrak çektikleri yerden bir nutuk söylemek istiyordu. Dedi ki, rejiyi, bankayı filan havaya uçuracağız. Bunları söyleyen, Çarlık Rusyadan gönderilen 20 kadar serserilerden biri idi. Yollanan 20 sresri Türkiyede ihtilal çıkarmak, altüst etmek için gönderilmişti. O vakit Babik ismindeki hademem dedi ki, biz burada iki ermeniyiz, biz kaçalım da sonra bombanı savur. Bu, tarihi bir vakadır. Namusum üzerine söylüyorum. O vakit bu herif dedi ki, siz Türk ermenilerisiniz, Türke merbut köpeksiniz ,maksadımız evvela sizi imha etmektir. O halde aman diyerek ve bomba atılmadan kaçtık.Şimdi bendeniz görüyorum ki Fransız Hükümeti aynı çarlık Rusyasının yaptığı rezil siyaseti (Alkışlar) tutarak yine böyle bir kaç ermeniye para kuvvetiyle kandırarak Hatayda bulunan ermenileri iğfal etmek istiyorlar. Onlara hitab ediyorum ve diyorum ki, nasıl ki çarlık Rusyası ermenileri iğfal etti, mahvetti, aman diyorum, sakın ha, bu iğfale siz de kapılmayınız, sarılınız Hatay Türklerine, sarılınız ve bunu bilmiş olunuz ki, yarın eğer kahraman Türk ordusu gelib (Gelecek sesleri şiddetli alkışlar) sizi kurtarır ve emniyet tesis ederse ona da sarılınız.”

before, the minorities constituted the largest one and the most attractive one to pay the price. In addition to this economic drive for extraordinary measures, the racist environment which found a considerable amount of audience created in the country during the war. The expressions of the political elites such as Kazım Karabekir, Şükrü Saraçoğlu and İsmet İnönü before the introduction of this law were giving the clues of the possible treatment of these minorities. The initial step in the process was the introduction of *Milli Korunma Kanunu*(Law of National Protection) in January 1940. This law was against extraordinary gains with speculation and stocking due to the drastic rise in the prices of commodities and for the critical commodity sectors to change hands. Both of the reasons were obviously targeting the economic activities of the non-Muslims. The Law for Tax of Wealth(*Varlık Vergisi Kanunu*) was accepted at the parliament in November 1942. The most critical point was the process of its application. The commissions for the determination of the amount of the tax to be paid divided the taxpayers into three categories which were Muslims, non-Muslims and foreigners. It was declared that the amount that the commissions reached after their calculations could not be objected, the tax had to be paid in 15 days, the portable and unportable wealth of the people who did not pay the tax before the deadline would be sold and the people who could not pay their taxes even with these sales would be sent to different parts of the country to work for the compensation of the taxes<sup>351</sup>. Depending on the memoirs of Faik Ökte who was the head of the finance department of Istanbul and among the people determining the amount of the taxes to be paid, there were many improprieties during the process. The result was destructive for the non-Muslims. The main target were non-Muslims as mentioned before and they paid 83 % percent of the total amount while Muslims paid 7 % and foreigners 10 %<sup>352</sup>. The non-Muslims who could not pay the taxes were sent to Aşkale to work under very difficult conditions. Most of them were old people and were not used to the cold climate of the region. The non-Muslims were subject to such severe punishment as to build roads fro the country because the political elites of the time and the press saw this tax as an obligation to the

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351Aktar, Ayhan, “Varlık Vergisi Nasıl Uygulandı?”, in *Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları*, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 135-153.

352Aktar, Ayhan, “Varlık Vergisi Sırasında Gayrimenkul Satışları ile Servet Tarnsferi: İstanbul Tapu kayıtlarının Analizi”, in *Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları*, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 215-225. See also: Ökte, Faik, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, 1951, Nebioğlu Yayınevi, İstanbul .

country<sup>353</sup>. The gain of the government with the payment of these tax was beneficial only for the short run and it did not contribute to the economy considerably. The purpose was obviously to exclude non-Muslims from the economic sphere and this aim was achieved. The economic sphere that was evacuated by the non-Muslims was not properly filled by a Turkish/Muslim class. Furthermore, the application of this law was a breaking point for the minorities because their process of integration to the Turkish society was heavily interrupted. Many of them migrated from the country with the loss of hope for a better treatment and a better future in Turkey<sup>354</sup>.

As a last point on this subject, a funny anecdote will bring in a further clarification on his last name. He replies a deputy by correcting his last name as Türker because the deputy used Kerestecioğlu for referring to him<sup>355</sup>. He seems to have appropriated the last name, Türker, instead of his original last name, Keresteciyân, which refers to his assimilation to the unique/unified nature of Turkish nation.

#### **2.4.Berç Keresteciyân's Public Life Between 1935-1943:**

Before dealing with the his activities at the parliament, a short assessment of the conditions under which the non-Muslims were elected in 1935 need to be presented. It should be mentioned that the exclusion of the non-Muslims from political participation began with the prevention of their participation in The Defense of the Rights Association of Anatolia and Rumelia/*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*. As they could not take place in this organization legally, they could not be candidates for any elections. The legal prevention of their participation in this organization continued after the organization was turned into People's Party in practice<sup>356</sup>. They could not take part in the party during the single Party Period. However, they could be candidates for

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353Aktar, Ayhan, "Varlık Vergisi Nasıl Uygulandı?", in *Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları*, 2004, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 196-200. See also: Akar, Rudvan, *Varlık Vergisi: Tek Parti Rejiminde Azınlık Karşıtı Politika Örneği*, 1992, Belge Yayınları, İstanbul.

354Ibid., p.: 206-212.

355T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1935, İ:29, C:1, p.: 260, "Maarif vekili Abidin Özmen: Keresteci oğlunun bahsettikleri ecnebi mekteplere gelince...Berç Türker: Türker! Maarif vekili Abidin Özmen: Afedersiniz, bilmiyorum. Fakat öz adımız da budur."

356Tunçay, 1999, p.: 20-23.

the Free Republican Party in the municipality elections in 1930 which should not be out of the knowledge of Mustafa Kemal. No minority candidates could participate in the elections with People's Party and the inclusion of the minorities in the opposition party received harsh criticism from People's Party. On the other hand, it can not easily be assumed that the opposition party could do this without the consent of Mustafa Kemal. As a result, this experience ended up with significant manifestations<sup>357</sup>. Firstly, it showed that the political environment was not proper for the participation of the minorities. Secondly, it showed the willingness on the side of Mustafa Kemal to include all subjects of the Republic in the political sphere gradually to be able to create a positive attitude in western European democratic countries such as France and Britain towards Turkey. This would also help to legitimize the Turkification of the minorities and for an easier control over them. Thirdly, the elections gave clues of the preconditions under which the minorities could take part in politics. However, these prospects were delayed until the elections of 1935 because of harsh criticisms of People's Party circles towards the participation of the minorities in the municipality elections with the opposition party in 1930. Rifat Bali argues that the minorities took a hard lesson in 1930 elections with their participation and this was well reflected in their declarations before 1935 general elections. They all stated that they were not representatives of minorities but of the Turkish nation as a whole, they were Turkish citizens, they spoke Turkish and they were culturally Turkish<sup>358</sup>.

They left 16 candidacies open for independent candidates, and some minority candidates were included among these. An Armenian, (Berç Türker-Keresteciyan-Afyon), a Jewish, (Abravaya Marmaralı-Niğde), and two Greeks (Nikola Taptas-Ankara and İstamat Özdamar-Eskişehir) were elected deputies. An interesting observation by Okutan is that the press, which opposed the candidacy of the minorities in municipality elections in 1930, evaluated the participation of candidates of minorities at the parliament elections as a proof of the egalitarian quality of the People's Party and the republican regime. Another significant observation, made again by Okutan, is that the ordinary people among the minorities expressed their gladness due to the election of

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357Bali, 1997, p.: 25-34.

358Ibid., p.: 33.

some minority candidates to the parliament by referring to their '*ekalliyet*'(minority) identity. However, the elected minority deputies emphasized their identity and participation in the elections as being Turkish citizens, but not as being '*ekalliyet temsilcileri*'(minority representatives)<sup>359</sup>. In fact, this stance presented by the elected minority deputies is a central issue in this research and some highlights may have been brought up by the examination of the general atmosphere of the period that loaded a burden on them as minorities and their earlier formation up to 1935, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan being one of them.

On 2 nd of February 1935, the participation of the minorities and the support for them was decided and declared at a meeting in Dolmabahçe Palace where People's Party Council of Presidency, General Executive Council and Executive Council of the Party's Parliamentary Group took part under the presidency of Atatürk. This date was just a few days before the elections and the idea should have been developed in the government and in party circles before<sup>360</sup>. The process of election of candidates for general elections in the People's Party was theoretically done by the Council of General Presidency (*Genel Başkanlık Divanı*) of the party and approved by the Unchangeable President (*Değişmez Genel Başkan*). However, the only authority for the determination of candidates was the Unchangeable President of the party<sup>361</sup>. For Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's participation, Atatürk himself should have put him in the list where he can be surely elected. In the general elections of 1935, there were 43 candidates for being an independent deputy among which 12 people were non-Muslims. Among 43 candidates, 13 people were elected as independent deputies and 4 of them were non-Muslims: Berç Türker-Keresteciyan (Afyon Karahisar an Armenian), Dr. Taptas Nikola (Ankara an Orthodox Greek), Dr. Samuel Abravaya Marmaralı (Muğla a Jew) and İstamat Zihni Özdamar (Eskişehir a Turkish Orthodox)<sup>362</sup>.

In line with the evaluations of Bali for the declarations of the non-Muslim

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359Okutan, p.: 150-155.

360Aksam, 3 Şubat 1935.

361Karadere, Osman, *Milli Şef Dönemi*, 1998, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, p.: 112.

362Yılmaz, Murat, *Tek Parti Döneminde Müstakil Mebuslar ve CHP Müstakil Grubu*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 2002, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Kamu Yönetimi ve Siyaset Bilimi Anabilim Dalı, Ankara, p.: 293.

candidates, 5 common points can be observed in their declarations published in the newspapers. The first one is that they all claimed not to be the representatives of the minorities/*ekalliyet-azlık* but of the Turkish nation as a whole. The second one is that they all underlined that they were Turkish citizens while refusing minority-majority dichotomy. The third one is that they all presented themselves as loyal to the regime and Republicanism with sincerity. The fourth one is that they all stated that they all adopted the 6 principles of 1931 of the People's Party. The last one is that they all claimed that they would work as much as they could for the benefit and in the service of the country (*memleket*)<sup>363</sup>. These common points well illustrate the fact that they would not be able to voice any minority voice and form a different critical agenda from the People's Party, as supposed by Atatürk in his declaration before the elections. He said that the independent deputies would offer an independent program from the party while remaining loyal to Republicanism and Nationalism sincerely, and their work at the parliament would strengthen the national endeavor. These expectations were far from being fulfilled by these non-Muslim deputies who had to strictly underline their loyalty to the principles of the People's Party under the conditions of the period.

While opposing to the participation of the non-Muslim minorities in the municipality elections of 1930, the press gave a very positive reaction to their participation in 1935 elections. There may be 3 possible reasons behind this reaction. The first is that there was a decision and support of the People's Party and Atatürk himself behind the participation of minorities this time. The second is that they did not take part in an oppositional group, even one directed by Atatürk as it was in 1930 elections. Thirdly, the declarations of the candidates were already proper for the spirit of the time by referring to cultural Turkishness, their faithfulness to Turkish citizenship and their loyalty to the principles of the regime. The positive reaction in the press was crystallized around the progress towards democracy which was interpreted as a merit of the republican regime, a progress towards the sovereignty of the people which could stir very positive reactions in the western democratic world and its contribution to the amalgamation of minorities and the majority<sup>364</sup>.

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<sup>363</sup>Son Posta, 4 Şubat 1935.

<sup>364</sup>Akşam, 4, 11 Şubat 1935, Zaman, 5, 6 Şubat 1935.

#### **2.4.1. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan and Atatürk:**

Specifically on Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's declaration, one significant point attracts attention different from the previous common points for all non-Muslim candidates. This was the point he argued in his declaration that he worked strictly in the directions of Atatürk after the foundation of the republic<sup>365</sup>. His connection to Atatürk can be traced back to the anecdote about his report of the information to the lawyer of Atatürk in Şişli that the ferry named Bandırma carrying Mustafa Kemal to Samsun would be hit by British torpedos. The second point of contact was his support of the Kemalist resistance forces during the War of Independence as a member of the Ottoman Red Crescent and one of the managers of the Ottoman Bank. The third point of contact should come about during the Lausanne conference with the letter he sent to Morning Post newspaper in Britain speaking to Lord Curzon for their withdrawal from the Armenian issue in Turkey and leave it to Turkish government possibly as the honorary president of the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association. The fourth point of contact was the telegram he sent to Mustafa Kemal as the honorary president of the same association and a member of the Secular Council of the Armenian Patriarchate to declare that they, as Armenians, would join the election in April 1923 and support the candidates of the Defense of Rights Association signed together with Artin Mosdicyan as an ex-member of the same council. These four contacts were presented while dealing with these periods. However, there is also a fifth point of contact which should be his support in the construction of the Taksim Republic Monument (*Taksim Cumhuriyet Abidesi*). He worked actively in the commission for the construction of this monument and gave 600 liras for the monument as a manager of the Ottoman Bank<sup>366</sup>.

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<sup>365</sup>Son Posta, 4 Şubat 1935.

<sup>366</sup>Benoğlu, Niyazi Ahmet, Taksim Cumhuriyet Abidesi Şeref Defteri, 1973, İstanbul cited in Yılmaz, 2002, p.: 297.



#### 2.4.2. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan as a Member of the Turkish Parliament:

After having dealt with his affiliation with Atatürk, a short assessment of his interview will help us in understanding the stance that he adopted at the time. The journalist conducting the interview began with his composition with his personal qualities and said that he was a very honest, virtuous, nicely talkative and also he was very well acquainted with fine arts and Turkish literature. After having added his personal and family information, the journalist underlined his contributions during the War of Independence in the Ottoman Crescent to the Turkish army and praised his silence in this matter by referring to his modesty. In the interview, there are several significant and interesting points to note. He began to say that being a deputy at the Turkish parliament was a great honor for him and his only aim was to serve for the country and he wanted to see the situation more closely in Ankara and voice his humble ideas in a friendly way. He went on to say that the split in religious terms and names in the society in the Ottoman empire was eliminated by the foundation of the Republic and the reforms of language and surnames concerning his understanding of the minority question. Thus, he continued to argue that there was not a question of minorities in Turkey anymore. In addition to this point, he said that Turkey did not need an opposition party but it was more a time to work in collaboration<sup>367</sup>. These views help us a lot in answering the question why he was chosen by the government and by the party for elections.

At this point, an analysis of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's activities at the parliament will be presented. He legally became a deputy on 7 th of March 1935 by his oath at the parliament<sup>368</sup>. On the same day, he also became a member of the Economy committee/*İktisad Encümeni* of the parliament in line with his expertise<sup>369</sup>. As an introduction to this analysis, some general points coming out of a overview of his parliamentary activities need to be given. The topics that he talked on was varied. The largest component of his speeches consists of sub-subjects of economy on which his

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<sup>367</sup>Aksam, 15 Şubat 1935.

<sup>368</sup>T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 7.3.1935,İ:1, C:1, p.: 13.

<sup>369</sup>Ibid., p.:26.

career developed: finance, microeconomic issues (currency/money), trade, banking and industrialization. It can be said that his participation intensifies during the sessions on annual government budget. However, there was another field that he talked about more than many of the deputies: international political environment and Turkish foreign policy issues. The third largest issue he dealt with was functioning of the bureaucracy and politics. The fourth one was education. Lastly, he also gave only one speech directly on minorities and references in his speeches on different topics. He was the second deputy who gave speeches mostly(62) after Hüsni Kıtapçı (97). He had a distinct manner of giving speeches. Most of his speeches were written and he read his written speeches at the parliament in general and his speeches during the sessions on the budget took long. One of the deputies presented discontent due to Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's speeches and he gave an answer to the deputy by taking the consent of the deputies at the parliament. He usually began his speech by stating his humbleness as an introduction and then went on with his topic. Having finished his topic, he nearly never finished without presenting his praises and gratitudes to Atatürk, to the government, later to İsmet İnönü, to the homeland, to the nation and to the army. Although he gave his speeches in a humble mood, he was insistent on speaking on any topics he felt concerned or on any topic he was curious and would like to be informed. Thus, 5 of the 12 questions given to the presidency of the parliament to be asked to the concerned people belonged to him. It seems that he never lost hope of contributing to the solution of the problems of the country by only presenting his ideas at the parliament. It was understood from his questions and speeches that he was not well informed about the issues no more than the ones which were discussed at the parliament usually without a considerable impact on policies. The functioning of the parliament was not as ideal as it was expected to be to make decisions but it was the People's Party where the real discussions took place. The parliament was an office to approve what was decided in the high party circles.

After the period marked by the consolidation of the single party regime at the congress of People's Party by the proclamation of a program and its 6 principles, the main discussion in the government was revolving around economic policies. The

discussion on the intervention and participation of the state in economic activities was the focus of the discussion. The short experience with the Free Republican Party was evaluated partly as a sign of failure in the economic policies of 1920's and as the reason of the inclination towards that party. While İsmet İnönü was declaring that the People's Party's economic perspective as moderate etatist/*mutedil devletçi*, then it turned into etatism only. The period between 1929 and 1932 was spent on searching for the direction of etatism in economic policies. After this period etatism became the main axis of the economic policies of the republic. However, it can not be said that etatist understanding was well systematized and consistently applied. The understanding of etatism changed depending on the conjuncture and the people in power. This economic policy took shape in the business administration of the state, the investments of the state especially in the industrial sector and the expanding control of the state in all spheres of economic activity. In line with the application of USSR, two 5 year economic plans were prepared and applied<sup>370</sup>. Just before the introduction of the second 5 year plan in 1939, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan showed his stance in line with this idea of planned industrialization. He praised the rising industrialization especially with government economic initiatives in his speech on the first 5 year economic plan<sup>371</sup>. It should be noted that this was a continuation of his emphasis on industrialization. Additionally, he warned the government for the industrialization to be achieved under control and in a gradual pace<sup>372</sup>. He also mentions that he was against the rights of strike and lockout for the industrialization process and the trade not to be interrupted<sup>373</sup>. Regarding the question of industrialization, he referred continuously to a minor point. He emphasized the importance of the modernization of the infrastructure<sup>374</sup> in the country such as the

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370Koçak, Cemil, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi 1938-1945 Cilt 1*, 1996, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, p.: 29-35.

371T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1939, İ:14, C:1, "Sanayileşme işlerinde birinci beş senelik sanayi programı Cumhuriyet rejiminin memlekette modern bir endüstri hayatı yaratan ilk muvaffakiyetli hamlesi oldu. İşittiğime nazaran yakında bir çok fabrikayı ihtiva eden yeni endüstri planının tatbikatına geçilecektir. Bu sevinçli bir haber..."

372T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1935, İ:29, C:1, p.: 248.

373T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 5.6.1936, İ:74, C:1, p.: 63-64.

374T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 165, "Memleketimizin müdafaasına aid masraflar ve imar işlerine aid masraflar mukaddes masraflardır."

support for the construction of the railways<sup>375</sup> and the ports<sup>376</sup> for the economic development of the country. At this point, his ideas on the issue of national development or developmentalism needs to be covered due to its connection to the previously mentioned vigor for industrialization. The emphasis on and the priority given to the notion of national development was obviously not surprising for a country like Turkey which was newly founded, lately developing and carefully integrating to the capitalist economic sphere. He was strongly underlining the urge for national economic development, too,<sup>377</sup> while referring to the difficult conditions of the time for economic development<sup>378</sup>. In this respect, he addressed an objection to the payment of the *Düyun-u Umumiye* debts properly on the basis of the agreement of 1933 and raised the idea to request a delay in the payment of this debt while trying hardly to develop economically under very difficult conditions internally and internationally<sup>379</sup>. He also opposes to the payment of these debts by foreign exchange.<sup>380</sup>

With the appointment of Celal Bayar to the Ministry of Economy/*İktisat Vekaleti*, Mustafa Kemal openly demonstrated his stance in the interpretation of statist economic policies. He took side with Celal Bayar in an understanding that statism was pragmatic and temporary solution for a country which did not have a developed industry and a

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375T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 203, "...Bunlar gibi de demiryollarımızın inşaatı için sarfolunacak paralar da stratejik ve ekonomik noktai nazardan zaruridir. İsmet İnönü Hükümetinin demiryollar siyasetini tenkid edenler olmuştur. Bunlar koltuk sandalyasında oturarak tenkid edenlerdir..." See also: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1937, İ:65, C:1, p.: 263.

376T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 12.5.1943, İ:22, C:1, p.: 57.

377T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1,p.: 187, "Bugün Türkiye Cumhuriyeti iki çok mühim zaruretle karşısında bulunuyor: Birinci zaruret, beynelmilel müşevveş vaziyetin karşısında vatan müdafaasıdır. İkinci zaruret, her ne pahaya olursa olsun, milli kalkınmamıza devam etmek zaryretidir."

378T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 204, "Maalesef milli kalkınma devri dünyanın en karışık, en berbat bir zamanına tesadüf ediyor. Bir taraftan iktisadi buhran ticareti felce uğratmış, diğer taraftan umumi bir silahlanma yarışı sulh ümitlerini berhava etmiş ve bizi de yurdumuzun müdafaası için fevkalade tedbirler almağa icbar ediyor."

379T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.5.1935, İ:28, C:1, p.: 217"Arkadaşlar; Türk ulusunun meziyetlerinden biri de borcunu tanımaktır. Fakat bu düyunu umumiye meselesinde müsrif ve hayırsız Hükümetler tarafından yapılan bir takım borçları böyle buhranlı zamanlarımızda kabul edip her sene muntazaman bütçeye koyarak Avrupanın boğazlarına kadar altınlar içinde boğulan finans enternasyonal adamlarına vermemizi doğru bulmuyorum. Bu mesele vicdanıma dokunuyor. Bu bir hakikattir. Eevelce biz bir bir milyon 900 bin İngiliz lirası verecektik .sonra mahir bir müzakere ile bu parayı indirdik. İngiltere, Fransa gibi zengin memleketler Amerikaya olan borçlarını vermiyor. Biz bunu niçin bütçeye koyduk ve niçin demedik ki, bie beş sene, on sene müsaade verin. Memlekette buhran vardır, zaten bu borcu biz yapmadık, borcu tanıyoruz, fakat bize müsaade edin, niçin bunu demiyoruz?..."

380T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936,İ:67, C:1, p.: 205.

dynamic private entrepreneur class to constitute the infrastructure for industrial development. While state was performing some of the significant functions of a future entrepreneur class, it would not neglect to support the economic activities of the small entrepreneur class. However, İsmet İnönü and Recep Bey were interpreting etatism not as a temporary solution for development and future economic mentality of the state as it was formulated in the People' Party congress of 1931 and which later took place in the constitution. The state must take part in economic activities especially where public benefit was in question and it must always be the approach of the state to economy. For the part of the organization of the economic sphere, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan pointed two different and important policies. One was the formation of national banks and the other was the strict monetary policies of the republican governments to keep the strength and stability of the national currency as opposed to foreign exchange. For the part of the formation of the national banks, he was obviously proud of the emergence of national banks<sup>381</sup> and later the law of banking which would contribute a lot to the organization of the economy at the micro(finance and money) level and to increase the trust of the investors<sup>382</sup>. This can also be observed in his speech on the foundation of *Halkbank*<sup>383</sup>. He later voiced the problems of the banking sector and its personnel at the parliament as an ex-bank personnel<sup>384</sup>. Regarding the question of the stability of national currency, he made a constant emphasis on the protection of the stability and strength of the national currency which continued during the World War II<sup>385</sup>. For the period just before the emergence of World War II, his emphasis seemed to have changed the axis of the problem and warned the government to rise the stock of foreign exchange and gold for

381T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 15.5.1936, İ:63,C:1, p.: 72, “Bugün milli banklarımız, Cumhuriyetin şunu şöhreti ile mütenasib, modern ustillerle iş görüyorlar. Milli banklardaki memurların kısmı azamı İstanbulda ve Avrupada ecnebi bankalarda çalıştılar, bankacılık sanatını öğrendiler ve şimdi oradaki servisleri muamelatı, ve bilhassa ahali ile temas, tam bir intizam, metod ve süratle yürüyor. İşgal ettikleri binaların nezafeti de ayrıca nazarı dikkati celbediyor ve müşteriler üzerinde bir hüsnü tesir bırakıyor.”

382T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 1.6.1936, İ:72, C:1, p.: 3.

383T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 17.1.1938, İ:29, C:1, p.: 146.

384T.B.M.M., Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.6.1939, İ:31, C:1, p.: 364.

385T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 204, “Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin en büyük eserlerinden biri de paramızın istikrarını temin etmesidir. Bunu bilhassa saygı değer İsmet İnönü'nün yüksek dirayeti sayesinde elde edilmiştir. Benim şahsi tecrübeme istinaden söyleyebilirim ki, her kim ki Türk parasına, Türk eshamona itimad gösterdi ise daima karlı çıktı. Harbi umumide bile marka, kurona, rubleye güvenenlerin serveti mahvoldu ve son zamanlarda ellerinde dünyanın en sağlam parası zannedilen sterlingi ve doları bulunanlar azim ziyanlara duçar oldu. Amerikan eshamı alanlar mahvoldular.” For his views in the same line see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 166, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1, p.: 188 and 30.1.1942, İ:33, C:1, p.: 171.

the times of emergency<sup>386</sup>.

It can be said that etatism was initially formulated in line with İsmet İnönü's interpretation. but later it was applied in between the two understandings especially after the appointment of Celal Bayar as prime minister/*başvekil* in 1937<sup>387</sup>. At this point, it should be mentioned that he defends nationalization of the economic activities and enterprises which meant the exclusion of foreigners/*ecnebler* from the economic domain in parallel with the statism of the period. Another dimension of his views on this issue was that he saw nationalization as independence in the field of economy in parallel with the economic development of the country<sup>388</sup>. In this line, he makes a comparison of Republican, identified with independence, and the Sultanate, identified with dependence, regimes in terms of independence<sup>389</sup>. This comparison well illustrate his devotion to the republican regime as a binary opposite to the old Sultanate of the Ottoman empire in full accordance with the political elites of the early republican era. As a minor footnote, he underlined the significance of bringing up new qualified generations for the economic development of the country while talking on the transfer of the bank personnel from the Ottoman Bank to national institutions with their knowledge and experience they gained in the Ottoman Bank.<sup>390</sup> It was understood that he puts the national institutions and the Ottoman Bank separately where he worked about 35 years,

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386T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1939, İ:14, C:1, p.: 146, “Milli paramız sağlamdır ve ihtiyacımıza kafi geliyor. Ancak ecnebi dövizin tedariki müşkül oluyor. Filvaki döviz ile olan borçlarımızın bir kısmını mallarımızla tediye ediyoruz. Fakat gerek altın stokumuzun ve gerek ecnebi dövizini provizyonumuzun her sene artırılması mali vaziyetimizi takviye eder olduğu aşıkardır. Bundan maada altın stokunun gittikçe artırılması <<harb ihtiyat akçesi rolünü de görürü>> ve bundan dolayı bu işe azami ehemmiyet vermek lazımdır.”.

387Ibid., p.: 35-47.

388T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1935, İ:29, C:1, p.: 248, “...Mesela; fabrikalar açıldı, madenler işletiliyor, çiftçi ve satış kooperatifleri kuruluyor, gemicilik işleri tevsi ediliyor, vapurlar alınıyor. Bunların hepsi nasıl ki bayındırlık işleri ecnebi ellerinden birer birer çıkıyor, millileşiyor ve müstakilleşiyorsa, iktisadi sahada da müstakil olacağına ben bütün ruhumla eminim. Bunun bilhassa milleti daima ileri götürüleceğine eminim...”.

389T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 3.1.1938, İ:23, C:1, p.:10, “...Bugün bir vakıa önündeyiz. Yani eski imparatorluğun milleti uyutarak ve bir saltanat etrafında toplanan bahsis alıcı hain adamların, ecnebilere bir takım millet menafini bahşiş mukabilinde vermeleri gibi bir hadisenin karşısında bulunuyoruz ve Cumhuriyetle saltanat arasındaki farkı tebarüz ettirecek bir vakıa önünde bulunuyoruz. Binaenaleyh bendeniz bir takım teferruata girişmek istemiyorum. Fenerler idaresinin Sayın Celal Bayar Hükümeti tarafından satın alınması meselesinden dolayı kendilerini bizzat tebrik etmeyi bir borç biliyorum. Zaten layihada bunu tebarüz ettiriyorlar. Diyorlar ki: <<Bu suretle Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun memleket menfaatlerini esaslı surette derpis ve temin etmeksizin ecnebilere yapmış olduğu mukavelelerin en ağır olan bu mukavele de oratadan kaldırılmış olacak.>>”.

390T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 29.4.1942, İ:52, C:1, p.: 296.

in line with the dubious character of this institution in the Ottoman period and in the transition from the empire to the republic.

As a general approach of his understanding of the period he lived in, he underlined the significance of economy by stating that it was an era of economy<sup>391</sup>. As an important detail for his understanding of economy and the state-society relations which was idealized around development and independence of the exalted homeland/*vatan*, he had an approach to the payment of the taxes as a debt to the homeland. This approach can be evaluated as overlapping with the territorial basis of the nationalism of the period for which the homeland kept at hand after successive wars was a significant segment<sup>392</sup>. However, he also thought that taxation should be well balanced not to damage the economic activities of the taxpayers<sup>393</sup> and not to exploit the poor masses with some examples<sup>394</sup>. Attached to his views on the nationalization of the economy and its connection to the notion of independence, he underlines the significance of self-sufficiency of the country in economy which seemed to have been as a continuation of the protectionist reactions developed in nearly all of national economies after the World Crisis of 1929<sup>395</sup>. The idea reflects the mental stance of the political and military leaders who fought for the abolition of capitulations at Lausanne and whose emotional situation were reflected in the march written for the 10 th anniversary of the Republic. This brings in the idea of being strictly against wastefulness in all aspects of economic life including the state, and during the World War II ordinary citizens<sup>396</sup>. He also raised points

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391T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1938, İ:67, C:1, p.: 234, “Sayın arkadaşlar, bir millet için hayati ehemmiyet, o milletin iktisadiyatıdır. İktisadiyatımıza azami önem vermek mecburiyetindeyiz. Çünkü zamanımız bir İktisad devridir.”

392T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 167, “Hulasa olarak söylemek isterim ki memleketimizin yüksek menfaatini göz önünde tutan Hükümetimizin vazettiği vergileri vermek vatani bir borçtur. Halk bu vazigeyi yapıyor ve daima yapacaktır. Yalnız benim temennim herşey etüd ve hesapla yapılsın.” For his ideas in the same line see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.5.1938, İ:64, C:1, p.: 133 and 22.5.1939, İ:14, C:1, p.: 147.

393T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.5.1935, his views in a protocol prepared by the Economy Commission on 22.4.1935.

394T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 28.5.1940, İ:57, C:1, p.: 303.

395T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 167, “Ben bu memleketin atisini çok iyi görmekteyim. 50 senede, yapılacak işler 10 senede yapılmıştır ve bunu eskiden olduğu gibi memleketin zararına imtiyazlar vererek para bulmak sureti ile değil, sırf kendi yağımızla kavrulmak siyasetini takip ederek Türk ulusuna has olan azim, metanet ve çalışkanlıkla harikalar yapılmış ve yapılmaktadır...”

396T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 207, “...Bizim de vazifemiz yurdumuzun menafine dair işlerde saygı değer Hükümetimizi ikaz etmektir. Ancak dünyanın pek karışık ve tehlikeli

in the same line for the maximum usage of the the national resources: a point to prevent fires in the forests and fishing by dynamite<sup>397</sup>, to rise productivity of the soil<sup>398</sup>, for the citizens to buy more credible state bones for the national wealth to remain in the country and in the state<sup>399</sup> and to ban the export of wheat, to utilize mines<sup>400</sup>.

For the second part of the 1930's, the GNP of Turkey rises significantly in parallel to the betterment in the overall world economies. Although the largest portion of the international trade was realized by the mutual agreements between the governments, the trade volume also increased considerably<sup>401</sup>. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan reflects a characteristic approach to Turkey's international trade for his period. He spent significant portion of his speeches on the increase of internal and international trade volume while defending self-sufficiency which might seem contradictory but it was understandable because there was a search for a mean way between protectionism/statism and liberalization of the economy especially after 1929 world economic crisis<sup>402</sup>. He also argues for more share of Turkey in the opium trade in line with her interests which he thought that blocked by a cartel in the League of Nations/*Cemiyet-i Akvam*<sup>403</sup>. For the part of Turkey, the largest portion of her

vaziyetini göz önünde tutarak yurdumuzun müdafaası için azami fedakarlıklar yapmak nasıl zaruri ise mali vaziyetimizi takviye etmek için azami tasarrufa riayet etmek te o kadar zaruridir. Binaenaleyh israf varsa; gayrimüstacel, kabili tehir masraflar varsa, durduralım, akibetendiş olalım ve ihtiyatlı davranalım.”. In the same line see, T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 203; 23.5.1938, İ:64, C:1, p.: 133; 30.1.1940, İ:33, C:1, p.: 171. For World War II and the urge for unwastefulness for ordinary citizens ,see TB.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1941, İ:56, C:1, p.: 159.

397T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 18.10.1935, İ:46, C:1, p.: 95-96.

398T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 28.5.1937, İ:67, C:1, p.: 365 and 27.5.1940, İ:56, C:1, p.: 282.

399T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 21.5.1941, İ:54, C:1,p.: 120.

400T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1942, İ:62, C:1, p.: 266.

401Boratav, Korkut, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi 1908-1985*, 1988, Gerçek Yayınevi, İstanbul, p.: 53-55.

402T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.5.1935, his views in a protocol prepared by the Economy Commission on 22.4.1935, “Beynelmilel siyasi vaziyetin karışık olmasına ve memleketimizin imar ve bayındırlık işlerini bir an evvel başa çıkarmak mecburiyetine binaen, bugüne kadar vazolunan vergilerin şimdilik tamamile muhafaza edilmesi memleketimizin yüksek menfaati icabinadır. Fakat, bu vergilerin mükellefler üzerine ne kadar ağır bir yük olduğunu göz önünde tutarak hrhangi bir sebep ve şekilde olursa olsun, yeni vergiler ihdası, bilhassa küçük miyasta iş gören ve ahalinin kısmı azamını teşkil eden mükelleflerin zayıf vaziyetlerini bir kat daha sarsacaktır. Aynı zamanda bu gibi yeni vergiler, mesela Hazineye mühim varidat temin eden ve memleketimizde yerleşmiş ecnebi tütün ticarethaneleri gibi büyük müesseseleri izac edici mahiyette olduğundan, bunların, belki memleketimizi terketmek mecburiyetine sebebiyet verecektir.”

403T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 12.6.1935, İ:37,C:1, “Eğer kartelin iddia ettiği (İnsaniyetperverlik) umumi, ciddi ve samimi olsaydı, hiç diyeceğim yoktu, fakat menfaatperest adamların dolabına girerek, milli ticaretimizi körlendirmek sureti ile (İnsaniyetperverlik) iddiasında bulunmak hiç işimize gelmez. Eğer, muhterem vekillerimizden birisi, bendenize luffen derseki; (Senin aldığın malumat yanlışır, afyon ticaretimiz velev ki kısmen olsun ecnebi tesiri altında değildir .Evvelki gibi serbesttir) buyurursa



international trade, nearly % 50, was with Germany and its allies including Italy<sup>404</sup>. Italy was significant in this respect because there was an international environment against the aggressive foreign policies of Italy<sup>405</sup>. In this respect, Turkey was about to be a part of an international measure against Italy which had a risk of influencing the trade relations of Turkey with Italy. His speech on this issue carries clues of the transformation of the economic mentality from protectionism to a more liberal one. He offers fine calculation of the participation of Turkey in a decision against Italy with the international institutions and if possible to remain neutral and not to engage in a political conflict with Italy for the benefit of the trade with Italy<sup>406</sup>.

The World War II brought in a harder phase for the economic development of Turkey. Although Turkey managed to remain neutral until the end of the war, it had to increase the number of its soldiers from 120.00 to 1.5 million. The logistics expenditures for such a huge rise in the number of soldiers meant the expansion of the share of national defense in the government budget<sup>407</sup>. This question of national defense was one of the most significant issues Berç Türker-Keresteciyan underlined insistently. He put a heavy emphasis on the financial support for the armed forces beginning before the emergence of the World War II<sup>408</sup> which he saw as sacred<sup>409</sup>. In his understanding,

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bendeniz memleketimiz namına şimdiden arzı şükran eylerim.” gibi

404Boratav, 1988, p.: 53.

405Hale, William, Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000, 2002, Frank Cass Publishers, London, p.: 64-65.

406T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 13.11.1935, İ:5, C:1, p.: 51-52, “Hulasa, incelenmesi gereken noktalar şunlardır: a) Zecri tedbirlere iştirakimiz, ticaretimizi atide ne derece mutazarrır edecektir? b) İştirakimize binaen muhtemel zararlarımıza karşı <<Compensation>> vesilesi sağlam surette temin edilecek mi? c) Ademi iştirakimiz halinde mahzuru ne olacak idi? d) <<Covenant>> i imzalayan, fakat zecri tedbirlere iştirak etmiyen Devletlerin Uluslar kurumuna karşı vaziyetleri ne olacaktır? e) Zecri tedbirlere iştirak etmek Uluslar kurumu üyeleri için cebri mi, yoksa ihtiyari bir vazifemi teşkil ediyor?”.

407Boratav, 1988, p.: 63.

408T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 203, “Sayın arkadaşlar, bugün dünya vaziyeti gittikçe karişiyor. Dünyanın bir ucundan öbür ucuna kadar bulutlar toplanmış, herkesi heyecana düşürüyor. Sulh isteriz diyen milletler bir silahlanma yarışına çıkmışlardır. Geçen defa olduğu gibi bu yarışın sonu harp olabilir. Dünyada en ziyade ve samimiyetle sulh seven millet Türk milletidir. Fakat bu vaziyet karşısında memleketimizi müdafa etmek zarureti çok şiddetlidir. Binaenaleyh bütçede Milli Müdafaamız için sarfolunacak paralar müstahcel ve hayati paralardır.”.

409T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 22.5.1935, İ:27, C:1, p.: 165, “Memleketimizin müdafaasına aid masraflar ve imar işlerine aid masraflar mukaddes masraflardır.”. For other speeches in the same line see: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1936, İ:67, C:1, p.: 207; 26.5.1938, İ:67, C:1, p.: 209; 22.5.1939, İ:14, C:1, p.: 147; 21.5.1941, İ:54, C:1, p.: 120; 25.5.1942, İ:62, C:1, p.: 265 and 24.5.1943, İ:26, C:1, p.: 165.

there were two priorities of the Turkish Republic: national defense and development<sup>410</sup>. He also underlines the importance of the financial support of the Turkish Red Crescent/*Kızılay* where he worked for 20 years due to its functionality in national defense<sup>411</sup>. He adds that the navy should also be supported and developed among other segments of the army<sup>412</sup>. Lastly, he opposes the replacement of the Tax for Planes/*Tayyare Resmi* for other purposes than national defense. The wars that were experienced very soon which had a significant space in the memories of the political elites of the time, the role of the army in the foundation of the republic, the insecurity, turbulences and armed conflicts in the international arena resulting in the World War II can explain this emphasis on national defense. Thus, he always includes the army while praising at the end of his speeches.

The solutions to meet the need for such sudden expenditures created by the insecure war atmosphere were to increase taxes and to print money through Central Bank(*Merkez Bankası*). The result was a drastic increase in the prices and a high inflation. The first reaction to this a heavier intervention of the state in all spheres of economic activity in the country and this intervention was materialized with the Law of National Protection/*Milli Korunma Kanunu* in January 1940<sup>413</sup>. Mainly aiming at the reduction of the economic burden that the war conditions put on the shoulders of the society, this law was giving very large, almost limitless, capabilities to the government in intervening the economic activities including determining the prices, confiscating products and forcing for mandatory work. In one of his speeches just after the introduction of this law, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan praised the Law of National Protection/*MilliKorunma Kanunu* which was introduced under the difficult economic conditions of the war in accordance with the nationalization of the economic sphere in the framework of protectionist and statist mentality<sup>414</sup>. However, these interventions did not result in the expected outcomes

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410T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1937, İ:63, C:1,p.: 187, “Bugün Türkiye Cumhuriyeti iki çok mühim zaruret karşısında bulunuyor: Birinci zaruret, beynelmilel müşevveş vaziyetin karşısında vatan müdafaasıdır. İkinci zaruret, her ne pahaya olursa olsun, milli kalkınmamıza devam etmek zaruretidir.”

411T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 30.12.1936, İ:18, C:1, p.: 97-98.

412T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 29.5.1937, İ:68, C:1, p.: 397-398.

413Ibid., p.: 371-379.

414T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.2940, İ:56, C:1, p.:282, “Arkadaşlar geçenlerde milli korunma kanunu ile muhterem Hükümetimize vasi salahiyetler verildi. Bu kanun çerçevesi dahilinde Hükümet

and the government gave up determining the prices in the second half of the war. The emerging black markets in the basic commodities for the society and the constant fall of the GNP went on creating a discontentedness among the society and a hatred towards the profiteers of the black markets. As a result of this reaction, the government introduced the Law of Wealth Tax/*Varlık Vergisi Kanunu* in November 1942<sup>415</sup>. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan also reflected the hatred among the society and the government very clearly in his speeches. He was obviously attacking stock of goods and commodities which began to be a rising merchant behavior in 1930's<sup>416</sup>, but especially during the World War II, and the consequent black market of the period blocking the availability of goods and commodities at their normal prices in the market and citizens easy access to them<sup>417</sup>. He defends the changes in the Law of National Protection to fight against stocking merchants and offers the rivalry of the government to the commodities of the stockers<sup>418</sup> by taking part in the monopolistic sectors which are vital for the people<sup>419</sup>. Interestingly, he did not give any speech specifically on the Law of Wealth Tax/*Varlık Vergisi Kanunu*. However, his speeches on the fight against stocking and speculation before and after the introduction of this law partly illuminate his approach. It can be said that he was strictly in the same line with the government to fight against stockers and speculators a significant part of which was non-Muslim minorities. He should have been aware that the preparation of the laws of National Protection and Wealth Tax was aiming considerably at the nationalization of the economic activities and wealth of minorities but he does not give us clues of his views on the treatment of minorities especially during the application of the Law of Wealth Tax. This law and its

memleketimizin menafini korumak için bir takım isabetli tedbirler almıştır...”.

415Ibid., p.: 481-487.

416T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 12.6.1935, İ:37, C:1, p.: 150.

417T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1941, İ:56, C:1, p.: 160, “Maalesef, memleketimizde ihtikara karşı alınan tedbirler, bu müessif hali kökünden söküp atamadı. Bilhassa büyük şehirlerdeki mütekitler, dullar, yetimler ve küçük maaşlı memurlar, muhtekirlerin yarattığı fiat pahalılığından ıstırap çekiyorlar. Muhtekir muzır fare gibidir. Hükümet bir kaçını kapana soktu, cezalandırdı, fakat geri kalan fareler ya kendi keyfinin istediği fiatı talep ediyor veyahut murakebe komisyonunun tesbit ettiği fiatı öğrenince, herhangi bir malı piyasadan yok ediyorlar.”.

418T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 30.1.1942, İ:33, C:1, p.: 171, “Bundan maada, vurguncunun hakkından gelmek için yapılacak şiddetli mücadelenin bir başka türüsü de, vurguncunun malına karşı Hükümet tarafından yapılacak devamlı ve amansız rekabettir.”.

419T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 24.5.1943, İ:26, C:1, p.: 165, “Korunma Kanunu vurguncuları tamamen ortadan kaldırmadı. Bence bunlara karşı ameli surette mücadele yapmak için Devlet tarafından işe ve havayıcı zaruriye teşkilatı yapılması gerekir. Yani halkın şiddetle muhtaç olduğu ve vurguncunun elinde bir monopol teşkil eden mallara karşı Devlet kendi teşkilatı ile rekabete kalkışırsa vurguncunun mumu çabuk söner.”.

repercussion were dealt with at length in the part on the treatment of the non-Muslim minorities in this period.

In the World War II period, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan referred to an interesting point. He emphasized the importance of population growth which would rise the power of a country<sup>420</sup> after a disastrous earthquake and also he offered the encouragement of marriage and population growth<sup>421</sup>. This issue can be understood in the framework of the for human power in a process of industrialization where underemployment was not a question, yet. Additionally, the importance of the human power might have increased due to the war conditions. Lastly on this issue, the impact of the racist views rose in Europe in this period which also began to gain a considerable weight in the Turkist movements of the time can be seen as an overspeculation. However, it should be kept in mind, too, although there is not a clear evidence on his part on this issue.

As a significant part of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's concerns at the parliament a brief assessment of his speeches on the international environment and the Turkish Foreign Policy will be presented. After an initial period of distrust towards the West from the foundation of the republic onwards, the relations between Turkey and western powers especially France and Britain entered into a phase of recovery in the second half of the 1930's. One of the main reasons behind this rapprochement was the attitude of Turkey to preserve the status-quo in European international sphere together with France and Britain against the aggressive expansionist policies of Hitler Germany and Fascist Italy. Although Turkey kept her relations with Germany in a relatively smooth mode, she perceived the expansionist aggressive attacks of Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean as a major threat to her security<sup>422</sup>. In this period and in the following period of World War II, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan addressed his worries about the insecure and instable international environment but he praised the peacefulness of Turkey and its nation. Furthermore, he always underlines the importance of the power of the Turkish army

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420T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1940, İ:56, C:1, p.: 283, "Sayın Hükümetinizin nazarı dikkatini celbetmek istediğim diğer mühim bir nokta vardır, o da nüfus meselesidir. Bir memlekette nüfus ne kadar artarsa her sahada, kuvvet ve inkişaf da o nisbette artar ve yükselir."

421T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1937, İ:64, C:1, p.: 231-232.

422Hale, 2002, p.: 61-66.

under these conditions as mentioned before<sup>423</sup>. However, he also had an economic concern in the issue of the emergence of an anti-Italian international environment and warned the government for the deterioration of trade relations due to the possible participation of Turkey in this international movement. He offered to search for the possibilities of being neutral specifically for economic purposes<sup>424</sup>. As it was mentioned in his emphasis on the financial support of the armed forces<sup>425</sup>, his praise of the armed forces<sup>426</sup> and his caution for national defense can be contextualized as it was in the previous part. In a speech on the importance of the Dardanelles for defense of Turkey, he refers to the courage and triumph of the Turkish army in the battles of Gallipoli in the World War I<sup>427</sup>. He also opposes the participation of the foreign specialists in the army due to the danger of leaking the secrets of the army<sup>428</sup>. Along the same line of argumentation, he supports the policy of construction of railways which İsmet İnönü leads and his government due the strategic importance of the railways in the defense of the country in addition to its economic contribution<sup>429</sup>.

In this insecure and instable international atmosphere of the second half of the 1930's, Turkey requested a change for the disarmament of the Traits by sending a letter countries that signed the Lausanne Treaty in April 1936. Turkey gained back her sovereignty over the Traits in Montreux for her security concerns only with the reservation of free transition through Traits for trade ships of the countries which were not in war with Turkey<sup>430</sup>. During the discussions on this issue, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan emphasized the significance of the traits in the national security of Turkey.

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423See footnote: 374 and T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23 and 22.5.1939, İ:14, C:1, p.: 149.

424See footnote: 371.

425See footnotes: 374, 375, 375, 376, and 377.

426T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 10.4.1939, İ:2, C:1, p.: 23, “Bahtiyarız; çünkü dünyanın en kuvvetli ve en kahraman ordusu bizim Türk ordumuzdur. Onun önünde hürmet ve hayranlıkla eğiliriz.(Alkışlar).”.

427T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 31.7.1936, İ:81, C:1, p.: 317, “Sayın arkadaşlar; Çanakkale boğazının stratejik notai nazardan ne kadar ehemmiyetli bir mevki olduğunu harbi umumide gördük. Orada en kuvvetli milletlerden olan İngiltere ve Fransa donamaları ile ve birçok asker ile Boğazi cebren geçmek istediler, Boğazın iki tarafını istila etmeye çalıştılar. Oranın mukaddes topraklarını altüst ettiler ve o civarları cehenneme çevirdiler, fakat Türkün gülleleri düşmanın zırhlılarını batırdı. Türk askerinin kahramanlığı ve çelik müdafaası, düşmanı ricate icbar etti. O zaman düşmanlarımız ve dünya alem anladı ki Türk askeri kahramandır, yenilmez yılmaz bir kuvvettir.”

428T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1936, İ:69, C:1, p.: 287.

429See footnote: 376.

430Hale, 2002, p.: 63-64.

He argued that Lausanne conditions which are not sufficient for Turkey's security could be reevaluated because the international environment was insecure and might threaten Turkey's security for which the traits were highly important<sup>431</sup>. He referred to the importance of Çanakkale and an idea to offer a resettling to League of Nations (*Cemiyet-i Akvam*) of the traits issue decided at Lausanne. Furthermore, his extensive knowledge on the discussion at Lausanne was interesting<sup>432</sup>. He also praised the diplomatic success in Montreux on this issue<sup>433</sup>.

In the second half of the 1930's, the long dispute over Hatay region which could not be solved at Lausanne, was creating an open international conflict between Turkey and France especially after France declared that she would give its independence to Syria including Hatay in its territories in 1936. The issue could not be solved up to the elections supervised by France and Turkish military in cooperation in July 1938 in spite of the involvement of League of Nations and Britain as intermediaries before these elections. The majority was slightly for the side of Turks (22 deputies out of 40) and the parliament and the parliament declared the independence of Hatay Republic soon. Lastly, the parliament of Hatay Republic declared that they joined to Turkey<sup>434</sup>. During the discussions over this issue beginning from 1936, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan made speeches on the dispute of Hatay before<sup>435</sup> and after the Hatay Republic was proclaimed

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431 T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 11.10.1935, İ:43, C:1, p.: 70, "Bence Lozan muahedesindeki boöazlara dair madde, hak ve adalet nptai nazarından, yurdumuzun emniyeti noktai nazarından ve arsiulusal siyasal vaziyetin kökünden deęişmiş olması noktai nazarından ortadan kalkmış ve hükmü kalmamış bir madde gibi telakki edilmelidir. Bu inkar olunamaz bir hakikattir. Binaenaleyh hepimizin hürmetini ve itimadını kazanmış olan saygı değer Hükümetimizden bu meselenin bir an evvel hallini kavi ümidle bekleriz (Alkışlar)". See also: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1936, İ:68, C:1, p.: 230.

432 T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 31.7.1936, İ:81, C:1, p.: 317-319.

433 T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 31.7.1936, İ:81, C:1, p.: 318, "Montröde imzalanan muahede bizim için parlak bir nuvaffakiyet, diplomatik bir zafer olmakla beraber ,arsulusal siyasi noktai nazardan dahi azim bir ehemmiyeti haizdir, çünkü ulu şefimizin yaratıcı dehası bütün dünyaya gösterdi ki, siyasette muallak ve nazik meseleleri kavga ile değil bilakis sulh ve dostluk havası içinde hal ve tesviye edebilirler. İşte Türk siyasetindeki bu yeni tez ve yeni usul dünya sulhu için hayırlı tesirler yaratacaktır."

434 Hale, 2002, p.: 66-67.

435 T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.11.1936, İ:8, C:1, p.: 76, "Sayın arkadaşlar, Bu gün İskenderon ve Antakyadaki 300.000 Türk kardeşlerimiz anavatana kavuşmak için göz yaşları döküyorlar ve bu gün, 18 milyon Türk yurddaşının bu sevgili kardeşlerinin feci vaziyetini görerek, kalpleri helecan içindedir. Bunları kurtarmak hepimizin mukaddes vazifesidir. Mesele, teahhür kabul etmeyecek dercede önemlidir. Hak, mantık, siyaset bizim lehimizdir."

including an interesting poem<sup>436</sup>. He spoke about the French diplomacy<sup>437</sup> in Hatay towards Armenians in a harsh way. Additionally, he addressed his testament by calling out to the Armenians of Hatay to be loyal to the Turks to have a happy and secure future after having given anecdote of his experience during the raid of some Armenians from Tsarist Russia to the Ottoman Bank in 1895<sup>438</sup>.

The insecure and unstable international environment in Europe ended up with the emergence of the World War II. The general tendency to preserve the international status-quo for a country which founded an independent nation-state just 16 years ago, was the main axis of the stance that she would try to defend. This point was consolidated with the relative military and financial weakness of Turkey in this period which might be totally exhausted with a major military confrontation. Turkish government managed to remain neutral up to the end of the war even though she symbolically declared war on Germany for the purpose of being accepted to the United Nations. The active neutrality policy of Turkey during the war by constant manouevers of insistent neutrality and obscure sidedness was presented as a great success by the İnönü government who was among the champions of this policy<sup>439</sup>. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan praised the Turkish diplomacy headed by İsmet İnönü, which managed to be neutral in the World War II<sup>440</sup> because of the possible negative effects of the war

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436T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 29.1.1937, İ:30, C:1, p.: 168, “Hatayın resmi lisanı Türkçe olması, mali ve idari işlerin dahi Hataylıların lehine neticelenmesi, sevinç ve iftiharla yadedilir. Hatayın istiklal bayrağı Hatayın üstünde ebediyyen dalgalandıkça, asil ve kahraman Türkü temsil edecektir ve arkadaşlık timsali olacaktır, muhabbet sembolü olacaktır.”, and T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 14.6.1937, İ:76, C:1, p.:307, “Ey Hataylı sen Türktün asırlardan beri, Türk kardeşin seni bırakmazdı geri, Seni esaretten kurtardı o büyük önder Sen ona sevgini, saygını gönder. Sen Türke sarıl, Türkten ayrılma, Mesud ol, hiçbir düşmandan yolma (Alkışlar).”

437T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1938, İ:68, C:1, p.: 264, he gives an anecdote to illustrate the French diplomatic approach to the Hatay issue: “Sayın arkadaşlar, beneniz bir tarihi vakadan bahsedeceğim. Mücadeleli milliye zamanında mensub olduğum bankada müdürlük ediyordum. Orada o vakit Türk muhibbi Mösyö Stek vardı, bankanın müdürü umumisi idi. Franklen Buyyon geldiği zaman orada müzakere ederdi. Beni de çağırırlardı, konuşurduk. Franklen Buyyon Anadoluya geldi, avdet etti, Franklen Buyyon muahedesini Mösyö Stegin odasında konuştuk. Beneniz bunu konuşurken hududları gördüm, söyledim, dedeim ki: Burada bir Hatay vardır, Türke aiddir, onu ne yaptınız? Namusum üzerine söylüyorum, Türk muhibbi olan olan Fransız diplomatıma burası hataydır, niçin muahedeye koymadınız dedim. Bu sonra olacaktır, şimdi yaptığımız muvakkat bir muahededir, dedi. Bu söylediklerim tarihi bir hakikattır, bunu bu kürsüyü mualladan bütün Fransız milletine hitaben söylemek istiyorum. (Alkışlar).

438See footnote: 350.

439Hale, 2002, p.: 79-81

440T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, “Sayın arkadaşlar, Harp dışında kalabilmiş olmak kıymetli bir bahtiyarlıktır. Yüce Milli Şefimizin, yüksek direktiflerini takib eden Sayın Hükümetimizin bu yoldaki muvaffak milli

which were felt even while staying neutral<sup>441</sup>. His stance was understandable not only with the strict policy of remaining neutral in the government circles but his previous worries of the insecure international environment and his praises of the peacefulness of Turkish nation and new Turkish foreign policy formulation in this line.

As a last part of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's speeches, the issue of education will be presented briefly in his views. As one of his initial and significant points in his concern of education, he underlined the lack of schools and teachers in many regions of the country and the vitality of the solution of this problem for the development of the country for the new Turkish generations not to be lost due to lack of education<sup>442</sup>. In line with this view, he underlined the need for the foundation of colleges and universities for the people to send their children willingly to the local/national schools instead of foreign schools such as Robert College and to Europe. His emphasis is on the formation of such national/local schools where education could be given at a level of this foreign schools<sup>443</sup>.

In addition to his general views on education, he also spoke about the content and the manner of education. Firstly, he emphasized the education of the Turkish language and Turkish history possibly referring to the formation of the Association of the Study of the Turkish Language and the Turkish History<sup>444</sup>. Furthermore, he criticized the lack of

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siyasetini şükranla yadediyoruz.”. See also: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 17.3.1943, İ:3, C:1, p.: 27-28 and 24.5.1943, İ:26, C:1, p.: 166.

441T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 27.5.1940, İ:56, C:1, p.: 282, “...Ancak dünya ahvali dolayısıyla bizim harb harici kalmamıza rağmen bu ahvalin serpintisine ve tesirine maruz kaldığımız ve kalacağımız inkar edilemez.”.

442T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1936, İ:68, C:1, p.: 238, “Sayın arkadaşlar, Cumhuriyet Hükümeti, büyük şefimizin yüksek direktifleri ile kültüre, ilme çok hemmiyet vermiş ve memleketimizin çocukları çok istifade etmektedir. Ancak, aldığım malumata nazaran, Anadolu da bazı şehirlerde mektebe girmek isteyen çocukların adedi çom, faka nisbeten mektebler ve muallimler az olduklarından çocukların bir çoğu tahsilsiz kalıyor.”. See also: T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, İ:65, C:1, p.: 249 and 25.5.1939, İ:17, C:1, p.: 253.

443T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 25.5.1935, İ:29, C:1, p.: 255, “...Bu kadar senlerden beri niçin çocuklarımızı Robert koleje, niçin Fırerler mektebine gönderiyoruz? Niçin kızlarımızı Senjandarka gönderiyoruz? Bendenizin sayın bakandan ricam şudur ki çalışsın, bu vaziyet melekette artık nihayet bulsun. Bizim meleketimizde teşkilat yapılsın ki çocuklarımız yapılacak mekteblere seve seve gitsin ve seve seve okusun ve zenginler de çocuklarını Kembiriç, Okusforda göndermesinler, Üniversitemize göndersinler. Biz memnunuz. Biz çocuklarımızı buraya gönderebiliriz desinler ve hem de beyhuda yere Avrupaya paramız gitmesin. Bendeniz bunu temenni ediyorum.”.

444T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1937, İ:65, C:1, p.: 249, “Muhterem Maarif vekili memleketimizde ilim ve irfan sevgiyisini yükseltmek için çom gayret ediyorlar. Türk dilini , Türk tarihinin



social education and education of manners/*terbiye* and offers to employ educators in the schools<sup>445</sup>. Interestingly, he defended the idea of separating the schools for girls and boys for primary level schools because their understanding of their sexes become already developed at that age, which was in fact against the reforms introduced by the reforms in education/*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*. He thought that mixed education might be harmful with the added statement that he was a liberal in perspective<sup>446</sup>. As a further point on his views in education concerning manners, he pointed to the need to discipline the schools as it was in the military beginning from the secondary schools due to his observations on the undisciplined behaviors of the student against their teachers reaching to attacking them physically<sup>447</sup> and to the need to offer education of ethics in the schools which would contribute to the development of the children<sup>448</sup>. Lastly on the issue of education, he addressed to the need to offer maternal education for girls in the schools for girls<sup>449</sup>. Additionally, his justification based on the role of the women in

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ehemmiyetini çocuklarımıza öğretmek için, bilhassa Ankarada çok güzel teşkilat yapılmıştır.”.

445T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 16.5.1937, İ:65, C:1, p.: 250, “Çocuklarımızın bir kısmı ana terbiyesi gördükten sonra mektebe gidiyor. Halbuki bir büyük kısmı da, bu terbiyeyi görmeden mektebe devam ediyor ve orada her sınıftan geçiyor, her türlü dersleri okuyor ve mektebden çıkıyor, bu çocukta science ve instruction tama, kahat (savoir vivre) ve Education sociale noksandır. Yani, içtimai terbiye na tamadır. Muhteremvekilden soruyorum, acaba ilk mekteplerde müderrislerden başka mürebbiler ve mürebbiyeler de var mıdır? Şayet yoksa, bir mürebbi yani (Educateur) kadrosunun ihdası fâideli olmaz mı?”.

446T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1937, İ:65, C:1, p.: 254, “Arkadaşlar, şimdi Bay Kazım Nami gibi muhterem bir arkadaşımız bendenizi mutaassıp ve cahil bir adam gibi telakki buyurdular. Benim mektepler için söylediğim fikri gayet şiddetle tenkid ettiler. Bendeniz çok liberal fikirli bir adamım. Söylediklerimi müsaaadenizle izah etmek istiyorum: küçük yaştaki çocukların dimağları daha körpe iken erkek ve kız farlı yoktur buyurdular, bendeniz erkek ve kız farkı olduğunu biliyorum. (Gülüşmeler). Çocukların dimağları daha körpe iken bize kumanda eden bir tabiat vardır, bir natür vardır. Buna kapılırlar, tabi olurlar. Bendeniz 10, 12, 13 yaşlarındaki mektep çocuklarının korte gibi birşeyler yaptıklarını biliyorum. (Gülüşmeler). Bendeniz diyorum ki, bu çağdaki çocuklar ayrı okusunlar, akilü balığ oldukları vakit birleşsinler, o zaman bir mahzur yoktur, çünkü kendi kendilerine kumanda edebilirler. Fakat dimağları körpe iken birleştirilirlerse o vakit erkek ve kız farkı olduğu ortaya çıkar. (Gülüşmeler).”.

447T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1938, İ:67, C:1, p.: 218, “Türk gençleri askerlik vazifesini ifa edip avdet ettikten sonra iftihar ve memnuniyetle görüyoruz ki bilaistisna hepsi de disiplin sahibi birer genç olmuşlardır. Halbuki daha askerliğini yapmamış bazı mektep talebeleri ara sıra disiplin aleyhine hareketlerde bulunuyorlar. Hocalarına karşı hürmetsizlik ediyorlar. Bu vakalar tektük ve nadiren oluyor. Amma ne için olsun. Acaba askerliket telkin edilen disiplin hissi mektep talebelerine de verilemez mi?”.

448T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.1938, İ:67, C:1, p.: 218, “İşittiğime göre muallimler tedris mevzularını bırakarak çocuklara ahlaki telkin yapmağa vakiy bulamıyorlar. Çünkü lise ve orta mekteb programları fazla yüklü imiş ve herhangi bir terbiyevi telkine değil, sadece tedrise bile vakit azmış. Zaten müfredat programında ahlak dersine benzer birşeyden de eser yokmuş. Ahlak terbiyesi olsun, disiplin işi olsun, mekteb programları olsun, bunlara dair ne düşündüklerini muhterem vekilden anlamak isterim.”.

449T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, 26.5.2943, İ:28, C:1, p.: 246, “bendenizin de bir temennim vardır, onu söyleyeceğim. Acaba bizim kız mekteplerimizde analık meselesi mevzubahis oluyor mu? Yüksek tahsil gören kızlarımıza nasıl ana olmalı, nasıl çocuk büyütülmeli bunlar öretiliyor mu? Çünkü Türk anası bizzm kahraman askerlerimizi doğuruyor. Türk anaları bütün kahraman büyüklerimizi

giving birth to the heroic 'soldiers' and 'leaders' of the Turkish nation gives a clue of his view shaped by the memory of the political elites of the period by praising the role of the army and the leaders, the chiefs Atatürk and İsmet İnönü.

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doğuruyor. Bu günkü kızlarımıza ana olmak vazifesini öğretelim.”.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Having established a biographical sketch of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's life story, some analyses, further speculations over the findings expressed in the text and new questions will be presented. This was an attempt to have an overview of the process of transition from the empire to the nation-state in the life story of an Armenian personality. As an extension of the general and large questions for the conduct of this research, the major concern for me was to understand to the limits and possibilities of different destinations for the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the process of transition to a nation state. This main question became reduced to a single issue in his life story of how the relationship or connection of an Armenian individual with his community would be transformed or would suffer ruptures in terms of those social conditions such as religious identity, citizenship, society. The single spectacle of a life story may help us in understanding different aspects of the voyage of non-Muslims from an empire to a nation state. The first is the channel through which a non-Muslim individual could surpass the communal ties in which the individual was born in a late Ottoman context. The second may be how a non-Muslim individual could relate individually to the Ottoman realm and how the perceptions of such an individual about the state and the society could be framed. The third question is how the perceptions of such an individual could be shaped about the emerging nationalisms and what may be the possible destinations for such an individual. In relation to this question, how could one possibly go through these options and stuck to an option and which factors could affect the critical decisions for such an individual. As a last question, how the boundaries to move in for such an individual would be drawn in the formation and consolidation processes of a nation-state.

The beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was marked by a transformation in the Ottoman state and society, brought in the question of nationalism into the empire. The introduction of this question changed the political mentality of the Ottoman political and intellectual elites. For the part of our concerns, the emergence of the dichotomy between the nature of nationalist world view which was promoting a nation-state, and the nature of an imperial political organization and its political thinking seems to be significant. The reason is that the 'Ottoman' and the 'Armenian' as conceptual entities shaping the political relationship between the Ottoman political organization and the Armenian community, and as pillars of individuals' identities, began to come into conflict. The reaction of the Ottoman political authorities to the emerging non-Muslim nationalisms was Ottomanism as a general framework. This was a remedy proposed to eliminate the above mentioned dichotomy of the national and imperial/Ottoman realms. Specifically for the part of the Armenian community, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was born into a period that witnessed the secularization in its communal organization and the late emergence of Armenian nationalism in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a major discontent among the Armenian flock in Eastern Anatolia.

Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was an individual who benefited from the transformation of the Ottoman state and society and modernization in the institutions surrounding his life. The linkage between the Ottoman state and his uncle (Bedros Keresteciyan) who raised him was a product of the transformation of the Ottoman political mentality and provided him with a connection to the Ottoman state. In the same line, the schools (Galatasaray Lyceé and Robert College) he received his education were also products of the modernization in the field of education where he could be equipped with positivist and secular notions of perceiving the world around him. The combination of the two (his uncle and the schools) would lead him a way that would arrive at a possible cosmopolitan interpretation of Ottomanism. Although Ottomanism was a cosmopolitan notion by nature, underlining the cosmopolitan interpretation is important in his formation because it could be interpreted as a way of consolidating the Muslim hegemony or a tool of opening the way to achieving the aims of emerging nationalisms.

The belief and dedication to Ottomanism would help individuals to surpass communal ties. Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's formation seems to provide him with a position by which he could surpass the communal (largely with religious connotations) ties to the Armenian community which were remnants of the waning Ottoman 'millet' system, and also avoid Armenian nationalism. His loose connection to the Armenian community might have already prevented him from developing a perception of the Ottoman state as an alien or arbitrary power which normally would have possibly been produced in a communal setting subject to secularization and nationalist drive. As a result, secularization of the religious communities which was widely accepted among the components of the emergence of nationalism in communal structures could be challenged under specific conditions. Even though Berç Türker-Keresteciyan might have developed a distinct secular Armenian consciousness, the way of its transformation towards a nationalist one was obstructed by his special surroundings and led him to develop a belongingness to the Ottoman realm. Thus, cultural reconstruction of a religious community with a secular ethnic basis would not necessarily lead to a nationalist stance if not accompanied by a wide spread discontentedness among the intelligentsia on the part of the possession of political authority and if not consolidated with the weak interest of the intelligentsia in the status quo.

At this point, some questions and suggestions for a further research will be given. The first question is whether emerging Armenian nationalism and its political endeavours gave hope for the liberation of the Armenian people as a nation-state. This question can be enlarged by discussing the perception of the national movement among different segments of the Armenian community to which Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's life story could contribute. This assessment would require an analysis of the level of discontentedness in different segments of the society towards the Ottoman power; this discontent was a crucial factor for the emerging nationalisms to achieve their aims by mobilizing the flock. The second question is whether there was a special linkage between the Armenian community and the Ottoman state and society different from other religiously identified communities composing the Ottoman society. This question comes to mind due to the cliché of the transformation of a 'loyal' Armenian community

into a rebellious one, while Serbian and Greek nationalisms, despite their revolts, were not evaluated as such. This question brings in a further proposal of research which may give us clues of the factor of the long past experience of the Armenians living under the hegemony of different great powers such as Sasanids and Byzantium before the Ottomans without forming stable states or establishing empires. Thus, the split among the Armenian community in its national endeavour, where Berç Türker-Keresteciyan resorted to Ottomanism, can be more comprehensively understood by discovering the possible role of the lack of a past experience of great statehood in the cultural reconstruction of the Armenian community. The last question can be formulated in terms of the timing and the place of the Armenian nationalist upheaval. The timing aspect of the emergence of Armenian nationalism is significant because it emerged following the independence of Serbs and Greeks, when the Ottoman political elite took urgent measures against further separatisms in the empire. Additionally, the period of the emergence of Turkish nationalism was largely overlapping with the Armenian one. That's why, a question of an improper timing can be raised due to the clash of nationalisms which resulted in violence and extermination especially in the World War I. For the part of the place of the Armenian nationalist upheaval, the setting of Eastern Anatolia, in which Turks, Kurds, Armenians and some other smaller populations were living, can be questioned as a problem for the emergence of a nation state (on a heterogeneous population). As an outcome of the timing and place, the position of a nationalism in opposition to another being in power, and the linkage between the public discontentedness, the intelligentsia, and the ethnic composition of the place of nationalist upheaval might have been crucial in terms of the dedication of people to the movement.

In the period after his formation, the Ottoman Bank was significant because its fate overlapped with Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's life story. With respect to the question of the identity of the Ottoman Bank, it carried a suspicion of being perceived as non-Ottoman and later non-national. It needed to prove its Ottomanness and later nationality with concessions which was reflected in the life story of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan in a slightly different way. The story was based on attempts at taking a position under

changing conditions of political mentality and political elites. For the part of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan's voyage, his participation in the Ottoman Red Crescent was referring to the most critical threshold for his future political stance. This institution gave him chances of being close to the regime and its proponents politically and physically from the II. Constitutional Period into the World War I and especially Turkish War of Independence. He got acquainted with the political perspectives and behaviors of the political elites of these periods. Thus, he could develop proper reflexes as an individual with this basis which functioned for him as an immune system. His appointment to the highest administrative level of the Ottoman Bank as an Ottoman subject, while the Armenians of Anatolia were subject to deportation and extermination, demonstrates his position in the system. He was a proper 'Ottoman' above a suspicious Armenian identity although the Armenians of Istanbul were not subject to deportation. This kept him from being excluded from the Ottoman realm and later from the Turkish nation-state. He as an Ottoman-Armenian could keep his position as well as the Ottoman Bank in the critical period of losing hope of remaining as an empire. The Turkish War of Independence was the period in which his previous decisive steps and traits came out of surface and got crystallized in the clearest sense with his efforts in line with the Kemalist forces in the Ottoman Red Crescent and in the Ottoman Bank, his initial contact with Mustafa Kemalist, his participation in the Turco-Armenian Friendship Association and his efforts during the Lausanne Conference as an Armenian of Turkish government. This was the peak of his political connection to political and military elites of the emerging nation-state and its regime to prove his loyalty to the political reorganization.

With respect to the Early Republican period, his background and similar ones would be awarded because the memory of the political and military elites of the new nation-state was full of reverse perceptions of non-Muslim behavior. The background of Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was including enough references of loyalty which would create a confidence on the side of the new political regime. However, his voyage to a more clear level of political confidence with his election as a deputy to the parliament in 1935 would require a certain relationship to Turkish nationalism of the Kemalist period. The

critical point for non-Muslim minorities, as well as Berç Türker-Keresteciyan, became cultural Turkification in their relationship to the new regime and Turkish nationalism. As a point of reference to his dedication to Turkification as a pillar of the new regime, Berç Türker-Keresteciyan was underlining his efforts of Turkification of the cadres of the Ottoman Bank after the foundation of the Republic. This attitude was well reflected in his speeches at the parliament in defense of cultural Turkification of the non-Muslims to be able to form the homogeneous-unified Turkish nation. Regarding his activities at the parliament and his views, it can be said that he was strictly on the same line in terms of the general political and economic policy preferences of the single party administration. However, he raised some minor criticisms towards the application of these policies and evaluated the subject matters with a trait of patriotism which could be clearly observed to be over an approximate level. With his attachment to Turkish nationalism and to the policies of the single party regime, he was in fact not voicing a sound which should be evaluated as surprising when the general atmosphere of the period was taken into account. While his demonstration of patriotism over an approximate level attracts attention, his general stance can be evaluated as reflecting the spirit of the time.



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