

# Turkish Jews between 1923 and 1933 – What did the Turkish policy between 1923 and 1933 mean for the Turkish Jews?

Reyhan Zetler\*

*From one civilization to another, every man gives his own version of the truth. The neighbour's version is never acceptable. The one thing of which we can be certain is that the destiny of Israel, its strength, its survival and its misfortunes are all the consequence of its remaining irreducible, refusing to be diluted, that is of being a civilization faithful to itself. Every civilization is its own heaven and hell.<sup>1</sup>*

Fernand Braudel

## 1. Introduction

This article entitled “Turkish Jews between 1923 and 1933” focuses primarily on the Turkish policy during this period and how the Turkish Jews were influenced by it. The leading question is “What did the Turkish policy between 1923 and 1933 mean for the Turkish Jews?” This period of time was chosen because in 1923 the Turkish Republic was founded and the transition from empire to republic brought many changes and difficulties with it. One of these changes was the situation of the minorities in the newly founded Turkish Republic. Bearing the National War of Independence (1919-1922) in mind, in the following ten years (1923-1933) there was a rise of Turkish nationalism and a search to find the “true Turkish identity”. The other intention of having chosen a time span of ten years was the wish to give a detailed portrait to the reader and to come to a more accurate answer and conclusion to the leading question. In the following years until 1945, the Turkish Government and some Turkish writers were to a certain extent influenced by the fascist and Anti-Semite movements in Europe which made the whole situation even more complex.

The way I chose to answer the leading question was to divide the main part into different aspects. By discussing one aspect (Treaty of Lausanne, education, language, political participation, military, communal organisation and activities and economy), I will firstly explain the Turkish policies and measures taken by the Turkish Government. The second part of the aspects mentioned above will describe the way the Turkish Jews were affected by these policies. The reason for having chosen these aspects is that these were the Turkish policies which affected the Turkish Jews the most. Additionally, the books and the press from this

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\*Reyhan Zetler hat ihre Matura 2013 am Gymnasium Liestal mit Schwerpunktfach Latein gemacht. Seit 2014 studiert sie Rechtswissenschaften an der Universität Basel. Da sie Halbtürkin ist, spricht sie Türkisch und interessiert sich für die Minderheiten besonders in der Türkei.

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<sup>1</sup> Weiker, Walter F.; Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish polity: A History of the Jews of Turkey, Maryland/London, 1992, p. 333.

period mainly discuss these aspects. Some other aspects (e.g. Jewish religion, arts, literature) which I have not chosen are not reported in detail in any book or newspaper article from this period. Through this comparison the reader will be confronted with both sides. As I tried to depict both points of view (Turkish policy and Turkish Jews) by separating these two organisationally, the reader will have the chance to get a clear overview of the whole situation.

A large part of the information is taken from literature. As no book has separated the Turkish policy and the Turkish Jews part in a clear way, it will be interesting to contrast both sides. Thus a new way of analysing this topic and at some places comparison of books<sup>2</sup> will be achieved through this research. In order to consider some important European Jewish newspaper articles this research also includes primary sources. The reason for not having analysed Turkish newspapers and the Turkish Jewish press of the early Republican years was that the archives are not accessible from the Internet or from the University libraries of Switzerland. Additionally, the Ladino press of the early Republican years is also non-existent in the libraries in Turkey. The archive of the Turkish Chief Rabbinate is also closed for researchers.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Historical background

### 2.1 Jews of the Ottoman Empire

The justice system of the Ottoman Empire was inter alia based on the Muslim law Shari'ah. Under this system the Jews and the Christians were under Muslim protection *dhimma*. Provided that they acknowledged the superiority of the Muslim religion they were allowed to practise their religion. In return they had to pay the poll tax *cizye*.<sup>4</sup>

*Communal Organisation.* The religious communities enjoyed internal autonomy which was described as the Millet System in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> It meant that the Jewish communities could administer and organise their own affairs, including especially religious and social affairs.<sup>6</sup> They ran their own courts, schools, charitable institutions, hospitals and their own community government.<sup>7</sup> The religious leaders had the responsibility for their communities and had to assure that the members of the community maintained peace and paid their taxes. This meant, in fact, that the community members did not have direct contact with

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. The book of Shaw, Stanford J.: "The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic" is dedicated "to the Muslim and Jewish Turks of the republic of Turkey, in celebration of five hundred years of brotherhood and friendship 1492-1992". This dedication suggests that the Jews in the Ottoman Empire and later in the Turkish Republic lived in harmony and did not suffer from any difficulty or change. In contrast Avner Levi writes on the verso of his book "Türkiye Cumhuriyetin'de Yahudiler" how the history about the minorities in Turkey, especially the Jews, was so far only researched selectively and how only the "positive" events were conveyed. Through this "selectivity" he wants to draw attention to on how the collective memories are tried to be manipulated..

<sup>3</sup>For more information the reader is invited to refer to the following speech: Bali, Rifat N.: Situation of Jewish Studies in Turkey, Muslims & Jews Together: Seeing from Without; Seeing from Within International Symposium April 28-30, 2010 Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>4</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, pp. 21-22.

<sup>5</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Shaw, Stanford J.: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, London, 1991, p. 44.

the Ottoman Government.<sup>8</sup> As the Jews in the Ottoman Empire had different origins<sup>9</sup> there was not a single leader but “self-governing congregations”.<sup>10</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a change occurred, as the Chief Rabbinate was restored under the *Tanzimat*<sup>11</sup> reform movement in 1865.<sup>12</sup>

*Economy.* Few Jews were very rich and influential in the Ottoman Government or in trade.<sup>13</sup> Many Jews worked as artisans and craftsmen and were organised in guilds. In particular, the textile industry and the tannery were typical Jewish occupations.<sup>14</sup> But the majority of the Jews remained unskilled and thus poor. Some of them did not even have to pay the poll tax *cizye*.<sup>15</sup>

*Education.* The literacy rate among the Ottoman Jews was very high. Children from the lower social class left school at age 9 or 10. The middle class had a considerable education. Besides the Talmud Torah<sup>16</sup> they were taught by private teachers.<sup>17</sup> In 1860 the Organisation Alliance Israélite Universelle<sup>18</sup> was founded in Paris by French Jews and opened schools mainly in the Middle East. The lessons in these schools were given in French and therefore many Ottoman Jews spoke far better French than Turkish. The French language enabled the former students to trade with Europe. Private schools, especially the AIU, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed to a rise in the economic situation of the Ottoman Jewish middle class.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 Transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

*Young Turks.* During the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Turkish students in the Ottoman Empire and from abroad started to form secretly revolutionary groups. These movements (also referred as Young Turks) opposed the absolutism of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. (1876-1909) and were against any European interference in the steadily weakening Ottoman Empire. In 1908 the Young Turks were able to cause the Sultan to proclaim the second liberal constitution, since the first liberal constitution had been abolished in 1876. A subsequent counter-revolution led to a coup d'état by the Young Turks in which Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

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<sup>8</sup> Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Jews of different origins lived in the Ottoman Empire. For instance the Rumanian Jews: Had lived under Byzantine rule and spoke Greek; Arabized Jews (Karaites): Spoke Arabic and had been under the Islamic caliphates; Ashkenazi Jews: Came from Europe due to the maltreatment of the Christians and spoke Yiddish, German and French; Sephardic Jews who after the Reconquista in 1492, had fled from Spain and Portugal and spoke Ladino. Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, pp. 44-45.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II. (1808-39) many reforms in the Empire were made in order to strengthen it and to catch up with the European nations. The Tanzimat reform movement continued to grow more influential after his death until 1876, when the First Constitutional Era started. Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-149.

Güleryüz, Naim A.: Bizans'tan 20. Yüzyıla Türk Yahudileri, Istanbul, 2011, pp. 152-153.

<sup>13</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, pp. 75, 86.

<sup>16</sup> These Jewish schools (mainly primary) gave the Jewish children a basic education in Hebrew and the religious scriptures. Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 94.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> In 1913, 35% of all the Ottoman Jewish adolescents were attending the AIU schools. Guttstadt: Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust, pp. 37-39.

<sup>19</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, pp. 37-39.

was deposed.<sup>20</sup> Although in 1909 Mehmed Reshad became the new Sultan, the revolutionaries ruled the Empire with increasingly dictatorial measures. From 1913-1918 the ever-weakening and shrinking Empire was ruled by a triumvirate which consisted of Enver, Talat and Cemal Pasha. They were the leaders of the reform group Committee of Ottoman Union, secretly founded in 1889, and which then became the Committee of Union and Progress *İttihad ve Terakki*.<sup>21</sup> As the Sultan had no actual power, a sham constitutional monarchy was prevalent.<sup>22</sup> During this period the existence of associations based on ethnic backgrounds was forbidden. This prohibition was only valid for minorities. On the other hand, Turkish-nationalist associations were highly welcomed by the Young Turkish Government.<sup>23</sup>

*Nationalism.* Until the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a nationalist feeling in the Ottoman Empire was not present. The Millet System in which the communities were living independently from each other made a unified, nationalist feeling impossible. Instead, similar to events after the French Revolution, nationalist feelings arose within the communities. As some of the communities started to demand independency<sup>24</sup> the Ottomanism was introduced, with the aim of uniting the communities with each other. Ottomanism is the ideology of living peacefully together in a multinational Empire, regardless of ethnic background or religion. After the proclamation of the second liberal constitution the ideology of Ottomanism began to rise among Young Turks. Their aim was to gain the support of the minorities.<sup>25</sup> This was possible as long as the new parliament's members' majority consisted of minorities. One of the members was the Jew Moiz Kohen<sup>26</sup> (he later modified his name to Tekin Alp, to make it sound more Turkish). As a Young Turk he would eventually be one of the most significant theorists of Turkism. The support of the Jewish members continued even after the Young Turks had altered their ideology from Ottomanism to Turkish Nationalism.<sup>27</sup> This involved a revision of the Turkish language and the emergence of a national economy, literature and education.<sup>28</sup> A Turkish bourgeoisie did not exist in the Empire, as middle class Armenians, Greeks and Jews had the control alongside with the European entrepreneurs' domination over the banks, assets, insurances, ports and the very few industrial enterprises.<sup>29</sup> Turkish

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<sup>20</sup> Roberts, John M.: Das osmanische Erbe und die westlichen Länder der islamischen Welt. Die Bewegung der „Jungtürken“. In: Knaurs: illustrierte Weltgeschichte: Das Moderne Europa und die Welt Bd. 3. München, 2001, p. 385f.

<sup>21</sup> Kutluca, Mehmet: Osmanli Padişahlar Albümü, Ankara, 2006, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Roberts: Das osmanische Erbe und die westlichen Länder der islamischen Welt. Der Staatsstreich und die Reformen. In: Knaurs: Illustrierte Weltgeschichte, p. 386f.

<sup>23</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> In 1821 the War of Independence started between Greeks and the Ottoman Empire which resulted in the establishment of the Greek Kingdom in 1832. Griechenland. Griechenland zwischen Monarchie und Diktatur. In: Der Brockhaus: Geschichte, Mannheim, 2003, pp. 313f.

<sup>25</sup> Okutan, Cağatay, M.: Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları, İstanbul, 2009, pp. 42-44.

<sup>26</sup> Moiz Kohen was born in Serres in 1883. He was educated as a rabbi from the Alliance school and in Turkish law both in Salonika. As he was politically active, he was a Kemalist and a strong Turkish nationalist. Throughout his career he wrote seven books and over 150 articles in French, Turkish, German and Ladino. His most known book is "Kemalism" where he sought to define the ideology of Mustafa Kemal. Kohen's ideal was the western model which he sought to apply to the Turkish Republic. He appealed to the Jews to assimilate themselves to Turkish culture and to adopt the Turkish language. Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and The Jewish Polity, pp. 247-248.

<sup>27</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, pp. 53-54.

<sup>28</sup> Okutan: Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları, p. 50.

<sup>29</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, p. 58.

became the official language. Political and literary magazines along with newspapers started to be published at this time. This contributed to an awakening of a Turkish nationalist feeling.<sup>30</sup>

*First World War.* During the First World War the power of the Millet leaders was lessened by the governing Union and Progress. This measure of secularisation and modernisation anticipated the reforms established by the Turkish Republic after 1923. The Jewish community was on the side of the Government while the Christian minority stayed neutral, which made them appear as if they were allied with the enemy. As many Christians left the Empire, the Jews did not have a significant competitor anymore. The Ottoman Empire entered the war on 11 November 1914 in alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Zionist lobby, especially in Germany, developed a plan with the German Foreign Minister Zimmermann to establish a Jewish state in Palestine under the influence of Germany. The Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum and most Ottoman Jews opposed this plan because they did not want to lose their position as faithful Ottoman subjects.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 1: Haim Nahum, Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire (1909-1920)

The war ended fatally for the Ottoman Empire. Twenty-five percent of its population died. In comparison to the rest of the population, few Jews died as most of them lived away from war zones and received food supplies from American Jews.<sup>32</sup> In 1915 the Russian invaders also killed the Jews together with Muslims at the eastern front and in 1917 the Greeks set fire to the Jewish quarter in Thessaloniki.<sup>33</sup> The Ottoman Jews also served in the military during the war. They fought in the communication zone.<sup>34</sup>

*The Turkish War for Independence.* The First World War ended for the Ottoman Empire when it signed its capitulation in the Treaty of Sèvres on 30 October 1918. This was the beginning of the Turkish War for Independence as the Entente started occupying the Empire by dividing it up. Its territories shrank to as little as half of the present Turkish territory. The Entente enforced their imperialistic politics by imposing the establishment of a state or an autonomous region for the minorities.<sup>35</sup>

Whereas most members of the minority groups (Greeks, Armenians and Jews are meant by minorities) supported the invaders, the Jews stayed loyal and shared the same fate with the Muslims throughout the war. Many of them had to flee to Istanbul, were killed and many children became orphans.

<sup>30</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, pp. 229-237.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>33</sup> Yıldız, Ahmet: „Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene“ Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938), İstanbul, 2001, p. 265.

<sup>34</sup> Okutan: Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları, p. 132.

<sup>35</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, pp. 63-64.

During this war the non-Muslim Ottomans were active in worker battalions. But some Jews fought actively as volunteers in the War for Independence.<sup>36</sup> Much of south-eastern Anatolia was occupied by the Greek army, until Mustafa Kemal commanding the Turkish national army regained these territories in 1922.<sup>37</sup> Due to internal problems, Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum gave notice but still continued to stay in contact with Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nationalists. The victory of the Turkish troops under Mustafa Kemal was sealed at the Conference in Lausanne on 24 July 1923 where the Treaty of Lausanne was signed.<sup>38</sup> The only non-Muslim consultant on the Turkish side was the former Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum.<sup>39</sup>

During a speech lasting six hours given in Izmir on 2 February 1923, a Jewish lawyer asked Mustafa Kemal about his thoughts on the Jews who had endured the same difficulties as the Muslims throughout the war. Mustafa Kemal's reply was briefly that all citizens, who live in Turkey, would not necessarily come from the same religion such as the Jewish citizens. Any non-Muslim citizen, who decided to live in the newly founded Turkish Republic, would be guaranteed that no harm would come to them.<sup>40</sup> This shows that Mustafa Kemal highly welcomed all non-Muslims of the Turkish Republic.

*Proclamation of the Turkish Republic.* After the Sultanate was abolished in November 1922, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed the following year, on 29 October 1923. Mustafa Kemal<sup>41</sup> became the first president. The people's party *Halk Fırkası* was founded whose members consisted of many former members of the Committee of Union and Progress. The Kemalist ideology was very similar to the politics of the Committee of Union and Progress. The central elements were modernism, civilisation and nationalism. Mustafa Kemal's aim was to establish a modern nation state and to introduce western civilisation. The Muslim law was, therefore, abolished and the European laws were adopted. With regard to the economy, the Kemalist politicians sought an emergence of a Turkish bourgeoisie, which was earlier non-existent. As a step towards modernisation, compulsory education was introduced and women were encouraged to obtain a good education and to participate in politics even earlier than in many European countries. Generally, one could say that Turkish politicians sought to make its citizens truly Turkish in every aspect of their lives. The intentions and consequences on the Jews will be discussed in this article.<sup>42</sup> The anticipation of the Jews for the newly established Turkish Republic can be summarised by David Fresco, the editor of the Jewish journal *El Tiempo* in the issue of 27 October 1922: "All our hopes are for the advancement of our hallowed and beloved fatherland. (...) We have to take part in these advancements of this new born era and to fulfil our duties as we are the children of this fatherland."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Guttstadt: *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>37</sup> Shaw: *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>38</sup> Levi: *Avner: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, Istanbul, 1998, pp. 18-19.

<sup>39</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>40</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup> From 1934 onwards he got the name Atatürk (father of the Turks). In that year, the family names were adopted. Guttstadt: *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Guttstadt: *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>43</sup> Translated by Reyhan Zetler from the book Guttstadt: *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 79.

### 3. The Turkish policy between 1923 and 1933 and its effect on the Turkish Jews

#### 3.1 Protection of Minorities in the Treaty of Lausanne

##### 3.1.1 Turkish policy on Protection of Minorities in the Treaty of Lausanne

The legal status of the minorities was laid down in the Treaty of Lausanne. The non-Muslim minorities in this Treaty were understood as the Armenian, Greek and the Jewish citizens in Turkey. The Articles 37-45 provided them with special privileges, foreign protection and assured them of living in a very similar way as in the Millet System.<sup>44</sup> Article 39 of the Treaty gave the non-Muslim minorities the same political and civil rights as Muslims, equality before law and the right to speak their own language anywhere. Article 40 gave legal equality to them and the right to establish, manage and control their own charitable, religious, social and educational institutions. Article 41 affirmed that the Turkish Government was obliged to provide adequate facilities to ensure an elementary education for citizens in the language of their choice. Nevertheless, teaching Turkish would be compulsory. Article 42 stated that the minorities could settle their family concerns and personal status (e.g. marriage, divorce and legacy) within their own communities and according to their customs. The Turkish Government would ensure full protection to non-Muslim religious and charitable institutions. Article 43 expressed that the minorities would not be required to act against their religious belief. However, the minorities were not exempted from keeping public order. Article 44 ensured that these rights given to the minorities were guaranteed by the League of Nations. Any modifications without the consent of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations were not allowed.<sup>45</sup>

Being a nation which sought a secular and independent state it was impossible for Turkey to have citizens who had a separate, non-secular legal system (Article 42) at the same time. Furthermore, Article 88 of the Constitution of the Turkish Republic already granted every citizen equal rights regardless of their religion. "All the Turkish citizens are called 'Turks' whatever their religions or races are."<sup>46</sup> During an interview with the New York Herald newspaper on 4 May 1924, Mustafa Kemal expressed his opinion by saying that along with the Caliphate, the authority of the Patriarchate of the Armenian and Greek churches and the rabbinates over the communities had to be removed.<sup>47</sup> The intention of Mustafa Kemal hereby was to distinguish state and religion. The Turkish Government wanted equal treatment for Muslim and non-Muslim citizens concerning this matter. This idea still exists in Turkey as the patriarchates and Chief Rabbinate are only responsible for religious matters.

The present situation in the 1920s made the politicians and the public opinion unsure whether these non-Muslim minorities could ever integrate into Turkish society.<sup>48</sup> Another problem was the history of the

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<sup>44</sup> Shaw: *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, p. 245.

<sup>45</sup> Protection of minorities, Treaty of Lausanne, Appendix pp. 52-54.

<sup>46</sup> Translated by Reyhan Zetler from Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, p. 89.

<sup>47</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Shaw: *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, p. 245.

end of the Ottoman Empire and the capitulations<sup>49</sup> it had brought with it, which still existed in the minds of Turkish citizens and the Turkish Government. Therefore, the rights given to non-Muslim minorities in the Treaty were seen as a threat for a possible capitulation. In addition, the right of intervention of the League of Nations reminded many influential Turkish intellectuals and the newly established Government of the War for Independence which had taken place not long ago and where, amongst others, many Armenians and Greeks had supported the invaders.<sup>50</sup> But in fact, no intervention from the League of Nations ever took place. Bali points out that the minority rights of the Treaty was more an act of the western diplomats to have a clear conscience concerning the minorities in Turkey. Additionally, he supposes that the Turkish delegation at the conference accepted the minority rights because they did not want to create any additional problems and prolongations. De jure, the minorities had obtained their rights, but de facto the bureaucracy and official posts of Turkey stayed an impediment in the achievement of these rights. The Turkish press eventually would play an important role in the acceptance of this situation by the affected minorities.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.1.2 The effect on Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on the Protection of Minorities in the Treaty of Lausanne**

On 15 September 1925 the Jewish community informed the Ministry of Justice of its renunciation of Article 42 from the Treaty of Lausanne. The announcement of the renouncement was made the following year on 1 August 1926 by acting Chief Rabbi Haim Bejerano.<sup>52</sup> Any responsibility of the Chief Rabbinate over the Jewish institutions ended. Every Jewish school, orphanage, home for the aged, hospital and even synagogue was completely independent. No organisation was left which could enable any cooperation and coordination between these institutions. No regulation concerning the Chief Rabbinate and the community was made from the Government's side. Consequently, the Jewish community was left divided, scattered and without any administrator.<sup>53</sup> Through these new regulations the Chief Rabbinate became an increasingly weakened institution and subsequently had a financial crisis. The Istanbul director of finance declared that the Or Ahayim hospital in Istanbul, the orphanage in Ortaköy (Istanbul) and the synagogues were to be considered commercial institutions. As a result, these institutions had to pay taxes as they received donations and inheritances. The Chief Rabbinate opposed this decision but it could not make any changes. In 1925

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<sup>49</sup> "Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire were contracts between the Ottoman Empire and European powers, particularly France. Turkish capitulations, or *ahdnames*, were generally bilateral acts whereby definite arrangements were entered into by each contracting party towards the other, not mere concessions. The Turkish Capitulations were grants made by successive Sultans to Christian nations, conferring rights and privileges in favour of their subjects resident or trading in the Ottoman dominions, following the policy towards European states of the Byzantine Empire.

According to these capitulations traders entering the Ottoman Empire were exempt from local prosecution, local taxation, local conscription, and the searching of their domicile."

Wikipedia: Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire

URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitulations\\_of\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitulations_of_the_Ottoman_Empire) (Status: 08.02.14).

<sup>50</sup> S.(enator), W.(erner): Die neue Türkei und die Juden. In: Juedische Rundschau, issue 11, 11 May 1926, p. 273.

<sup>51</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yillarında Türkiye Yahudileri, pp. 99-100.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 563.

<sup>53</sup> Levi: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler, p. 73.



the Chief Rabbinate had to pay 5,000 liras (2,400 dollars) and the Or Ahayim hospital 32,000 liras (15,500 dollars). The Chief Rabbinate could not pay the taxes and was therefore sequestered.

There were several reasons for the shortage of money that the Chief Rabbinate had. The main reason was the renunciation of Article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which caused the Chief Rabbinate to lose its power over the other Jewish institutions.<sup>54</sup> One consequence was that the Chief Rabbinate no longer had the authority to control the kosher meat and other food and mark it with a kosher seal. Thus, the butchers did not pay or only paid a very small amount of money. Another shortage came through the non-approval of the documents the Chief Rabbinate signed by officials. Besides not being able to pay taxes, the Chief Rabbinate could no longer support other institutions financially and did not even have the means to pay the salaries of the employees at the Chief Rabbinate properly.<sup>55</sup> After sequestration, all belongings and the library of the Chief Rabbinate were sold. A great part of it was bought by Jews and was returned back to the Chief Rabbinate.<sup>56</sup> Besides these negative consequences derived from the renunciation of Article 42 of the Treaty, there were some positive effects. Some influential Jewish intellectuals highly welcomed the renunciation. One of those Jewish intellectuals was Avram Galante<sup>57</sup>, who was one of the main authors of the statement renouncing Article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne: “(...). If it is correct that by virtue of Article 42 of the Lausanne Treaty some matters concerning customs and usages are to be defined by a commission, it is noteworthy at the time of the signature of this Treaty our national Government, taking into consideration the laws of family and personal status which have as their main sources Muslim religious principles, and which are not applicable to non-Muslim minorities, agreed to establish special arrangements for each of these minorities. In the meantime, as a result of the complete separation of religion from things of this world, and seeing that all the laws, without exception, are elaborated and implemented without regard to religious considerations and in conformity with the requirements of the country and of the progress of contemporary law, it is no longer necessary to develop arrangements related to Jewish family law, on the contrary the development of such special provisions would mean that the Jews are deprived of being able to have personal status based on secular principles. (...) seeing that the political and general order of the Turkish Republic is completely based on the separation of religion from things of this world, the Jews, who consider themselves at all times to be true children of this fatherland, cannot conceive of a situation of incompatibility concerning the application against them of separate arrangements which are in contradiction to this principle and to the duties of patriotism. (...). As a consequence (...), we, as Jewish Turks, express the view that we will benefit from secular laws and arrangements as well as from all other civil laws which the

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<sup>54</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudiler*, p. 101.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>56</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudiler*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>57</sup> Avram Galante (in some sources he is referred to as Galanti or Galanté) was born in Bodrum in 1873. His family was of Sephardic ancestry. His career began as an educator in French, Turkish and Hebrew. After having stopped teaching, he began a career as a journalist and writer as he travelled to many Jewish communities in Turkey. In 1914 he came to Istanbul to teach language and ancient history at the University of Istanbul and became professor in 1928. During his career at the University he continued on writing until his death in 1961. From 1943-1946 he served as a deputy from Niğde in the Grand National Assembly. His political writings were based on the good and mutual relationship between Turkish Jews and Muslim Turks. Some community members complained about Galante for having a too rosy picture of this relationship. Weiker: *Ottomans, Turks and The Jewish Polity*, pp. 248-249.

republican Government intends to promulgate in reference to personal status and to family laws, and we present to the Government the feelings of our unwavering gratitude.”<sup>58</sup>

It seems likely that the minorities<sup>59</sup> appeared to renounce Article 42 of their own free will but in fact, the Turkish press and the political authorities imposed pressure on them. The press had a suitable chance to impose pressure on the Jewish community in 1925 as the 90,000 Sephardic Jews and the 10,000 Ashkenazi Jews were split due to the Ashkenazim envying the Sephardim as they led the community. For this reason, unity within the community did not exist. The political authorities benefited from this situation and ensured the spread of news about the renunciation in the press. The community could not afford to deny this news. In the following weeks, the press praised the Jewish community for their alleged renunciation of Article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne. Necmeddin Sadik, a journalist, announced his congratulations about the decision of the Jewish community in the editorial of the newspaper *Aksam*. He wrote that the privileges given to the minorities through the Treaty of Lausanne would always cause an atmosphere of distrust. In his opinion, people living in Turkey, no matter what religion or race, have to think, speak and live as Turkish.<sup>60</sup> Levi points out that the first minority group to renounce Article 42 would gain the most prestige. He also supposes that the privileges given to the minorities through the Treaty were not built on strong grounds as the right to interfere could only be done by the League of Nations. He also emphasises that the League of Nations was in reality not so powerful<sup>61</sup>. This meant that the minorities did not have as strong a backer as they had probably wanted. Nevertheless, they were being criticised by the Turkish press for having special privileges through the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>62</sup>

For instance, such an incident occurred in October 1925. The Turkish press criticised the Jewish community<sup>63</sup> for having sent a message of loyalty to the Spanish Government on the occasion of the celebrations of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506). Thereupon acting Chief Rabbi Haim Bejerano appealed to the governor of Istanbul complaining about the press spreading fake news.<sup>64</sup> The political authorities promised to investigate this accusation but in fact nothing came out of it. Whoever made this claim, it is still unclear whether it was right or wrong. The attacks by the press saddened the Jewish community. Therefore, they were disappointed about the fact that the Government did not interfere but stood silent. In addition to the attacks by the press, a Synagogue in Istanbul was attacked, in which the shrine where the Torah had been kept, was smashed and the Torah inside demolished. These incidents increased the pressure on the Jews to renounce Article 42.<sup>65</sup> Right after the accusations of the Jews' above message had ceased, the

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<sup>58</sup> Official Turkish Jewish Community Renunciation of special privileges provided by the Treaty of Lausanne, Article 42, 15 September 1925 in: *Ibid.*, pp. 242-244.

<sup>59</sup> After the Jews' renunciation of Article 42, the Armenians and the Greeks followed suit shortly after. Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 65.

<sup>60</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>61</sup> Wilson was in favour of the protection of the minorities in Turkey. Thus he was a strong supporter of the minorities' right in the Treaty of Lausanne. Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, p. 68.

<sup>62</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, p. 68.

<sup>63</sup> The accusation was that 300 Sephardim had sent this message. Turkish Press starts agitation against Sephardic Jews. In: *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 23 February 1926.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 81.

Turkish-Jewish Friendship Society was founded by some Jewish and Turkish intellectuals. The main goal of this society was to spread the Turkish language amongst Jews.<sup>66</sup> Amongst this society 150,000 liras (80,000 dollars at that time) was collected to donate the money to the Turkish air force *Türk Hava Kuvvetleri*.<sup>67</sup>

During the events discussed in this chapter, the daily life of an individual Turkish Jew was not directly affected. But as a community they were continuously under pressure. Levi points out that the more the pressure on the Turkish Jews increased the more they submitted themselves and tried to prove their loyalty.<sup>68</sup> We do not know if every Jewish citizen was willing to renounce Article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne. But what stands for sure is that the renunciation was a highly important step towards an assimilation of Jewish citizens to Turkish society.

## 3.2 Education

### 3.2.1 Turkish policy on education

A crucial project of the young Turkish Republic was to reform education. By wishing to create a single nation state, the education system had to fit this ideal. Therefore, the main goals were to educate the individuals to acquire nationalist feelings, to serve their fatherland and to acquire the national language and history.<sup>69</sup> In order to implement the secularly-based project, the ideal way was to manage all schools through one administrator. For this reason, education was unified and placed under the control of the Ministry of Education. The law enacting this change, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, was decided on 9 March 1924 by the Grand National Assembly.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, it was forbidden to teach any religious and ethnic subjects, to make any kind of religious propaganda and to have any religious symbols and signs in schools.<sup>71</sup> In accordance with circular no. 3965 of 26 September 1925 it was forbidden to use any expression against Turkish, the Turkish Republic or against Turkish history in minority schools. Furthermore, in another circular of the year 1926 the teachers teaching Turkish, Turkish history and Turkish geography had to be appointed by the Ministry of Education. Another regulation from the ministry was made in 1927. From then on, the mother tongue of all teachers teaching in the minority schools had to be Turkish and they were obliged to undergo an examination testing their Turkish.<sup>72</sup> In the minority schools, the ministry decided to have five Turkish lessons per week. The teachers for this subject had to be Turkish and to be appointed by the ministry itself. The teachers' salaries working at the minority schools and who were appointed by the

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<sup>66</sup> This aspect is discussed in the Language part (4.3).

<sup>67</sup> Guttstadt: *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 100.

<sup>68</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, p. 74.

<sup>69</sup> By teaching the Turkish history the Ottoman history was almost neglected but the period before the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turkish period was the curriculum in schools. Okutan, *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, p. 165.

<sup>70</sup> Üstel, Füsün: "Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde-II.Meşrutîye'ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi, İstanbul, 2004, pp. 127-128.

<sup>71</sup> Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, p. 167.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

ministry were set by the ministry and had to be paid by the schools. Additionally, the language of instruction in the minority schools was permitted to be the respective mother tongue of the minorities.<sup>73</sup>

From 1926 onwards, the Ministry of Education started to inspect the minority schools. After each investigation they would be decided whether the school would be closed or not. It was insisted that pupils attending the Jewish schools comprehend Turkishness and acquire a very good level of Turkish. That is why it was emphasised that the teachers teaching Turkish, history and geography were Turks. It was decided that pupils having an insufficient grade in Turkish had to repeat the class. The schools which neglected the Turkish lessons on purpose were to be closed.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.2.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on education

Before the educational reforms took place, Turkish lessons given in the Jewish schools were very few and the main language taught was French and some Hebrew. The Jewish schools were either the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools or schools which stood in close relation to the Alliance. For the Jewish schools, these new regulations had some important consequences. The salary of the teachers, who were appointed by the ministry, was three times higher than the salaries of the other teachers working at the Jewish schools. Consequently, the Jewish schools had problems paying the salaries. The only income these schools had were the payments by the Jewish community. But as the Jews paid their taxes like every other Turkish citizen to the Turkish Government, the school tax was in fact already paid. In that case, salaries should have been paid by the Government, which was not the case.<sup>75</sup>

In 1924, a deputy of the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools in Turkey reported the new situation to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. According to the report, the new measures taken by the Government had caused several difficulties in the Alliance schools. The teachers had to be of Turkish nationality and the teachers teaching Turkish lessons had to be Turkish Muslims, which excluded the Jews and the Christians. As a



Figure 2: „Atatürk“ Jewish school in Ankara, 1931

consequence, non-Turkish and even some non-Muslim Turkish teachers were dismissed from the Alliance schools. In addition, the teachers appointed by the Government and their fixed salaries are listed in the

<sup>73</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, pp. 38, 49.

<sup>74</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 191.

<sup>75</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, p. 38.

report. At the very end of the statement the possible future existence of the Alliance schools in Turkey is questioned due to the increase of their expense.<sup>76</sup>

With regard to Article 41 of the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish Government was obliged to support the minority schools financially.<sup>77</sup> However, the Government disregarded this aspect.<sup>78</sup> In 1924, all Alliance schools had to break off their relations with the Alliance Israélite Universelle Organisation in Paris and were from then on common schools under the authority of the Turkish Ministry of Education.

Benbassa points out that the motivation for this regulation was the ultra-nationalism in Turkey.<sup>79</sup> From then on, the Alliance schools changed their names to “Jewish schools”.

The deputy of the Ministry of Education, Hilmi Bey, made a statement concerning the further procedure of the minority schools. This statement was published in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency saying: "Our schools are open to all sections of the community, non-Muslims of both sexes, without discrimination. There are in Constantinople a hundred Greek schools, seventy Armenian schools and thirty Jewish schools, equal in number to the Turkish schools. Teachers in these schools, who are not duly qualified by the State, will not be allowed to exercise their profession, and schools which have not a sufficient teaching staff to carry on the work, will be closed down. The pupils who have been attending these schools will be compelled to attend the Turkish schools."<sup>80</sup>

As many French teachers were teaching in the Alliance schools in Turkey, they were dismissed and as a consequence, the schools were left with insufficient numbers of teachers. Hereupon, the acting Chief Rabbi Haim Bejerano wrote a letter to the governor of Istanbul concerning this matter. He asked for a slow implementation of the new regulations and for the non-dismissals of the non-Turkish teachers. He also complained about the high salaries of the newly appointed teachers. But all of his requests were refused. Nevertheless, a step by step and smooth implementation was observed. Levi stresses that the minority schools had lost any independence and were under the close inspection of the Ministry of Education. Additionally, he points out that the Ministry was just interested in dismissing the foreign teachers. But for him, the exchange of Turkish Jewish teachers by Turkish Muslim teachers is against the principles of the secular Turkish Government. According to Levi the term “Turkish” only comprised the Muslim citizens.<sup>81</sup> In this case the paradoxical situation and behaviour of the Turkish Government can be observed. On the one hand, the Turkish Republic had abolished the Caliphate and was a secular republic. But practically seen, not all the consequences of the reforms were neutral and secular. Bali does not mention directly the exchange of non-Muslim teachers by Muslim teachers but that all teachers were examined in their Turkish

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<sup>76</sup> The Position of the Alliance Schools in Turkey; Statement by the Alliance. In: Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 8 March 1924.

<sup>77</sup> See Treaty of Lausanne Article 41, p. 52.

<sup>78</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 187.

<sup>79</sup> Benbassa, Esther: Les Juifs de Turquie durant l'entre-deux guerres. In: Les Cahiers de la Shoah, Paris, 1994, p. 123.

<sup>80</sup> Position of the Jewish Schools in Constantinople. In: Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1 January 1924.

<sup>81</sup> Levi: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler, p. 39.

knowledge. The teachers who did not pass the exam were dismissed. Additionally, all teachers had to be appointed by the Ministry.<sup>82</sup>

As manifested in Article 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne, the minorities could use their own mother tongue. From a religious perspective, the mother tongue of the Jews was Hebrew. The Jewish schools at an elementary level taught enough Hebrew which enabled the pupils to recite the Jewish prayers.<sup>83</sup> But the mother tongue of Turkish Jews was not Hebrew. As the majority of the Turkish Jews were Sephardim their mother tongue was Ladino, a language very similar to Spanish. But Ladino was not taught in school. The language of instruction in the Alliance schools was French. Since the Turkish Government allowed teaching in the mother tongue, the only accepted language was Hebrew. But since Hebrew was not spoken amongst the Turkish Jews and appropriate teachers to teach Hebrew were not available, the Jewish schools switched over to Turkish, because the Turkish Government did not acknowledge French as the language of instruction in Jewish schools. This measure would have a crucial impact on the economic life of the Turkish Jews, as French was the dominant language in the economic field. The headmasters of the Jewish schools resorted to the Ministry of Education to change the decision. Two Jewish lawyers were sent to Ankara. But the decision could not be changed and thus the language of instruction in the Jewish schools was declared to be Turkish.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, French lessons were reduced to only a few lessons per week.<sup>85</sup> According to Bali, the protest by the Jewish schools had some effect: the deputy of the Ministry of Education, Hilmi Bey, promised to decelerate the transition to four years. A great part of the Jewish schools were closed in 1928, especially as they found themselves in a severe financial crisis. Many Jewish pupils left the Jewish schools because French was no longer being taught properly. With an education in the Turkish language the Jewish families believed that their children would not be successful in business. Only for this reason one hundred pupils out of a hundred and fifty pupils left the Haydarpaşa Jewish school in Istanbul. In other Jewish schools the situation was similar. Therefore, those pupils started attending schools where they could get an education in a foreign language which were established by Christian missionaries. Besides the language problem, it was prohibited to have any religious education and history in schools. Therefore, the religious education had started in some places to be given in synagogues.<sup>86</sup>

During this process the Jewish schools were under close inspection by the Ministry and the press. The Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* investigated the education given in these schools. The Jewish schools had lost any independence and nothing was taught about the Jewish culture anymore. The language of instruction was Turkish and a great part of the education was taught by Turkish Muslim teachers. Even though the Jewish community had not renounced Article 40 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which granted them the right to establish and run their schools at their own expense and to teach their language and religion, these rights were practically repealed. Only the pupils and the fact that the Jewish community paid for the

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<sup>82</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 191.

<sup>83</sup> Weiker: *Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity*, p. 297.

<sup>84</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>85</sup> Benbassa: *Les Juifs de Turquie durant l'entre-deux guerres*, p. 124.

<sup>86</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 189-194.

Jewish schools were left Jewish. Everything else was turkified. The students graduating now from the Jewish schools subordinate to the Turkish Ministry of Education obtained an education very similar to that of Muslim citizens. But they encountered difficulties in finding a job because the Muslim citizens were preferred to non-Muslim citizens.

### 3.3 Language

#### 3.3.1 Turkish policy on language

When the Millet System during the Ottoman Empire was in order, the community members were not in direct contact with the Ottoman Government. Through this system, the members of the communities were not obliged to speak Turkish and in return the Government did not require the knowledge of Turkish for every non-Muslim. Since Turkish nationalism arose at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the national language (Turkish) was becoming paramount. Having a command of the national language was equivalent to identity. Consequently, the wish to have a unified state meant having an official language which every citizen would be fluent in, or, ideally have as her/his mother tongue. Therefore, the Turkish language was revised. The words which derived from other languages such as Persian and Arabic were changed to pure Turkish words. The adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928 was also a part of the revision.<sup>87</sup> During a speech held in Adana in 1931 Mustafa Kemal mentioned the importance of the Turkish language in order to be considered as a Turk. “One of the most obvious, precious qualities of a nation is language. A person who says he belongs to the Turkish nation should in the first place and under all circumstances speak Turkish. It is not possible to believe a person’s claims that he belongs to the Turkish nation and to Turkish culture, if he does not speak Turkish.”<sup>88</sup> Mustafa Kemal believed in the unity of a state by speaking the same language which was Turkish.

As a matter of fact, Turkish began to be the common feature of Turkishness of all Turkish citizens. This could be explained so far as the previous religious features such as the Caliphate (1924), the religious orders and schools (1925) and the Islam (1928) from the constitution were all banned.<sup>89</sup> The importance of the Turkish language for Turkish citizens was stated once again by the president of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal: “Anyone who claims to be Turkish should speak Turkish.”<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the minorities needed to assimilate themselves if they wanted to be considered as “true” Turkish citizens. The other option was to be regarded as a “guest” or “half-national”.<sup>91</sup>

One major reaction came from the student association of the Faculty of Law at the University of Istanbul. At their congress on 13 January 1928, they decided to start a campaign called “Citizen, speak

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<sup>87</sup> Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, pp. 176-180.

<sup>88</sup> Bali, Rıfat N.: *The politics of Turkification during the Single Party period*. In: Kieser, Hans-Lukas (ed.): *Turkey beyond Nationalism*, London, 2006, p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> Guttstadt: *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 89.

<sup>90</sup> Translated by Reyhan from Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, p. 87.

<sup>91</sup> Yıldız: “*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*“, p. 290.

Turkish!” *Vatandaş Türkçe konuş!* After getting permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the campaign started in January 1928 and lasted till April. In all Turkey, especially in Istanbul, the aim was to get the minorities to speak Turkish in public by hanging placards on walls, public transport and by announcing the message from cars by going from one place to the next. In Istanbul the peddlers were not permitted to speak any other language than Turkish. The Turkish press put additional pressure upon the minorities to speak Turkish. One of the most known Turkish journalists, Yunus Nadi, criticised the minorities for not speaking Turkish in public. He gave Beyoğlu<sup>92</sup>, a well-known “minority” district in Istanbul as an example. His complaint was that not even one Turkish word could be heard in such districts.<sup>93</sup>

### 3.3.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on language

The Sephardic Jews spoke Ladino since they had come from Spain. The Millet System during the Ottoman Empire did not oblige the Sephardim<sup>94</sup> to speak Turkish. There was no institution where Turkish could be learned. Consequently, the only way for the Jews to learn Turkish was to learn it by picking up words here and there. As a matter of fact, they could not write Turkish, nor had knowledge of Turkish grammar and had a strong accent. In 1927, 85% of the Jews listed Ladino as their mother tongue.<sup>95</sup> According to Levi, the very bad to non-existent command of Turkish of the Jews was a consequence of the Millet System and not a mistake of the Jews.<sup>96</sup> Since the Millet System was not existent anymore in the Turkish Republic, the Jews were expected to speak Turkish fluently. As such a change is only possible over a period of some years; even decades, the Jews were confronted with some measures and actions taken to make the minorities speak Turkish. Such an action was the “Citizen, speak Turkish!” campaign. This campaign led to protests in some places. Arabic, Bosnian, Circassian, Armenian, Greek or Ladino was spoken on purpose under the placards or in some places the placards were torn down. Two Jews were sent to court for having torn down a placard.<sup>97</sup> Speaking a foreign language in public during this campaign resulted in unwelcome attention being paid.<sup>98</sup>

The Jewish intellectual and writer Avram Galante published a book<sup>99</sup> about the language question of the minorities and especially the Jews. In this book, Galante tried to find solutions for the language problem of the minorities and explanations of why some minorities spoke better Turkish than others. In his book “Histoire des Juifs de Turquie” he points out three periods (the current period followed by the transition

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<sup>92</sup> During the late Ottoman Empire embassies and missionaries were located at Pera (later the name was changed to Beyoğlu). Pera was considered to be a small copy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe (especially Paris and London). As a matter of fact, a considerable non-Muslim population was located in this district. Avcı, Halil Ersin: *Gezi Rehberi İstanbul*, İstanbul, 2010, pp. 148-149.

<sup>93</sup> Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, pp. 182, 184.

<sup>94</sup> I could not find any information about the language situation of Jews of different descendants (Ashkenazi Jews, Arabized Jews and Romaniot Jews).

<sup>95</sup> Weiker: *Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity*, p. 304.

<sup>96</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, p. 57.

<sup>97</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 136.

<sup>98</sup> Les Israélites et la langue turque. In: *Paix et Droit*, year 6, issue 6, June 1934, p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Galanti, Avram: *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş Yahut Türkçe’nin Tamimi Meselesi-Tarihi, İçtimai, Siyasi Tetkik*, İstanbul, 1928.



period and the future period), which are important for the diffusion of a language. He explains the influence of these three periods in Turkish Jewish families by stating that there exist grandparents who are not able to communicate with their grandchildren. The grandparents would only speak Ladino, ignoring all other languages. Their children, representing the transition period would have a command of Ladino and French, whilst their children could only speak French. Bearing these transition periods in mind, Galante refers to the Alliance Schools, which succeeded within 50 years to change the mother tongue of many Turkish Jews from Ladino to French. As a conclusion to this matter, he suggests that Turkish should be the language of instruction in the minority schools.<sup>100</sup>

Another supporter of the Turkification<sup>101</sup> policies and particularly the importance of Turkish was the Jewish intellectual and writer Moiz Kohen (he later turkified his name to Tekin Alp). In 1928, he published his book “Turkification” *Türkleştirme*, which he dedicated to the nationalist organisation *Türk Ocakları*. As the title of his book declares, Tekin Alp was a supporter of the Turkification policies. Consequently, he expected the Jews and all the minorities to turkify themselves so that they could merit the status of citizenship granted to them by the Constitution of 1924. In this book he appealed to the Jewish community in the form of ten commands, which resembled the Ten Commandments of Moses. These commands were formed according the Kemalist ideology:

- Turkify your names
- Speak Turkish
- In the synagogues read part of the prayers in Turkish
- Turkify your schools
- Send your children to state schools
- Interest yourself in Turkey’s affairs
- Socialise with Turks
- Eliminate the (Jewish) community spirit
- Do your particular duty in the area of the national economy
- Know your constitutional rights<sup>102</sup>

Levi believes that these ten commands did not have any effect on the Jews. He claims that the important aspect of the ten commands by Tekin Alp was its publication. Additionally, he thinks that these commands were rather published for the interest of the Turkish Muslims. After the publication, Alp issued several articles referring to his ten commands. He reminded the readers of how the Jews in other countries had adapted their names according to the country they lived in. By reading the prayers in Turkish he argued it to be closer to God and the Turkish nation. Alp did not believe in the existence of race for mankind. In this

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<sup>100</sup> Galante, Avram: *Histoire des Juifs de Turquie*, Istanbul, 1932, Volume 8, pp. 110-111.

<sup>101</sup> “The term “Turkification” means the Turkish Republic’s project to create a state of citizens enjoying equal rights, who define themselves first and foremost as Turks, their religion being a private matter.” Bali: *The politics of Turkification during the Single Party period*, p. 43.

<sup>102</sup> Bali: *The politics of Turkification during the Single Party period*, p. 44.

case the Jews should be able to start speaking Turkish and to become a united whole with the Turkish culture. He wrote also that some young Jews taught Turkish to older people of Jewish faith by running evening courses. For the adoption of the Turkish language Alp asked for patience from the Muslim-Turkish side.<sup>103</sup> The publication of the ten commands caused some reactions. The Jewish community in Ankara established a “Turkification of the Jews” association in 1928.<sup>104</sup> David Fresko, the editor of the Turkish Jewish newspaper *El Tiempo*, criticised Alp’s ten commands by writing: “It was assumed that Tekin Alp addressed uneducated people who were not aware of their rights.”<sup>105</sup> Through the publication of the ten commands Fresko also stated that the Turkish Jews would now find themselves in an unjust situation although they had a point.<sup>106</sup> Very shortly after, Tekin Alp became one of the founders of the National Culture Association *Millî Hars Birliği*. Besides Tekin Alp, other Jewish community members were the founders of this association which was established on 10 March 1928. The main goal of the National Culture Association was to spread the Turkish language. In this regard, the ten commands were printed on small pieces of paper and distributed to Jews.<sup>107</sup> Another reaction to Alps’s command “In the synagogues read part of the prayers in Turkish” came from the acting Chief Rabbi Haim Bejerano. He clarified that the Torah would only be read in Hebrew. Concerning the usage of Turkish in synagogues, Bejerano uttered that he was making an effort to spread Turkish amongst the rabbis.

The extreme Turkism of Alp was not appropriated by the Turkish Jews and the Turkish Muslims.<sup>108</sup> The Turkish Jewish newspapers *El Telegrafo* and *El Tiempo* accepted Turkish to be the mother tongue of the Jews living in Turkey. Both newspapers defended the Jewish community that they needed time to adapt themselves to Turkish. The acting Chief Rabbi Bejerano stated during an interview with the *El Tiempo* that the Jewish community would need ten to fifteen years to fully acquire the Turkish language. By stating that, Bejerano clarified that he would support this process. He added that there was a search to find a way of translating the Talmud to Turkish. Having the holy books in Turkish translation would encourage the Jews to learn Turkish even more. While the Turkish Jewish press accepted Turkish as being the mother tongue of the Turkish Jews it asked for permission to use French. *El Tiempo* claimed that Hebrew was only the religious language of the Jews, which was used in reciting religious texts. Thus, it strongly opposed the suggestion of Hebrew being the second mother tongue of the Turkish Jews. *El Telegrafo* campaigned for Ladino. It claimed that Ladino was only used in daily conversations but it was considered to be the national language amongst Jews living in the Ottoman Empire and now in the Turkish Republic.<sup>109</sup>

Following the “Citizen, speak Turkish!” campaign and particularly the speech of Mustafa Kemal held in Adana in 1931<sup>110</sup>, Jewish communities all over Turkey decided to speak Turkish, established Turkish speaker

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<sup>103</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>104</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 152.

<sup>105</sup> Translated by Reyhan Zetler from Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 153.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>109</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 156.

<sup>110</sup> For recapitulation the reader is invited to refer back to 4.3.1, where a part of Mustafa Kemal’s speech is cited.

associations *Türkçe Konuşma Birliği* or declared Turkish to be their “native language”. These associations were established in Izmir and in Milas. In June 1931, these two associations united to establish the Izmir Turkish Culture Association *Izmir Türk Kültür Birliği*. In February of the following year, the Jews living in Gallipoli also established a Turkish Speaker Association. The associations showed their effectiveness in some cities. For instance, Jews speaking Turkish in steamships and trams in Izmir were observed. Changing former Jewish names to Turkish names became widespread in Izmir.<sup>111</sup> In Bursa, the Jewish community declared Turkish to be their “native language” on 25 February 1933. In a clubhouse owned by the Bursa Jewish community signboards were hung, which had the inscription “Speak Turkish!” *Türkçe konuş!* It was prohibited to speak another language than Turkish.<sup>112</sup> Appeals in synagogues were made to speak Turkish. The Rosh Hashanah celebrations in 1933 coincided with the first anniversary of the Language General Assembly *Türk Dil Kurultayı* which was the 26<sup>th</sup> of September. The New Year’s message of the rabbinate was “Turkey is our fatherland. For this reason, Turkish must be our native language”<sup>113</sup> Almost no negative reactions from the Jewish side occurred which opposed the Turkish language movement.<sup>114</sup> In spite of the effort of the Jews to speak Turkish and the pressure of the press the realisation did not and could not occur immediately.<sup>115</sup> It is obvious that an acquisition of a language cannot be realised within a few years. Such a process needs several decades and it can only be expected that the following generations fully accepted Turkish as their mother tongue and spoke it fluently and without accent.

In my opinion, the campaigns to promote the Turkish language, such as the “Citizen, speak Turkish!” campaign did not motivate the minorities to speak Turkish. They must have rather felt intimidated and preferred to speak as little as possible in public. Especially the Jewish citizens were made fun of because of their bad accent in newspapers, magazines or even sometimes in plays, where Jews were stereo typified. Speaking a language of a state which chased them away in 1492 made the Jews highly vulnerable compared to the Armenian and Greek citizens. Amongst the public opinion supported by the press, it awakened the impression of Jews being ungrateful that they could find shelter in the Ottoman Empire followed by the Turkish Republic.

### **3.4 Political Participation**

#### **3.4.1 Turkish policy on political participation**

The first parliament was established on 19 March 1920 in Ankara. The regulation for being chosen as a parliamentarian was from 1908, where everybody of Ottoman nationality could be elected. This regulation included the non-Muslims. However, the promulgation for the parliamentary election in 1920 declared that only Muslim citizens could be elected. As background information it is highly important to consider the on-

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<sup>111</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, pp. 157-161.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>113</sup> Translated by Reyhan Zetler from Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 180.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

going War for Independence (1918-1923) where the pro-invader behaviour of some minorities during the First World War and the following War for Independence lasted in some minds. The Jews however, stayed loyal. This could have had the consequence of Jews being exempted from the promulgation. This was not the case because mistrust against all non-Muslims was prevalent as the country was fighting to regain its independence.<sup>116</sup> According to the Constitution of 1924, non-Muslim citizens had the right to vote and to be elected. This right was given to them as Article 88 of the Constitution of the Turkish Republic granted every Turkish citizen equal rights no matter what religion and race.<sup>117</sup>

Until 1930 one single party, the Republican People's Party existed in Turkey. But in 1930 Mustafa Kemal pronounced the establishment of a second party to create a multi-party democracy. The Liberal Republican Party (LRP) *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* was founded on 12 August 1930. Fethi Okyar, the former Paris consulate and the founder of the party, presented the programme of the party. He stressed that the party's programme was suitable for every Turkish citizen regardless of their religious or cultural heritage. The purpose of this declaration was to address non-Muslim residents directly and to expect support from them. Shortly after this statement the party's writer announced that they awaited the non-Muslims to run for the mayoral elections. The result of the poll showed that the new party had gained one quarter of the votes.<sup>118</sup> After the elections however, the party was disbanded on November 1930 by its founder himself because some extremist groups used the party's platform to reverse the reforms of Mustafa Kemal and opposed having a secular state. Thus a single party period existed in Turkey until in 1945 the National Development Party *Milli Kalkınma Partisi* was established.<sup>119</sup>

### **3.4.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on political participation**

Until 1930 the Jews participated in politics only by voting. However, this changed as the Liberal Republican Party was founded in 1930, where some Turkish Jews campaigned from this newly established party. Under 117 candidates from Istanbul, the lawyers Marko Naum and Avram Naum (Ibrahim Nom) campaigned. From the slate in Edirne five Jews stood. In contrast, the Republican People's Party (RPP) did not have any minority on its slate. The poll started on 6 September 1930. Between the members of both parties disputes arose in various places. For instance, a Jew named David Olajo spoke badly about the RPP in public. Somewhere else a deputy from RPP exclaimed the Liberal Republican Party to be a non-Muslim party.<sup>120</sup>

The Turkish Jews voted mainly for the LRP. During the elections the press accused the Jews of being in opposition to the RPP. This pro-LRP behaviour of most of the Jews seemed peculiar to the press. The press pointed out that the Jews were always loyal citizens to the Turkish Republic and now were showing some

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<sup>116</sup> Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, p. 148.

<sup>117</sup> Levi: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler*, p. 56.

<sup>118</sup> Bali, Rıfat N.: 1930 Yılı belediye Seçimleri ve Serbest Fırka'nın Azınlık Adayları. In: *Tarih ve Toplum*, issue 167, November 1997, p. 281.

<sup>119</sup> Okutan: *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, p. 155.

<sup>120</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, pp. 182-183.

kind of disloyalty by supporting the recently established party and not the actual Government. The disputes caused by the election irritated the Jewish community. Therefore, some notable members of the Jewish community visited the chairman Kazım Pasha of the Grand National Assembly on 16 October 1930 in the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. The committee reinforced the patriotic feelings of the Jews for Turkey and its loyalty. They explained how the young Jewish generation endeavoured to turkify themselves. The committee stressed that the disputes about the election did not represent the opinion of the Jewish community. As a reply Kazım Pasha emphasised the assurance of the Government concerning the loyalty of the Jewish citizens. According to Bali, the loyalty of the minorities to the Turkish Government was questioned even after seven years had passed since the War for Independence had ended. The word “minority” was still a reminder of the cooperation of some minorities with the Entente and thus created mistrust against almost all of them. Even though the opposition party LRP was a legal party, the minorities were reminded through the press that they did not have the “right” to vote for this party. Because this meant that the minorities did not vote for the RPP and thus not for the present Government, which in a way “confirmed” the disloyalty of those minorities in the eyes of some people. This situation led to an apology from the Jewish community which caused the meeting of Kazım Pasha and the Jewish Community representatives.<sup>121</sup> Jewish citizens voting for the Liberal Republican Party may be understood as a protest against the Turkification policies of the Government and the wish to change this situation. As the Liberal Republican Party was disbanded in 1930 no Jewish citizen was active in politics until 1935, when some of them stood for the parliamentary election. This time they campaigned independently.<sup>122</sup>

### **3.5 Military**

#### **3.5.1 Turkish policy on military**

In the procedure of becoming a nation-state the Government’s actions are very crucial. The army hereby also plays a key role in teaching the key principles of the nation-state and awaken patriotic feelings in the individuals who serve in the military. As a matter of fact, the army takes over the role of a school, which educates individuals who should not be against the state. This situation was the case in the young Turkish Republic. The educational possibilities were not fully developed and had not yet spread throughout the entire state. Thus the army took over the role of an “educator” in this sense.<sup>123</sup> This is why suspicious citizens could not be tolerated to take an important position in the army and possibly to harm the system.

#### **3.5.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on military**

Like every Turkish citizen, the minorities had to serve in the military during the first years of the Turkish Republic. But there were inequalities. They were not allowed to be active in the military academies or in the military college. They were neither allowed to become military officers, nor were they allowed to carry arms.

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<sup>121</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, pp. 184-185.

<sup>122</sup> Okutan: Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları, pp. 150-151.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, pp. 129-13.

Most commonly, the minorities served in the *Amele Taburları* (battalions consisting of soldiers who did not fight actively, but contributed by building roads etc.).<sup>124</sup> There are two main reasons why the minorities were not permitted to become officers in the army. As already mentioned above, the army took over the role of an educator seeking to form one single society. That is why the minorities were not eligible to obtain offices in the army. Secondly, once again was the mistrust against the minorities. But on the other hand, most of them were not very willing to participate in the army. One reason for that unwillingness was that the participation in the army was seen as an impediment to start working directly after university education. Therefore many non-Muslim families sent their children abroad to study and possibly to start working there.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.6 Communal organisation and activities

#### 3.6.1 Turkish policy on communal organisation and activities

The maintenance of any community in the Turkish Republic, such as the Jewish community, was no longer legally tenable. Nevertheless, the term community still continued to exist de facto. This continuity of the term was taken over from the period of the Ottoman Empire, where the communities existed under the Millet System.<sup>126</sup> The newly founded Republic sought to have a single type citizen regardless of his religion which understandably opposed having citizens with their own legal system concerning family and personal matters and other privileges. The first obstacle was the rights granted by the Lausanne Treaty to the minorities living in the Turkish Republic. For this reason, the first butt of the Government was the minorities mentioned in the Treaty. When the minorities renounced Article 42 of the Lausanne Treaty in 1926, these communities were much weakened. Mustafa Kemal described a nation which of course did not foresee the existence of any communities in the real sense as it existed in the Ottoman Empire. According to Mustafa Kemal, a nation should share the same understanding of politics, same language, same fatherland and same ethnic background.<sup>127</sup> The aspect of sharing the same religion was not mentioned as Islam ceased being the state religion in 1928. Thus no distinction was made between a non-Muslim and a Muslim citizen in the law book.<sup>128</sup>

Besides secularism, another important pillar of the Republic was nationalism. This nationalism was extended to an anti-internationalism, which prohibited any kind of activity based on ideologies such as communism, socialism and thus also Zionism for the Turkish Jews.<sup>129</sup> This prohibition was valid for every citizen and was not a prohibition against any people in particular. Additionally, any association affiliated to abroad was not allowed which can be explained as anti-internationalism.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Levi: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler, p. 56.

<sup>125</sup> Okutan: Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları, p. 135.

<sup>126</sup> Bali, Rıfat, N.: Cemaat dediğin ne ki? In: Birgün, issue 17, August 2006, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, pp. 499-500.

<sup>128</sup> Benbassa: Les Juifs de Turquie durant l'entre-deux guerres, p. 122.

<sup>129</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 242.

<sup>130</sup> Benbassa: Les Juifs de Turquie durant l'entre-deux guerres, p. 130.

### 3.2.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on communal organisation and activities

Before the War for Independence broke out a Jewish national religious corporate body existed. This *meclis-i umumi* (general council) consisted of sixty secular and twenty rabbinical members. These members were indirectly elected by their local communities. This *meclis-i umumi* elected two councils. The first one was the *meclis-i rubani* (religious council) consisting of nine members and the second one was the *meclis-i cismani* (official council) consisting of seven members. These two bodies formed the Chief Rabbinate of the Ottoman Empire lead by one Chief Rabbi. The members of the Chief Rabbinate were elected for life. During the Young Turkish period a revision of the Rabbinate was made. The members of the Chief Rabbinate were elected for ten years. Additionally, Haim Nahum, the Chief Rabbi of Istanbul since 1908, was made the Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire. Nahum had good relations with the Young Turks as he eventually became a member of the Turkish delegation to the Conference in Lausanne in 1922. During the Young Turkish Republic a reform of the Jewish constitution was foreseen. But when the war broke out this change did not take place.



Figure 3: Chief Rabbi Haim Bejerano in his office in 1926

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic the Millet System was banned. This weakened the centralised system of the Jewish community. The Ministry of Interior declared that provincial governors were responsible for their region. After Haim Nahum left office in 1919 Haim Bejerano was appointed acting Chief Rabbi officially in 1922. Especially after the Jewish community had renounced Article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne the community came under direct control of governmental laws. The Chief Rabbinate was therefore reduced to dealing only with religious matters.<sup>131</sup>

In the first official census of the Republic of Turkey from 1927, there were in total 79,481 Jews. The biggest Jewish population was in Istanbul with 47,035 followed by the Aegean region with 18,728 Jewish citizens. Most Jews in the Aegean region were living in Izmir, which was formerly the city of Smyrna. Former smaller Jewish communities during the Ottoman Empire began to shrink and an internal migration took place to bigger cities such as Istanbul and Izmir mainly due to economic reasons. This migration started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>132</sup> Besides immigrating to Palestine poorer Jews preferred to go to South America and Spain. Due to the Spanish background of the Sephardim and the command of Ladino, which was in fact very similar to Spanish, the reason for the immigration to Spanish

<sup>131</sup> S.(enator), W.(erner): Die neue Türkei und die Juden. In: Juedische Rundschau, issue 93, 27 November 1925, p. 779.

<sup>132</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, pp. 263-266.

speaking countries is understandable. Wealthier Jews preferred moreover to immigrate to France as they already had a very good command of French thanks to their education.<sup>133</sup>

With the foundation of the Turkish Republic the Turkish Jews officially ceased all relations with any Zionist organisation such as the World Zionist Organisation. Somewhat clandestinely Zionism continued existing in the Republic.<sup>134</sup> A Palestinian bureau in Istanbul has existed since 1920. This bureau continued working clandestinely and helped Jewish fellows to immigrate to Palestine. It was under the control of the Zionist executive in London. Before the Republic was founded the bureau helped especially Russian Jews who used Turkey as a transit to go to Palestine. After the Republic was founded the Russian Jews were prohibited to use Turkey as a transit country. Therefore, the bureau concentrated on the emigration of local Jews. Since the formation of any movement or group based on an ideology was prohibited, the Zionist movement was clandestine and rather specific. The prohibition made it impossible to have a nationwide Zionist education, indoctrination or propaganda. This situation gave hardly way to educate pioneers and to organise immigrations to Palestine. Benbassa mentions hereby of an existence of a Zionism without ideology and of Zionists without Zionism during the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the Turkish Republic.<sup>135</sup>

Under the Republic the communities were not allowed to impose compulsory taxes. For this reason, the Jewish community set up a system of donations which was calculated from the earnings of the family. The Jewish institutions were not under the control of the Chief Rabbinate after the renunciation of Article 42 of the Lausanne Treaty. Many Jewish schools had to close due to the Turkification policies concerning education. This led to a declining attendance at Jewish schools and a financial crisis within the community.<sup>136</sup> After the death of Rabbi Bejerano in 1931 no Chief Rabbi was elected until 1952. Shaw comments that in the following excerpt:” The integration of Turkish Jews into the Republic’s society was so successful that after Rabbi Bejerano died in 1931 no need was seen to appoint a new Chief Rabbi for two decades, since it appeared that the tasks assigned to the community easily were handled by the Chief Rabbinate’s councils and staffs under the direction of Bejerano’s last Secretary General, Samuel Altavev.”<sup>137</sup> This integration Shaw is mentioning was in fact the Turkification policies imposed on the Turkish Jews. Part of the reason for the two decades without a Chief Rabbi was that the Turkish Government suspended a decision on new regulations concerning the religious communities. And as in these two decades when Turkish Nationalism was at its height, the Jewish community preferred keeping an “unseen” and low-key profile.<sup>138</sup> The Ashkenazi Jews numbered during the 18<sup>th</sup> century about 3-3.5 per cent of the Ottoman Jewish community. In 1912 Ashkenazim Rabbi David Marcus made an agreement with Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum which granted the Ashkenazim more formal recognition. After Rabbi David Marcus died in 1944 he was not

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<sup>133</sup> S.(enator): Die neue Türkei und die Juden, p. 779.

<sup>134</sup> Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, p. 251.

<sup>135</sup> Benbassa: Les Juifs de Turquie durant l’entre-deux guerres, pp. 130-131.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., pp. 271-272.

<sup>137</sup> Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, p. 251.

<sup>138</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 276.



replaced. The Ashkenazi Jews maintain their own synagogue in Istanbul still today. In contrast to the Ashkenazi Jews who are still part of the Turkish Jewish society the Karaite Jews<sup>139</sup> do not consider themselves as being part of that society and have no relation to the Chief Rabbi.<sup>140</sup>

### **3.6 Economy and public services**

#### **3.6.1 Turkish policy on education on economy and public services**

Not many Turkish-Muslim entrepreneurs existed in Turkey in 1923. Many of them worked in the public administration, the agriculture or the army, where they had participated in wars. On the other hand, the non-Muslims worked in industry and trade. According to a statistics of the year 1915, only 15% of the capital belonged to Turkish-Muslims whilst 50% of the capital belonged to Greeks.<sup>141</sup> Since the non-Muslims had a very good command of foreign languages they could trade more easily with European countries and therefore were dominant in the economy. Whilst the Turkish-Muslims participated in wars during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the non-Muslims could unhindered continue their craft and trade with Europe. This situation also continued in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: During the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the War for Independence, a lot more Turkish-Muslims than non-Muslims participated in these wars and therefore could not develop any prosperous industry or trade. In this sense, most non-Muslims could unimpeded continue to grow their industry and trade until 1922. With the end of the War for Independence young Muslim-Turkish citizens wanted to work in industry and trade but realised that all these positions already were occupied by non-Muslim citizens. Parallel to that, there was a wish to create a national bourgeoisie and to nationalise the economy. In this sense, the end of the War for Independence created a “War for Economic Independence”.<sup>142</sup> In this “War for Economic Independence” the non-Muslims were seen as collaborators with western forces and therefore had to be “defeated”.<sup>143</sup> An economic congress in Izmir took place in 1923.<sup>144</sup> At this congress, where around 1000 Muslim-Turkish delegates were invited, Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt) declared the Turkification of the economy as the most important aim. Non-Muslim citizens were not invited to the congress.<sup>145</sup> As the country belonged now to Turks<sup>146</sup> they also had to be their own masters in trade and industry of this country. Therefore, foreign companies established in Turkey were liquidated or the language spoken within these companies was to be Turkish and Muslim-Turkish citizens had to be appointed.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> For more information the reader is invited to see footnote 11.

<sup>140</sup> Weiker: *Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity*, p. 279.

<sup>141</sup> Bali: *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri*, p. 197.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>144</sup> This congress took place eight months before the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Mahmut Esat would eventually become the first Turkish Minister for Economic Affairs. Guttstadt: *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 82.

<sup>145</sup> Guttstadt: *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, p. 82.

<sup>146</sup> The term “Turks” only described Muslim-Turkish citizens.

<sup>147</sup> Yıldız: “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene“, p. 265.

Such changes also occurred in public services. With the Tanzimat reforms in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century non-Muslim citizens were allowed to work in public services in the Ottoman Empire. In 1897, for instance, 45% of all employees in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were non-Muslims. But with the establishment of the Turkish Republic the appointment of new non-Muslim citizens for public services stopped and non-Muslim employees were dismissed and exchanged with Muslim-Turkish citizens. A first regulation was made on 31 March 1926 since in the law book of officialdom a new law (no. 778) was enacted saying that employees in public services had to be Muslim-Turkish citizens.

### **3.7.2 The effect on the Turkish Jews concerning the Turkish policy on economy and public services**

Due to the Greek-Turkish population exchange (1923-1939) and the emigration of Armenians and Greeks, there was a lack of skilled workers in Turkey in the 1920s. The Turkish-Muslims did not yet have the experience and the skills to work in these positions. Therefore, the Jews found the perfect occasion to occupy these positions especially in commerce. As non-Muslim employees in foreign companies were exchanged by Muslim citizens, a group of Jewish, Armenian and Greek citizens who were dismissed due to this reason wrote a telegram to the League of Nations. Their telegram said that the dismissals were against Articles 37 und 43 of the Treaty of Lausanne which foresaw equality for Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. But the Turkish Government did not enact any law against these articles. This regulation was passed through official directive. For this reason, the League of Nations did not see the need to act.<sup>148</sup> The Turkish Jewish press responded sharply to these events and claimed that this was discrimination against their religion. The Jewish journalist David Fresco stated that the Jews did not want to believe in this discrimination.<sup>149</sup> The dismissals occurred in shipping companies, railway and port operations, telephone companies, commercial enterprises, hotels and restaurants.

Interviews made with Turkish Jews living in France, Italy and Belgium showed that the previous generations of those Jewish families emigrated because they were dismissed from public services.<sup>150</sup> Other emigrations occurred as well. For instance, ten thousand Jews living in Izmir immigrated to Marseille or Genoa. From there, some of them immigrated to Spanish speaking countries in Latin America.<sup>151</sup> In 1924, Vitali Kamhi, a well-known Jewish trader, committed suicide due to financial problems.<sup>152</sup>

According to Article 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne “All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law. Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries.”<sup>153</sup> The

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<sup>148</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 208.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>150</sup> Guttstadt: Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust, p. 82.

<sup>151</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 230.

<sup>152</sup> Levi: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler, p. 64.

<sup>153</sup> See Treaty of Lausanne in the appendix pp. 52-54.

Turkish Government neglected Article 39 of the Lausanne Treaty. Instead, it gave preference to its Muslim-Turkish citizens and supported them during wartimes. Their backlog due to wars had somehow to be caught up. It is clear that in this stage the Government had to do something to change this situation. Mostly Armenian and Greek citizens had to give way to Muslim-Turkish citizens. Hereby, the non-Muslim citizens felt unfairly treated. But in comparison, their number was much smaller than that of the Muslim-Turkish citizens who had also suffered especially during wartimes.

Weiker explains that the 1930s was a more difficult period due to nationalism, the rise of the Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs and the recovery of the remaining Armenians and Greeks and the world depression, which weakened the Turkish economy. Weiker indicates that this economic depression led to statism<sup>154</sup> which did not welcome the private sectors and shifted almost the entire economy to public sector.<sup>155</sup> In total contrast to Weiker, Levi points out that compared to the 1920s, the 1930s were a better time for the Turkish Jews. Especially the economy in Turkey advanced. He adds that the worldwide economic crisis did not weaken the Turkish economy because the policy of state control over the economy sought for advancement. Additionally, he writes that from 1927 onwards the emigrations of Turkish Jews almost stopped. In fact, immigration to Turkey occurred from 1933 onwards due to the Hitler regime in Europe.<sup>156</sup>

In my opinion, the Turkish economy enormously advanced in the 1920s. Hereby, the economic policy of the Government led the way. But as the Turkish economy was not independent from abroad, it somehow must have been affected by the worldwide economic crisis. A recording made in 1935 shows the occupations of Jewish, Armenian, Greek and Muslim-Turkish citizens. Table 1 shows clearly that Jews were mostly active in commerce in comparison to Armenians and Greeks. In addition, it illustrates that Turks were mostly working in other fields such as in administration or agriculture. If there had been a register in the 1920s the percentage of Turks working in trade and industry and crafts certainly would have been even less.

*Table 1: Occupations in 1935 by ethnic groups (Males only)*

	Industry and Crafts	Commerce	Other Fields	Unknown/ Unemployed	Total
Jews	20.5%	24.0%	9.6%	45.9%	35,674
Armenians	33.2%	16.5%	14.1%	36.1%	19,866
Greeks	28.4%	19.2%	17.8%	34.5%	36,480
Turks	19.2%	8.9%	31.5%	40.4%	1,284,936

<sup>154</sup> Statism is a belief that the government should control the economic or/and the social policy of a country. Wikipedia: Statism.

URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statism> (Status: 07.03.13).

<sup>155</sup> Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 282.

<sup>156</sup> Levi: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler, pp. 93-94.

To a certain extent, the economic dominance of minorities (especially Jews) was reflected in caricatures. In addition to that, the Jewish citizens were stereo typified as being a coward, speaking Turkish with a foreign accent and being very avaricious.<sup>157</sup>



Figure 4: *Akbaba*, 14.06.1933, page 3

-Rebeka, who is standing next to me in my last minutes?

-Your sons Yasef, Mişon, Refael and Jak are all present!

-Oh dastards... Before my death they left the shop without attendance, ha!

Two caricature magazines *Akbaba* and *Karikatür* were well known for their Jewish caricatures. Between the 1930s and the 1940s the Jewish caricatures gained popularity.<sup>158</sup> Figure 4 represents a caricature from the *Akbaba* magazine showing an old Jewish man in his deathbed surrounded by his wife and his sons. The old man complains that his sons have left their shop without attendance before his death. This caricature shows that the Jews were illustrated as avaricious people.

As a conclusion, the Turkish policies in the domain of the economy were not that easy for Jewish citizens. Some of them lost their jobs, migrated to bigger Turkish cities or even emigrated. It is important to state that it was not the intention of the Turkish Government to act specifically against its Jewish citizens. But since the Jewish citizens made up a very small percentage of the population of Turkey, the Government acted in favour of the majority of its Muslim citizens. Without this sharp regulation, the Muslim citizens could hardly have found themselves holding important positions in economy. For a long time they would have found themselves dominated in the economy by a minority in the country. Seeing the situation from this point of view, the policies of the Government are understandable. But this process could have been implemented in a much slower and smoother way. In this matter, the Turkish-Muslim citizens acted impatiently. They wanted to dominate all economic fields as fast as possible.

#### 4 Conclusion

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic there was a wish to create one single nation (Turkish: *Ulus*) with single type citizens sharing the same culture and language. Being accredited least as “real” Turkish citizens and therefore needing to be “turkified”, the main target of this policy represented the non-Muslim citizens. In theory, all citizens regardless of religion or ethnical background enjoyed the same rights

<sup>157</sup> Bayraktar, Hatice: *Salamon und Rabeka: Judenstereotype in Karikaturen der türkischen Zeitschriften Akbaba Karikatür und Milli Inkilap 1933-1945*, Berlin, 2006, p. 73.

<sup>158</sup> Bayraktar: *Salamon und Rabeka*, p. 72.

according to the Turkish constitution of 1924. But the non-Muslim citizens were not set equal in practice and therefore the policy to turkify especially the non-Muslim citizens failed.

Several reasons can be mentioned which could have led to this inequality in practice. The Ottoman legacy was a very important factor for the failure of turkifying the non-Muslim citizens. Even though secularism was implemented in its most strict form, it was not possible to get rid of the Ottoman legacy which formed the collective memory. Under the Ottoman Empire the Muslim religion had played a crucial role as the Empire was run *inter alia* by Shari'ah law. The minorities had lived within their own communities but had been required to accept the superiority of the Muslim religion. That is why religion was still a common feature of Turkishness due to the Ottoman legacy. But, it is noteworthy to mention that throughout the entire history of the Ottoman Empire and later on in the Turkish Republic every citizen was allowed to practise his own religion freely.

Another reason for the failure of this policy was the recent past, which as well defined the collective memory. Because some minorities had supported the invaders during the First World War and the Turkish War for Independence, mistrust existed against all minorities, including Jewish citizens. The trauma of these two wars could not be healed as long as minorities in the country continued governing themselves independently, like a state within a state and speaking their own languages. As a consequence, the Turkish Government found itself in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it was keen to turkify the non-Muslim citizens, so as to be fully part of the Turkish nation. On the other hand, the non-Muslim citizens were disadvantaged due to the undeniable Ottoman legacy and the existing mistrust. With the establishment of the Turkish Republic a national and independent economy also had to be set up. As the minorities were dominant in the economy, they had to give way to citizens who shared the same ethnic background and were Muslims.

During this process of turkifying the non-Muslim citizens, the Turkish press played an important role as it additionally put pressure on the minorities. There were also other reasons for the failure to create single type citizens coming from the Jewish side. The Turkification of the Jews was implemented through a top down process. The representatives of the Jewish community and some Jewish writers were strong supporters of the policy to turkify all citizens. Tekin Alp tried to change the way of life of the Jews through the Ten Commands. The Jews were expected to obey without any objections. The Jewish community leaders believed that the element of religion had lost its importance for being considered as a "real" Turkish citizen enjoying all his rights or just wanted to believe that.

There are many changes that the Turkish policy brought with it. The most important change for the Turkish Jews between 1923 and 1933 was the weakening of the Chief Rabbinate. The community, which was *de jure* not a community anymore, was consequently much weakened and the community was split. The Jews had to acquire a command of the Turkish language as soon as possible because loss of time was not tolerated. Concerning education, all schools were placed under the control of the Ministry of Education where many Jewish teachers were dismissed and the Jewish community had to pay the salary of the teachers

instead of the Turkish Government. The Jewish citizens also could not be active in politics until 1935. The attempt to stand for the newly founded Liberal Republican Party failed as the party eventually closed down. The public services were not open to non-Muslim citizens because they were dismissed and replaced by Turks. Also, the Jewish citizens were totally isolated from any international Zionist Organisation because the Government forbade all its citizens from being active in any international organisation. These inequalities for the non-Muslim citizens were proof of the failure of the Turkification policies. As a matter of fact, the minorities could neither profit from the rights granted by the Treaty of Lausanne, nor from the civic rights. They felt that they were minorities and compatriots at the same time. This feeling of being in-between eventually led to emigration. On the other hand, a great part of the Jewish citizens were not very willing to turkify themselves because they did not want to give up the way of life they had had under the Millet System during the Ottoman Empire.<sup>159</sup>

It is hereby noteworthy to mention that all these effects on the Jews were not a specific act against Jewish citizens. Armenian and Greek citizens were also submitted to these changes. For this reason, we cannot speak of anti-Semitism in the sense of an ideology existing in Turkey between 1923 and 1933. The problem was rather the existence of a xenophobic anti-minority which typifies the public opinion during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>160</sup> The consequence of the Turkish policy amongst others was that the Jews started to isolate and to be among themselves.<sup>161</sup>

During the Second World War the Jewish citizens living in Turkey were not much affected<sup>162</sup> by the Hitler regime especially as Turkey did not participate in this war. On the contrary, Jewish professors from Germany came from 1933 onwards to Turkey to teach in the Universities. <sup>163</sup> With the establishment of Israel in 1948 many Turkish Jews left.<sup>164</sup> Today, Jews are thoroughly assimilated in Turkey. The new Jewish generation does not have a command of Ladino. One could say that Turkish Jews consider themselves to be Turkish citizens first and Jews second. 17'000 Jews live today in Turkey, mainly in the region of Istanbul

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<sup>159</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 520.

<sup>160</sup> Benbassa: Les Juifs de Turquie durant l'entre-deux guerres, p. 132.

<sup>161</sup> Bali: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, p. 546.

<sup>162</sup> In 1942 the Capital Tax levy was implemented on all wealthy Turkish citizens. The aim was hereby to have enough financial means for a possible entry into the Second World War. However, the minorities had to pay more than other citizens. The aim hereby was also to reduce the influence of the minorities over the Turkish economy. Minorities who could not pay their taxes were sent to a labour camp to east Anatolia (Aşkale).

Wikipedia: Varlık Vergisi

URL [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varlık\\_Vergisi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varlık_Vergisi) (Status: 10.03.13).

<sup>163</sup> For instance Paul Hindemith contributed in the establishment of the Turkish State Conservatory in Ankara. The German theatrical producer Carl Bert founded the Turkish State opera Company. The political scientist Ernst Reuter went into exile to Turkey and eventually became the Mayor of Berlin after his return to Germany in 1945. Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and The Jewish Polity, p. 253.

Between 1944 and 1949, my grandfather Mahmut Bilgin studied law at the University of Istanbul. He likes to tell us that two of his professors were Jewish professor from Germany. The Jewish professors in law Andreas Schwartz (Freiburg), who made important contributions in the adaption of western law in Turkey during the 1930s and Professor Ernst Hirsch (Freiburg), who specialised in international law and legal philosophy were his professors. Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, p. 252.

<sup>164</sup> Between 1948 and 1949 over 30,000 Turkish Jews immigrated to Israel. Weiker: Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish Polity, p. 255.

and Izmir.<sup>165</sup> With regard to public opinion today, mistrust still exists against non-Muslim citizens especially amongst less educated citizens, according to a survey made in 2009. This perception does not result from direct contact with Jewish citizens as only 10% declared to know any Jew. At the same time, 76% of the participants declared to be uninformed about Jewish citizens.<sup>166</sup>

In 1992, the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews was founded as the Sephardic Jews settled down in the Ottoman Empire in 1492 following the expulsion from Spain. Neither in the Museum nor on its web page is anything about the situation of the Jews between 1923 and 1933 exhibited. Representatives and important members of the Jewish community, the Quincentennial Foundation and the only Turkish Jewish Newspaper Shalom, represent the attitude towards the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic as Stanford J. Shaw summarises in one sentence. Shaw, who published his book “The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic” on the occasion of the Quincentennial (500.) anniversary of the Jews, wrote “For the most part, Jewish life in Turkey continued before World War II as it had half a millennium under Ottoman Rule.”<sup>167</sup> Public opinion in Turkey has accepted this attitude, as it only reveals the good relationship between the Ottoman Empire and its Jewish citizens and the Turkish Republic and its Jewish citizens and hence ignores the Turkification policies of the Turkish Government and its effects on the minorities. In my opinion, this verifies the citation of Fernand Braudel, “From one civilization to another, every man gives his own version of the truth. The neighbour’s version is never acceptable. The one thing of which we can be certain is that the destiny of Israel, its strength, its survival and its misfortunes are all the consequence of its remaining irreducible, refusing to be diluted, that is of being a civilization faithful to itself. Every civilization is its own heaven and hell.”<sup>168</sup> But nevertheless, historical events should not be hidden or shown from their good sides. As “every man gives his own version of the truth”, the reality concerning historical events seems to be subjective. Or, in other words, “History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation.”<sup>169</sup> Throughout human history, efforts have always been made to try and neglect or modify certain historical events which did not seem convenient and rather “disturbed” certain conceptions. I hope that Turkish Jews as well as other ethnic groups in other regions in this world become more conscious about their history and legacy through independent and unimpeded research and reading. Foremost through the digital age the accessibility of information gets ever easier and numerous which will facilitate this process.

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<sup>165</sup> Wikipedia: History of the Jews in Turkey.

URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Turkey) (Status: 25.03.13).

<sup>166</sup> Frekans Araştırma: Farklı Kimliklere ve Yahudiliğe Bakış Araştırması, 2009. URL:

[http://www.turkyahudileri.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/farkli\\_kimliklere\\_yahudilige\\_bakis\\_algi\\_arastirmasi\\_090930.pdf](http://www.turkyahudileri.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/farkli_kimliklere_yahudilige_bakis_algi_arastirmasi_090930.pdf) \t "\_blank" (Status: 24.03.13).

<sup>167</sup> Shaw: The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, p. 247.

<sup>168</sup> Weiker, Walter F.; Ottomans, Turks and the Jewish polity: A History of the Jews of Turkey, Maryland/London, 1992, p. 333.

<sup>169</sup> Barnes, Julian: The Sense of an Ending, London, 2012, p. 17.

## 5 Appendices

### 5.1 Treaty of Lausanne: Protection of Minorities

**ARTICLE 37.** Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 38 to 44 shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, no regulation, nor official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation, nor official action prevail over them.

**ARTICLE 38.** The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals. Non-Moslem minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and of emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or on part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may be taken by the Turkish Government for national defence, or for the maintenance of public order.

**ARTICLE 39.** Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems. All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law. Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries. No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts.

**ARTICLE 40.** Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

**ARTICLE 41.** As regards public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Moslem nationals are resident, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision will not prevent the Turkish Government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory in the said schools. In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budgets for educational, religious, or



charitable purposes. The sums in question shall be paid to the qualified representatives of the establishments and institutions concerned.

**ARTICLE 42.** The Turkish Government undertakes to take, as regards non-Moslem minorities, in so far as concerns their family law or personal status, measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the customs of those minorities. These measures will be elaborated by special Commissions composed of representatives of the Turkish Government and of representatives of each of the minorities concerned in equal number. In case of divergence, the Turkish Government and the Council of the League of Nations will appoint in agreement an umpire chosen from amongst European lawyers. The Turkish Government undertakes to grant full protection to the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the above-mentioned minorities. All facilities and authorisation will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at present existing in Turkey, and the Turkish Government will not refuse, for the formation of new religious and charitable institutions, any of the necessary facilities which are guaranteed to other private institutions of that nature.

**ARTICLE 43.** Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their faith or religious observances, and shall not be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend Courts of Law or to perform any legal business on their weekly day of rest. This provision, however, shall not exempt such Turkish nationals from such obligations as shall be imposed upon all other Turkish nationals for the preservation of public order.

**ARTICLE 44.** Turkey agrees that, in so far as the preceding Articles of this Section affect non-Moslem nationals of Turkey, these provisions constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations. The British Empire, France, Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their assent to any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations. Turkey agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction or danger of infraction of any of these obligations, and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such directions as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances. Turkey further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or of fact arising out of these Articles between the Turkish Government and any one of the other Signatory Powers or any other Power, a member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Turkish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.

**ARTICLE 45.** The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in its territory. <sup>170</sup>

## **5.2 Official Turkish Jewish Community Renunciation of special privileges provided by the Treaty of Lausanne, Article 42, 15 September 1925**

Following the acceptance and proclamation of the principle separating religion from the affairs of state, the same principle as in other civilized countries, and following the decision relative to the elaboration of all laws on purely secular bases, an extraordinary session, presided over by the Grand Rabbi, and attended by members of the lay, religious and general councils as well as the notables of the community, was convoked at the Grand Rabbinate to discuss the new situation created regarding the fixing of family rights and of personal statute, and in that it be our duty to submit to our Republican government.

If it is true that in virtue of article 42 of the Treaty of Lausanne dispositions regarding ways and customs should be defined by a commission, it should be noted that when this treaty was signed, our national government, taking into consideration personal statutes and family laws, which find their source in Muslim religious principles and which cannot be applied to non-Muslim minorities, agreed to fix and apply special dispositions for each of the minorities. But as a result of the complete separation of religion from things of this world, and in view of the fact that all laws, without exception, are being elaborated and applied outside of all religious ideas and considerations and conforming to the needs of the country and to the progress of contemporary law, there is no longer any need to elaborate dispositions relative to the family laws of Jews; and to the contrary the elaboration of such exceptions would signify the preservation for Jews of a personal statute based on secular principles. In addition, it has been proven by experience and historic witness that Jews not only have never been indifferent to political and social revolutionary movements of the countries in which they live but rather, to the contrary, they have taken part in them and have added their influence. From another point of views, since the political and general order of the Turkish Republic is completely bases on separation of religion from the things of this world, the Jews who have always considered themselves to be the true children of this country cannot conceive of any incapability regarding the application, for them, of exceptions, which would be in contradiction with this principle and the obligations of patriotism. Given then that the personal statute which is now being our civil and social rights, we have no doubt that it will satisfy all the civil and social needs of all Turks inhabiting Turkey as well as Jewish Turks.

There remains only the question of marriage and divorce. Jews who want to satisfy their religious sentiments can, as is done in Europe and America, address themselves, relying on freedom of conscience proclaimed and affirmed by the organic statute of the Republic, to the Grand Rabbinate in their religious centres so as to accomplish their religious ceremonies after first conforming to the dispositions of secular

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<sup>170</sup> The World War I Document Archive, Conventions and Treaties: Treaty of Lausanne (Articles 37-45)  
URL: [http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty\\_of\\_Lausanne](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne) (Status: 08.12.12).

law, which constitutes no legal impediment. As a result, taking into consideration what we have said, we Turkish Jews accept the vow from which we profit as well as the other civil laws and secular dispositions that the Republican government publishes relative to personal statute and family rights, and we present the sentiment of our gratitude.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Shaw: *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, p. 288.

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