

Vartan ARTINIAN

THE ARMENIAN CONSTITUTIONAL
SYSTEM
IN THE
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
1839-1863

A Study of its
Historical
Development

Istanbul

2021

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INTRODUCTION

The following study was originally presented as a doctoral dissertation in history at Brandeis University in 1970. In the ensuing 18 years neither it nor any article based upon it has appeared in print.

As the reader will certainly agree, it makes a most valuable contribution to our understanding of the complex question of Turco-Armenian relations in the closing decades of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, we have decided to undertake this publication.

The Editor

INTRODUCTION

The following study was originally presented as a doctoral dissertation in history at Brandeis University in 1970. In the ensuing 12 years neither it nor any article based upon it was reported in print.

As the reader will certainly agree, it makes a most valuable contribution to our understanding of the complex question of "race" relations in the closing decades of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, we have decided to undertake this publication.

The Editor

PREFACE

The aim of this work is to analyze the constitutional evolution of the Ottoman Armenian community whose beginning goes back as far as the middle of the eighteenth century. It is hoped that a study of this evolution may contribute to a better understanding of the Ottoman empire.

The discussion in the present study is focused on the question of the relationship between the conservative aristocracy and the liberal middle-class of the Armenian community in Istanbul. A concentrated attempt is made to examine the inner life of the Armenian community, particularly the process of secularization as it affected many aspects of Armenian society. The focal period is the first two decades of the Tanzimat which led up to the promulgation of the Armenian National Constitution in 1860.

A note concerning the sources utilized in the present work is necessary. It is often stated that the scholar is at the mercy of his materials. This holds especially true for the study of the Armenian constitutional evolution, on which there is paucity of accurate information. For example, there is little data available on the decision-making process at the Armenian patriarchate of Constantinople. In these circumstances, it has been necessary to rely on extensive reading of newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks. Throughout the work there will be heavy reliance on Armenian language materials published in and outside Istanbul.

2 The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire

I am much indebted to the staffs of several libraries. Among them are the Antilias Catholicosate Library, the Calouste Gulbenkian Library of the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Armenian Educational Foundation Library of Arlington, Massachusetts. A special debt, too, must be acknowledged to the staff of the Houghton Library of Harvard University, who generously granted permission for use of the manuscript records of the ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions). Finally, my profound thanks to Professor Benjamin Halpern of Brandeis University for his guidance and wise counsel throughout the preparation of this work.

CHAPTER I

THE OTTOMAN ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Geographical Dispersion

Perhaps as early as the second half of the eight century B.C. the Armenians settled in the region of Mount Ararat on the territories which formed part of the ancient kingdom of Urartu. This mountainous country, which dominates the valley of the Euphrates and provides easy access into Asia Minor, was to be a battleground throughout the course of her history, and her inhabitants were compelled to emigrate from their native land to neighboring countries. As a result, several Armenian colonies were founded abroad.

Armenian associations with Asia Minor, in accordance with documentary evidence, date back to the earliest Christian centuries. By virtue of the treaty of 387 A.D. between Persia and the Byzantine empire, Armenia was divided into two vassal states. The western region fell to the East Roman empire, and the remaining part was allotted to Persia. Oppressive measures taken by the Persian kings in the eastern sector provoked an exodus of the Armenian people. Some of those despoiled of their possessions sought refuge in the Syrian region west of the Euphrates. Others, attracted by the greater opportunities that the Byzantine empire had to offer, went to Constantinople.¹ During the Arab

¹*Handes Amsoreay*, 1907, pp. 225-226 ; Babgen Kiwlesérian, "K. Polsoy Hay Galut'in Cagumè ev Hnagoyñ Ekelec'in," *Endarjak Tarec'oyc'*, 1926, p. 291.

domination of Armenia, which lasted until the middle of the ninth century, large numbers of Armenians, mostly from the province of Taron, once again emigrated to Constantinople and other Byzantine territories.²

The devastation of Armenia by the Seljuks in the eleventh century caused a new phase of Armenian wholesale emigrations this time, in the direction of the Taurus Mountains and the Cilician plain. Having lost their native land, Armenians were soon to establish a new home on the shores of the Mediterranean, and to found a kingdom which flourished for over two centuries. The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia never enjoyed, however, any long period of peace. Finally, when Cilicia fell under the heavy blows of the Mamluks in 1375, "tens of thousands of her inhabitants emigrated to Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Smyrna, and other parts of the Byzantine empire."³

With the capture of Constantinople on May 29, 1453 by Mehmet II, the Ottomans fell heir to the Byzantine empire. To the Greek population the fall of the capital marked the beginning of large scale emigrations to the west. So many Greek merchants, businessmen, and intellectuals had left the capital that "Constantinople was, in 1453 a half-populated city."⁴ In order to rebuild and repopulate the new capital, the Conqueror attempted to replace the departed Greeks by Armenian and Jewish merchants and tradesmen from the other regions of the empire. Many skilled Armenians were forcibly brought to Istanbul from Akn, Cilicia, Arapkir, Bursa, and Amasya.⁵ The Conqueror's policy of compulsory immigration continued during the reign of his successors. As a result, many Armenians were imported to the capital from

²K. Fntk'lean, "Hayazginer i Biwzandion," *Hayastani Goc'nak* 1935, p. 582 ; Arsak Alpoyacean, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean* (1941), I, p. 233.

³Bonaventure F. Slaars, *Étude sur Symrne* (1868), p. 135 ; *Biwzandion*, # 2301, 2326 ; *Arewelk'*, #4558.

⁴Arsak Alpoyacean, "Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwnë, ir Cagumë ew Kirarut'iwnë," *Endarjak Orac'oyc' Azgayin Hiiwandanoc'i*, 1910, p. 88..

⁵Eremia Celepi, *Stampolay Patmut'iwn* (1913), I, p. 210 ; Hayk Perperean, *Niwl'er K. Polsoy Hayoc' Patmut'ean Hamar* (1965), pp. 52-53.

Theodocia (1493), Tavrız (1514), Naxijewan (1577), and other areas.⁶ During the early part of the seventeenth century large numbers of Armenians fled the persecutions of Shah Abbas of Persia and settled in Ottoman territories. To Smyrna alone "over one thousand families came in 1607."⁷ Moreover, skilled Armenians, especially merchants from New Julfa, emigrated to Istanbul, Smyrna, and other Ottoman cities to seek fortune and comfort. Thus, by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Armenians could be found almost in every part of the Ottoman empire. The great majority of the Armenians, however, lived in the *eyalets*⁸ of Erzurum, Bayezid, Kars, Cıldır, Van, Diyarbekir, Adana, and Maraş. The last two regions included the great majority of Cilician Armenians.⁹ Although most of the major Ottoman cities contained important Armenian communities, the great bulk of the Armenian urban population was concentrated in Bitlis, Sivas, Van, Erzurum, Harput, Tokat, Amasya, Malatya, Diyarbekir, Arapkir, Bayezid, Khnus, Adana, Hajin, Maraş, Kayseri, Bursa, Smyrna and Istanbul.¹⁰

The Numbers, Occupations, and Status of Ottoman Armenians

With regard to the population statistics for the Ottoman Armenians, estimates vary. According to a census of 1478 Istanbul had a total population of 120,000,¹¹ who lived in 16,026 homes, including 9,486 Muslim families, 3,743 Greek families, 1647 Jewish homes, and 817 Armenian families.¹² By the middle of the seventeenth century the Armenians of the Ottoman capital were estimated by the secretary of the French Embassy in Istanbul at 8,000 native families and 50,000

⁶L. Incicean, *Asx rhagrut'iwn C'oric'Masanc'Asxarhi* (1806), V, pp. 115-116.

⁷Yakob V. K'osean, *Hayk' i Smiwrnia* (1899), I, p. 31.

⁸These provincial administrative units were also known as *paşalik*.

⁹Incicean, *Asxarhagrut'iwn*, I, pp. 50, 282.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 66-95.

¹¹Perperean, *Niwt'er Polsoy Hamar*, p. 53.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

immigrant Armenians.¹³ By the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century the total population of Istanbul was about 1,000,000 in which the Greeks and the Armenians together constituted a majority.¹⁴ In the nineteenth century the estimates hardly agree with one another. Ubicini places the Armenian population of Istanbul in 1840 at 222,000,¹⁵ while an Armenian source indicates that "at no time in the nineteenth century the number of Armenian Constantinopolites exceeded 150,000."¹⁶ Marcel Leart estimates the Armenians of the capital in 1878 at 135,000,¹⁷ and a British traveler of the late nineteenth century places the total number of the Armenians in Istanbul at 180,000 in 1895.¹⁸ Three contemporary Armenian journals, however, estimate the Armenian population of the capital during the third quarter of the nineteenth century from 250,000 - 300,000.¹⁹ In view of the absence of more accurate material, it can be reasonably surmised that, at the time of the promulgation of the Gülhane Charter (1839), the Armenian inhabitants of Istanbul numbered between 125,000 and 150,000.

The Armenian population of Smyrna in 1812 was 10,000, in 1868 12,000, and by the end of the century 30,000.²⁰ From 1800-1830 31,000 Armenians lived in Erzurum, 20,000 in Euthica, 15,000 in Sivas, 14,000 in Amasya, 12,000 in Arapkir, 10,500 in Diyarbakir, 10,000 each in Van, Akn and Kars, and 9,800 in Harput.²¹ The number of Armenian urban population throughout the empire by the end of the

¹³ La Croix, sieur de, *Elat present des nation et églises grecque, arménienne et maronite en Turquie* (1695), p. 76.

¹⁴ Incicean, *Asxarhagrut'iwn*, V, p. 115.

¹⁵ J.H.A. Ubicini, *Lettres sur la Turquie* (1854), I, p. 27.

¹⁶ H.G. Mmrean, *Masnakan Patmut'iwn Hay Mecatuneru* (1909), p. 49.

¹⁷ Marcel Leart, *La question arménienne* (1913), p. 59.

¹⁸ H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia : Travels and Studies* (1901), II, p. 247.

¹⁹ *Msak*, 1876, #26 ; *Arewelean Mamul*, 1878, p. 283 ; *Arjagank'*, 1882, #36.

²⁰ Teodik, *Amenun Tarecoyce*, 1924, pp. 154-155.

²¹ Hayk Lazaryan, *Arevmtahayeri Soc'ial-Tntesakan ev K'alak'akan Kac'ut'iwnë 1800-1870* (1967), p. 162.

first quarter of the nineteenth century was estimated at 612,212 including 157,212 souls in Cilicia.²²

About the total Armenian population of the Ottoman empire authorities again disagree. Ubicini places the Armenians of the empire in 1854 at 2,400,000, and his figures make no regional breakdowns.²³ The Armenian patriarchate estimated the Ottoman Armenian population in 1872 at 3,000,000,²⁴ while Marcel Leart, places the total number of the Armenians for the same period at 2,600,000.²⁵ The significant point is that while the great majority of the Armenian population lived in the provinces, only 20.4 per cent of the total number resided in the cities. Moreover, it was a small minority of Armenian Constantinopolites which controlled the policy of the community, and, eventually, established the machinery of a constitutional life for the Armenians throughout the empire.

The overwhelming majority of the Armenian population in the major cities of the empire consisted of the artisans and merchants who played an important role in the internal economy of the empire. Although most of the trades and handicrafts were carried on by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, some occupations were almost monopolized by certain groups. Druggists and house-painters, for example, were chiefly Muslims, and carpentry and shoemaking were primarily reserved to Greeks.²⁶ The Armenians were engaged in almost every occupation, but had almost complete monopoly in certain trades. During the reign of the Conqueror Armenian bakers are mentioned in great number with their own special quarters at Galata and Hasköy.²⁷

²²*Ibid.*, p. 169.

²³Ubicini, *Lettres*, p. 19.

²⁴*Masis*, 1872, #50 ; *Msak*, 1872, #30.

²⁵Leart, *La question*, p. 59.

²⁶H.A.R. Gibb, and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (1957), I, ii, p. 289.

²⁷Mimar Ali Saim Ülgen, *Fatih Devrinde İstanbul* (1939), p. 41 ; Çelebi, *Stampolay Patmut'iwn*, p. 37.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Armenian masons of Istanbul were commonly known as *kalfas* or master-builders. These *kalfas* built, in the course of time, some of the palaces and mosques of the Ottoman capital. The palace of Dolmabahçe, the mosque of Tophane, the headquarters of the *Defterdar* or the Finance Ministry, the Selimiye Army Barracks at Üsküdar, the palaces of Saray Burnu, the headquarters of the *Zerhane* or the Imperial Treasury, and many other buildings are attributed to Armenian master-builders.²⁸

In his description of an annual parade of artisans at the capital in the seventeenth century, a Turkish historian makes special mention of Armenian *kiremitcis* (tile-layers), *kalemkars* (engravers), *kerestecis* (lumbermen), and even *eşekcis* (donkey-drivers) and *lağımçis* (sewermen).²⁹ Armenians were also prominent in silk, linen and muslin manufacturing, drapery and embroidery, and tailoring. Many were expert watchmakers, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, and locksmiths.³⁰ One could even find Armenian tobacconists and tavern-keepers.³¹ But the most important profession, on which the Armenians had almost complete monopoly, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was jewelry. During the reign of Sultan Abdül Hamid I (1774-1789) Armenian jewellers were especially famous for their art of setting diamonds and other precious stones.³² From their special quarter in the Büyük Çarşı, these Armenians effectively controlled the trade of jewelry with about a dozen *tellals* or brokers acting as their salesmen.³³

Each product gave its name to a special quarter where several shops, adjacent to each other, worked hand in hand. Thus, jewels, gold and silver were sold in the *cevahir* bazar, and clothing of all types could

²⁸G. Mesrop, "Gelaruest," *Haykaran*, 1931, III, pp. 253-254.

²⁹Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* (1898), I, pp. 629-630.

³⁰H.G. Mirmrean, *T'urk'ahayoc' Hin Vacarakanut'iwnn ev Vacarakank'* (1908), p. 17.

³¹Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 311.

³²Ambrosios Galfaeon, *Hamarot Patmut'iwn Nor Azgac'* (1851), pp. 442-443.

³³*Endarjak Oracoyc'*, 1907, pp. 83-85.

be bought at the *oturakcılar* bazar.³⁴ Thousands of Armenian artisans owned workshops in the Büyük Çarşı, Vezir Han, Çuhaci Han, Kürkçü Han, Çarşamba Bazar and many other quarters.³⁵ During the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were over 5,000 small shops in the capital and its environs, and almost all of them belonged to Armenian, Greek and Jewish artisans and merchants.³⁶ According to an Ottoman census of 1850 Armenian merchants, artisans and shopkeepers in the capital were estimated at 35,979 with 32,999 master-apprentices and regular apprentices.³⁷

Among the other major cities of the empire special mention should be made to the famous Armenian coppersmiths of Erzurum and Tokat, the goldsmiths of Van, the shoemakers of Harput, and the textile manufacturers of Sivas, Amasya, Malatya and Hajin.³⁸ In Aleppo Hoca Petik had established a mercantile firm which conducted the European silk trade with the Ottoman empire.³⁹ Commerce in Smyrna was, to a great extent, in the hands of Armenians and Greeks. The latter were primarily engaged in the importing business, while Armenians concentrated in exporting Ottoman products to England, France and other European countries. During the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Anton Celebi was a wealthy Armenian silk merchant with offices both at Smyrna and the capital.⁴⁰ Some successful Armenian merchants had even offices in European capitals. By the middle of the nineteenth century there were over thirty Armenian commercial firms in London and Manchester with their headquarters located either in Smyrna or Istanbul.⁴¹

³⁴Incicean, *Asxarhagrut'iwnk*, p. 18.

³⁵Mrmrean, *Trkahayoc' Vacarakanut'iwnk*, p. 18.

³⁶Incicean *Asxarhagrut'iwn*, V, p. 129.

³⁷*Arjagank'*, 1885, #10, pp. 142-143.

³⁸V.A. Barsamean, *Hay Zolovrdi Patmut'iwn* (1960), VII, p. 164.

³⁹Artawazd Siwmeyean, *Patmut'iwn Halepi Hayoc'* (1950), III, pp. 357-358.

⁴⁰Hrand Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë ew Irenc' Patriark'nerë," *Endarjak Orac'oyc' Azgayin Hiwandanoc'i*, 1901, p. 98.

⁴¹Mrmrean, *Trkahayoc' Vacarakanut'iwnk*, pp. 47-48.

The Tradition of Communal Organization

In foreign lands the organized community life of the Armenians evolved around their churches. From its inception the Armenian church was governed by the catholicosate of All Armenians, whose headquarters was located at Ejmiacin near Valarsapat, the capital of Armenia, where it remained until 901. From then onwards the seat peregrinated from one place to another until 1292 when it established itself at Sis, the capital of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. Finally, in 1441 it reverted once more to Ejmiacin, where it has remained to date. Under the impact of political circumstance, several other sees with local jurisdictions were created. The catholicosal see of Alt'amar was established in 1113, and retained its existence until World War I. The Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem came into existence in 1311, and the catholicosate of Cilicia was established at Sis in 1446, following the return of the mother see to Ejmiacin. Like the catholicos of Ejmiacin, only the incumbents of Alt'amar and Sis bore the title of "catholicos" and exercised the privilege of ordaining bishops. Prior to the conquest of the Byzantine capital, the Armenian community of Constantinople was under the jurisdiction of the Cilician catholicosate.

The earliest surviving document which mentions the existence of an Armenian church in Constantinople goes back to the end of the eleventh century. Michel le Syrien, the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (1166-1199), describes an Armenian church in the Byzantine capital, where "a priest ministered to the spiritual needs of the Armenians, and a lay council of wealthy merchants managed its financial affairs."⁴² Until then the Armenians of Constantinople were not considered a separate ecclesiastical community, since most of them followed the Greek liturgy.⁴³ By the beginning of the fourteenth century the Armenians of Constantinople, Bursa, Kütahya, and other cities were organized enough

⁴² Michel le Syrien, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche, 1166-1199* (1905), III, p. 185.

⁴³ Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë, p. 77.

to have individual diocesan bishops. In a council of Armenian bishops held in Sis (1307) mention is made of one "Bishop Yusik of Stimbol Armenians,"⁴⁴ representing the Armenian community of Constantinople. By 1391 the Armenians had two churches in Constantinople with a metropolitan primate, a local bishop, and several parish priests who performed the sacramental events of baptism, wedding, and funeral.⁴⁵ The jurisdiction of the Armenians of Greater Constantinople, and all the diocesan bishops within the boundaries of the Byzantine empire were subjected to the authority of the Armenian catholicos of Sis.

After his capture of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmet II vested the new Greek patriarch, Gennadius, with ecclesiastical and civil authority over his coreligionists of the Empire, including the Serbs, Bulgars, Wallachians, Moldavians, and Melkites. The Conqueror also invited Bishop Yovakim, the Armenian primate of Bursa, to Istanbul in 1461, and conferred upon him the title of "patrik", thus placing him on the same footing as the patriarch of the Greek community.⁴⁶ The non-Orthodox Christian subjects, comprising the Syrian Jacobite, Ethiopian, Georgian, Chaldean, and the Coptic communities, while retaining their own individual heads, were placed under the authority of the Armenian patriarch.⁴⁷ For example, permits for marriage and funeral, as well as passport to travel were procured for the members of these communities only upon the presentation of a certificate from the Armenian patriarch.⁴⁸

The division of the Christians in the Ottoman empire into two broad groups was based not on race or nationality but on a profession of faith. The main dividing line was the doctrine of the person of Christ. The whole Orthodox group believed, as professed in the Council of Chalcedon (451), that "Godhead and manhood in Christ existed as two

⁴⁴A. Palcean, *Patmut'iwn Kat'olike Vardapetut'ean i Hays* (1878), p. 281.

⁴⁵Babgen Kiwleserean, *Patmut'iwn Kat'olikosac' Kilikiyoy, 1441-en Mincew Mer Orerë* (1939), p. 27 ; Celebi, *Stampolay Patmut'iwn*, p. 74

⁴⁶Mik'ayel C'amc'ean, *Iatmut'iwn Hayoc'* (1785), III, p. 500.

⁴⁷Malak'ia Ormanean, *Hayoc' Ekelec'in* (1911), pp. 102-103.

⁴⁸Malak'ia Ormanean, *Azgapatum* (1912), col. 2163.

distinct and separate natures," while the non-Orthodox Christians remained faithful to the dogma formulated at the Council of Ephesus (431) whereby "divinity and humanity were united in Christ." Hence the Orthodox Christians came to be collectively known as *diophysites*, or believers in the "two natures," and the non-Orthodox group was termed *monophysites*, or adherents of the "one nature."⁴⁹

The administration of the Ottoman Armenian community and the privileges and the prerogatives of the Armenian patriarch can truly be understood only within the context of the Ottoman governmental system which, as an absolute monarchy, was dynastic in character and military in organization. At the apex of the system stood the sultan, an autocrat whose authority was derived primarily from the military power which he controlled. The sultan possessed the traditional prerogative of legislating and held all the reins of government in his hands. The sultanate was hereditary, and the sons of the sultan usually had some experience, before their accession to the throne, as provincial governors or as commanders in the army.

The "Ruling Institution"⁵⁰ consisted of the civil and military officials, and the standing army. Legally all members of the Ruling Institution were the personal slaves of the sultan. Their slavery, however, was not a condition of penal servitude, but a legal fact which gave the sultan complete control over his officials, including the power of life and death. Since according to the Islamic Law no sultan could have such power over his free-born Muslim subjects, the slave officials of the empire were born Christians who, through a systematic conscription of boys from Orthodox Christian families of the empire, were brought into the sultan's service. These Christian boys were carefully selected, and received rigid training for several years in the schools of the imperial palaces. At the conclusion of their education they held various offices in the imperial household, in the central and

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰A term first used by Albert Howe Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent* (1913), p. 36.

provincial governments, and as officer in the army. Although they became Muslims, and the way was open to them for advance to the higher posts in the government, they still remained slaves. Their sons could not, because they were free-born Muslims, enter this privileged slave hierarchy.

In addition to the slave soldiers, other troops were provided through the system of land grants made by the sultans to their *sipahis*, or free-born Muslim cavalymen. As the empire expanded, the state took title to most of the conquered Christian lands. These lands were granted in fiefs to the *sipahis*, who were obliged to provide a stipulated number of fighters. The *sipahis*, who were not slaves, collected a tithe from the peasants as their own salaries. Although fiefs were often granted to the sons of the *sipahis*, and thus the position sometimes became hereditary in one family, the state still reserved the land title and the right of grant. This system of land tenure not only provided for additional fighters but also gave the state adequate control to prevent the growth of a permanent landed aristocracy.

Unlike the Ruling Institution, the "Muslim Institution"⁵¹ was open to all free-born Muslims. Trained in Islamic religion and law, the learned members of the Muslim Institution, known as the *ulema*, became teachers, preachers, and held all the legal and judicial posts of the empire. Two members of this institution became chief judges of Anatolia and Rumelia. At the apex of the hierarchy of jurists, or *müftis*, was the *seyhülislâm*, the *müfti* of Istanbul, who represented the highest religious and legal authority of the empire.

The representatives of both the Ruling Institution and the Muslim Institution participated in the deliberations of the sultan's *divan*, his privy council. The grand vezir, the commanders of the army and the navy, the

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 37.

treasurer, the two chief judges of Anatolia and Rumelia, and other dignitaries took part in the *divan* and discussed the affairs of the state.

For the administration of the provinces, governors or *sancak beys* were appointed from the sultan's slave hierarchy. Each governor was the head of the civil administration of his province and commander of the troops stationed there. He presided over a *divan* which in composition was similar to the *divan* of the sultan, each member in it being a representative on a lower level of his superior in Istanbul. Similarly, the judges and the *müftis* were subordinate to those of the central government.

An integral part of the Ottoman governmental system was the administration of the non-Muslim communities. The principles upon which non-Muslim were governed by Muslim rulers have their roots in the earlier traditions of Persian and Byzantine rule and in the attitude of Muhammad to other religions. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians had a special place in the conception of the Prophet. They all had Books of their own to excuse them for not accepting his, and thus, they were called in the Kuran "People of Scripture."⁵² Moreover, according to the centuries-old Near Eastern concept law was personal rather than territorial in its basis and religion rather than political allegiance determined the law under which an individual lived. Hence Christians and Jews were permitted under special conditions to practice their own faiths. The Sacred Law of Islam provided that Christians and Jews who had accepted Muhammadan rule had agreed to pay the special poll-tax, called *cizya*, and the land tribute, *harac*, were, aside from certain regulations, to be left unmolested in the exercise of their religion.⁵³ Accordingly, the adherents of each of these religions came to be regarded as forming a community controlled by the guardians of its sacred traditions.

⁵²Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, I, ii, p. 207.

⁵³Lybyer, *Government of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 211.

In the Ottoman administrative system the non-Muslim subject were organized in semi-autonomous bodies, called *millets*,⁵⁴ replacing in some ways the direct authority of the sultan's government. The leader of each *millet* was entitled *millet-başı*, and the Greek and Armenian *millets* were each headed by a patriarch. The heads of the *millets* were confirmed in office by the Ottoman government. In addition to their spiritual authority over their own ecclesiastical subordinates and coreligionists the patriarchs had a fairly extensive civil authority in the internal administration of their *millets*. Moreover, some taxes due to the Ottoman government from the non-Muslim subjects were collected through the designated representatives of the patriarchs. The Ottoman government recognized the *millet* leaders as the voice of their people and usually backed their decisions. On their part, the chiefs of the *millets*, whose interests were often allied with the sultan's government, cooperated with Ottoman authorities.

As head of his *millet* the Armenian patriarch was assigned the ceremonial rank of a *paşa*, and received his investiture directly from the sultan. He was personally responsible for, and enjoyed complete jurisdiction over, his *millet's* spiritual administration and officials; public instruction, and charitable and religious institutions. The patriarch was allowed his own court and prison at the capital for trying members of the community in all cases except those involving "public security and crime."⁵⁵ Disobedient lay members were tried by the patriarch and then accordingly punished by his *vekil* (vicar), who was always a high ranking cleric.⁵⁶ Unfortunately no detailed information is available about the temporal powers of the Armenian patriarch. But the following description by an eyewitness of the punishment of an Armenian artisan, who had failed to meet a financial obligation to the patriarchate, illustrates, to some extent, the magnitude of civil prerogatives of *millet* leaders:

⁵⁴The word *millet* is derived from Arabic *milla* used in the sense of a religious community.

⁵⁵ Ormanean, *Azgapatum* col. 1486.

⁵⁶ *Masis*, 19 March 1893.

In those days the name of the patriarchate caused terror in the capital. When the bailiff came to an Armenian and said 'the *vekil* Holy Father would like to see you,' the man was so petrified that his saliva dried in his mouth. Then the bailiff pulled the man by a big chain around his neck through the streets like a bull-dog and took him to the patriarchate. No one dared to interfere. At the patriarchate the *vekil*, with whom no one could joke, told the man to lie down on his stomach, and personally delivered twenty-five to thirty lashes on his back.⁵⁷

If the accused person still refused or failed to meet his obligation, he was deprived of his shop or job and even sent into exile, depending on the will and disposition of the patriarch.⁵⁸

The earliest surviving formal ordinance, granting such powers and privileges to an Armenian patriarch, dates back to 1764 when Sultan Mustafa III issued an imperial *berat* to Patriarch Grigor Pasmacean.⁵⁹ According to this imperial document the patriarch exercised absolute authority over the dioceses of the Armenian church in Anatolia and Rumelia. He could appoint, depose, imprison, and exile primates, bishops, priests, and deacons at will. Similarly, he had jurisdiction in matters of personal status, divorce, inheritance, guardianship, and no Ottoman official could interfere in his decisions. Also, he had the authority to grant permission for the construction of new churches, monasteries, schools, and printing establishments. Moreover, all publications were to have his official seal of approval. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Armenian patriarchate was, for all practical purposes, a strict censorship office for all types of publications.

The Armenian patriarch was also granted the right to own extensive properties, and, along with his fifteen-member staff, was exempted from all Ottoman taxes. It was through him that the sultan

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 20 March 1893.

⁵⁹For the Armeno-Turkish text of the *berat*, see Awetis Perperian, *Hayoc' Patmut'iwn* (1871), pp. 227-233; The Armenian translation of the document will be found in Y.C. Siruni, *Polis ew Ir Derë* (1965), pp. 282-284.

exempted from all Ottoman taxes. It was through him that the sultan collected the *millet's* annual tribute of 100,000 *akce*. He possessed the exclusive right to appoint his own tax collectors, and was empowered to confiscate the properties of insubordinates. Against all these privileges and prerogatives the patriarch was obligated to pay the sum of 500 piastres to each new grand vezir and 250 piastres to the vezir's assistant.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Armenian patriarchs have constantly paid substantial amounts, sometimes in the form of precious gifts, to the *Aga* of the Janissaries and other influential officials in the government.⁶¹

The Armenian patriarchate's sphere of jurisdiction increased proportionately to the extension of the Ottoman empire. At first the patriarch's authority extended only over the Armenians of Asia Minor, including Bursa, Aydın, Angora, and Sivas. By the middle of the seventeenth century the empire stretched from Algiers to Armenia and from Budapest to Basra. Consequently, the Armenian dioceses within these geographic boundaries came under his authority. By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Armenian patriarch exercised jurisdiction over fifty dioceses throughout the Ottoman empire which were governed through the agency of subordinate ecclesiastics. The latter were divided into two groups, the celibate clergy and the married priests. The former consisted of the diocesan bishops and the *vardapets*, or the deans of the cathedrals who delivered sermons on Sundays. Until the establishment of the Armenian seminary in Istanbul (1718), most of the celibate ecclesiastics came from the seminary of the Cilician catholicosate at Sis, where they followed a seven year program of religious education. The same curriculum was also applied later at the seminary of Istanbul.⁶² The married priests mostly served as pastors of local churches throughout the empire. Their education was usually rudimentary, and their qualifications were confined to celebrating mass and performing the sacraments of baptism, matrimony, penance, and burial. Promotion of the clergy was reserved only to the celibate

⁶⁰Incicean, *Asxarhagrut'iwn*, V. p. 117.

⁶¹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 1737.

⁶²*Ibid.*, cols. 1923, 1934, 1935.

ecclesiastics. The *vardapets* were, according to their experience and accomplishments, elevated to the bishopric. The married priests could, at best, receive only an honorary degree of *avag* (senior). As a whole the Armenian clergy did not have particular group interests. With few outstanding exceptions, the Armenian lower clergy were "lazy, materialistic, and served as tools in the hands of influential magnates."⁶³

⁶³Mikayel Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Naxapatmut'iwn* (1912), p. 239.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY BEFORE 1839

In accordance with the centuries-old canonical tradition of the Armenian church the laity participated in the election of parish priests, as well as bishops, patriarchs, and catholici. Clerical exclusiveness has been alien to the Armenian church. This traditional participation of the lay element in church affairs dates back to the earliest period of the Armenian church. The transactions of the national ecclesiastical councils bear testimony to the fact that formerly the princes, and, after them, the leading men and deputies, have always taken part with the bishops in these councils.¹ Although the participation of the laity in ecclesiastical matters was exercised under different forms, according to the laws and customs of the various countries in which Armenians have settled, yet the basic principle of lay participation was everywhere held in esteem. In the light of such tradition it was inevitable that the influence of the laity would eventually be exerted in the affairs of the Ottoman Armenian community as well.

Armenian Notables Affiliated with the Ottoman Ruling Institution

The Armenian patriarchate of Constantinople, with its spiritual and temporal powers, had in time, become such a prestigious and financially lucrative office that ambitious bishops constantly competed with one another for its control. From 1461-1848 over eighty

¹Ormancan, *Hayoc' Ekelec'in*, pp. 180-185.

ecclesiastics occupied the patriarchal throne. In actuality, however, the patriarchate had come to be dominated by certain Armenian magnates who had strong ties with the Ottoman Ruling Institution. The imperial confirmations of patriarchal elections were usually received through these urban aristocrats who often felt that their own vested interests would be furthered by the fall of one patriarch and his replacement by another. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these wealthy Armenians were known as *hocas* or *çelebis*.² Beginning with the second half of the eighteenth century these magnates came to be known as *amiras*,³ a title given by the sultan only to those Armenians who were financially connected with, or directly employed by, the Ottoman government.

The first group of these influential Armenians consisted of the *sarrafs* or bankers who lent capital to Ottoman officials and individuals on interest. In the Ottoman administrative system, the provincial governors and high ranking officials derived their income from the taxes levied on the population in their jurisdictions. The Ottoman treasury did not deal directly with the population but rather put up certain districts, especially tax-farms, to auction. However, before the highest bidder could secure the purchase, he was required to appoint a *sarraf*, usually Armenian, who furnished him with the capital on interest for securing the appointment and guaranteed the proper transmission of revenues on his behalf to the imperial treasury. Only those *sarrafs* whose names were registered with the treasury could assume such responsibility.

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the prosperous Armenian bankers of the capital were incorporated into two

²According to H. Acarean, the noted Armenian linguist, *hoca* is a Persian term meaning *lord* or *teacher*, given by the Ottoman government as an honorary title to influential individuals. The word *çelebi* is derived from old Turkish *çeleb* used in the sense of *master* or *lord*. Although the two titles were sometimes used interchangeably, it is generally believed that the *çelebis* were wealthier and enjoyed more prestige. For more details, see H. Acarean, *Hayoc' Anjnanunneri Bararan* (1944), II, p. 526.

³The Armenian *amira* comes from Turkish *emir* which is derived from Arabic *amir* (pl. *umara*) meaning prince.

large companies of *sarrafs*. The influential bankers in the Anatolia Company were Yarut'iwn Amira Erkanian, Mkrtic Cezayirlean, Polos Asnan, and Paltasar Cerazean, while the control of the Rumelia Company was in the hands of Magsut Amira, Abraham Allahverti, Canik Amira, Yarut'iwn Kelkelean, and Yovsep' Davudean. The president of both companies was Yarut'iwn Erkanian whose financial advice was often sought by the sultan.⁴ These two companies advanced capital to high ranking Turkish officials for the purchase of tax-farms in Anatolia and Rumelia respectively, and after collecting the taxes levied on the population shared the receipts. They also handled, for the most part, the business of Ottoman foreign exchange.⁵ Moreover, they lent money to merchants usually at an annual interest of twenty-five per cent.⁶

The second group of the Armenian notables was directly employed by the Ottoman government. Ever since 1453 Armenians had, by virtue of their occupational proficiency, attained some of the highest positions ever given by Ottomans to members of Christian minorities. During the reign of the Conqueror (1451-1481), Amirtovlat' had become the official palace physician.⁷ Hoca Ruhican was the chief furrier or *kürkçü-başı* of Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640), and Hoca Astuacatur was appointed as the imperial architect.⁸ In 1644 Abro Çelebi was in charge for the food supply to the Ottoman army while Sargis Çelebi had become an interpreter in the Ottoman ministry of foreign affairs.⁹ During the first quarter of the eighteenth century Selbos Amira was the *baş-bezirgan* or the chief surveyor of textiles for the grand vezir.¹⁰ Ever since 1789 members of the Tatean family successfully

⁴G. Mmrean, "Hyk' i Polis," *Verjin Lur*, 1921, #13.

⁵Siwrmeyean, *Patmut'iwn Halepi Hayoc'*, III, p. 532.

⁶Garnik Step'anean, *Urvagic Arevmtahay T'atroni Patmut'ean* (1962), I, p. 22.

⁷L. Yovnanian, *Hetazotut'iwnk' Naxneac' Ramkoreni Vray* (1897), pp. 339-375.

⁸Banaser, 1902, p. 233 ; Mmrean, *Patmut'iwn Hay Mecatuneru*, p. 27.

⁹Arak'el Dawrizec'i *Patmut'iwn* (1896), p. 281 ; Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," pp. 91-96; Leo, *Hayoc' Patmut'iwn* (1946), III, p. 242; N. Akinean, *Eremia Çelebi Koemiwrcean* (1933), pp. 230-238.

¹⁰Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," p. 131.

assumed the directorship of the imperial powder-works for over seventy-five years.¹¹ Also prominent in this group was the Tiwzean family whose members were given the directorship of the imperial mint.¹² Similarly, members of the Cezayirlean family were often appointed directors of customs.¹³ Almost all the members of the Palean family became imperial architects who built the famous palace of Dolmabahçe, renovated the mosque of Aya Sofya, and constructed several palaces and buildings in the capital.¹⁴ The Noratunkean family was in charge of the supply of bread to the Ottoman army while members of the Arpiarean family were given the directorship of the silver mines. Moreover, during the first half of the nineteenth century, almost all the factories in the capital and the provinces were built or rebuilt and furnished by the members of the famous Tiwzean and Tatean families.¹⁵ During the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) Tat Arak'el became the first Ottoman subject to invent a special machine for the powder-works at Azatlı, a water-pump and a spinning machine, and, as a result of his contributions, he was appointed to the directorship of the imperial powder-works.¹⁶ The most outstanding magnate of this period, however, was Yarut'iwn Amira Pezcean who became the superintendent of the imperial mint in 1819. Pezcean was held in high esteem by Sultan Mahmut II as one of his counselors. In 1829, during the Russo-Turkish war, when famine threatened Constantinople, Pezcean, in his capacity as director of the imperial mint, advised Mahmut to remit all import duties on grain and provisions and thus save the capital from disaster. After the war Mahmut again followed Pezcean's counsel to depreciate the currency, which made the payment of the indemnity of the war possible. The sultan was so pleased with Pezcean's ingenuity that he conferred upon him the decoration of the Imperial Image, bestowed upon him the

¹¹T. Azatean, *Tatean Gerdastanë ew ir Akanawor Demkerë* (1952), pp. 3-12.

¹²Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2354.

¹³T. Azatean, *Akn ew Akncik'* (1944), p. 51.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁵Azatean, *Tatean Gerdastanë*, p. 9.

¹⁶*Bazmavep*, 1896, p. 7.

title of Prince of Imperial Court, and gave him the privilege of sharing in the deliberations of the Imperial Divan or the State Council.¹⁷ It is told that at his funeral ceremony (1834), Sultan Mahmud II came disguised to pay his last tribute to "a beloved friend and counselor."¹⁸

Both groups of the *amiras* played important roles in the destiny of the Ottoman empire. They not only held some of the important positions in the government but also controlled, almost totally, the economy of the whole empire. By virtue of their prestige and wealth the *amiras* wielded some power in the Ottoman government. Moreover, they exercised powerful influence upon the central administration of their own community. In fact, they often acted as mediators between the patriarchs and the government of the sultan. And since they met the regular expense of the patriarchate, their authority was usually recognized by the Armenian ecclesiastics. In order to consolidate their authority within the *millet*, some of those magnates were engaged in philanthropic and educational activities. Abro Çelebi, who underwrote the cost of copying numerous manuscripts, was personally responsible for the construction of one and the renovations of three churches in Istanbul.¹⁹ In 1649 Malak'ia Çelebi assumed the operating costs of six churches in the capital. During the first quarter of the eighteenth century Selbos Amira was instrumental in constructing St. Karapet and Holy Cross churches in Üsküdar (1727).²⁰ During the third quarter of the eighteenth century Mkrtic' Amira Miricanean established the first Armenian parochial school in the quarter of Kum-Kapu. This elementary school served as a model for similar schools soon opened in the quarters of Balat (1796), Ortaköy (1798), Kuru-Çeşme (1798), Samatya (1799), and Scutari (1800). For his educational and philanthropic activities Mkrtic was surnamed *snorhk'* (graceful) by patriarch Zak'aria.²¹ During the reign of

¹⁷ Biwzand K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Surb P'rkci Hiwandanoc'in Hayoc'* (1887), p. 2.

¹⁸ H. Acarean, "Hayoc' Derë Osmaneian Kaysrut'ean Mej", *Bamber Erevani Hamalsarani*, 1943, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Luma*, 1898, II, p. 258.

²⁰ Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 135.

²¹ K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 3; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2354.

Mahmud II Pezcean Amira became a friend of the poor, and gave abundantly of his ample means for philanthropic, educational and religious enterprises. He underwrote the costs for the renovations and constructions of the patriarchal headquarters, the two elementary schools of Kum-Kapu, the school for girls at Pera, and the church, the school and the fountain at Kartal. In 1820 he established a professional school of *dival* (embroidery) for girls where most of the ecclesiastical vestments were prepared. In 1828 he alone built the Cathedral at Kum-Kapu, but his most important benevolent act was the construction of the Holy Savior National Hospital²² in Constantinople (1833) which, to this day, serves Armenians and Turks alike. As a result of his activities, Yarut'iwn Amira Pezcean of all men was the one to make himself heard on all problems in his own Armenian community. He presided over the patriarch's advisory board and was commonly called *azgapet* or head of community.²³

The Esnafs

The social organization of all major Ottoman cities was one of self-contained and self-governing groups. Not only skilled workmen and tradesmen, but almost all who were engaged in any occupation were members of a recognized guild, called an *esnaf*.²⁴ There were, for example, *esnafs* of physicians, teachers, jewelers, shoemakers, bakers, and even water-carriers and beggars. Until the middle of the seventeenth century Muslims and Christians belonged to various corporations without distinction. The Ottoman government encouraged the establishment of these guilds, irrespective of the religion of its members, for economic reasons. It was convenient for the sultan to "collect taxes from the heads of organized groups rather than from clandestine tradesmen and merchants."²⁵ By the second half of the seventeenth

²²L. Alisan, *K'alak'akan Asxarhagrut'iwn* (1853), pp. 390-394.

²³Perpercan, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 189.

²⁴From the Arabic word *sinf* (pl. *Asnaf*) meaning class, trade.

²⁵*Msak*, 1888, #132.

century, however, relations between Muslims and Christians in the various *esnafs* had begun to deteriorate and the formation of separate guilds for Christians was permitted by the Ottoman authorities.

The exact number of Armenian *esnafs* in the Ottoman empire, at any time, is not easy to determine. At the end of the eighteenth century the Armenian artisans and merchants of Istanbul were organized into sixty-five *esnafs*,²⁶ and by the second quarter of the nineteenth century this number was almost doubled and included most of the trades in the capital.²⁷ During the same period "the Armenian coppersmiths, shoemakers, tailors, bakers, masons, grocers, blacksmiths, and other artisans of Erzurum were established into over fifty corporations."²⁸ In 1829 there were 331 Armenian shopkeepers in Bayezid organized into several guilds.²⁹ During the same period the Armenian tradesmen of Çıldır were incorporated into thirty *esnafs* while the artisans of Van, mostly jewellers, were established into several dozens of corporations.³⁰

The organization of the Armenian *esnafs* generally followed the same system throughout the empire. Each guild included *ustas* (masters), *kalfas* (master-apprentices), and *çıraks* (apprentices). The leader of each *esnaf* was usually given the title *ağa* (general officer) by the Ottoman government. Every apprentice attached himself to a master who taught him the trade and vouched for him when he became eligible for promotion. The privilege to open shops for each *esnaf*, as well as the quality and price of each product, were decided upon by the local government. In 1836 the official price of one *okka* (2.8 lbs.) of olive oil in the capital was 50 *para* (the fortieth part of a piastre), and bakers were required not to charge more than 25 *para* for an *okka* of bread.³¹

²⁶ *Divan Hayoc' Patmut'ean* (1912), x, p. 338.

²⁷ *Endarjak Oracoyc'*, 1902, p. 199.

²⁸ *Msak*, 1890, #127.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Arew*, 7 October 1855.

In the eighteenth century the affairs of each Armenian *esnaf* were managed by a council of elders formed by the *ustas*. This council, whose powers were usually vested in a single individual, the *kahya* (warden, steward), issued all licenses of the *esnaf* upon the surety of one of the important licensed artisan of the guild. The *kahya* was the representative of the *esnafs* and the general manager of the guild's internal business. The *kahya* of each *esnaf* was usually employed by the paşa of the region, and exercised great influence on him. In the provinces "the *kahyas* were often able to have the death verdict of their fellow tradesmen reversed through their prestige and influence with the local authorities."³² The election of the *kahya* took place at a special meeting of the council of elders where an Armenian priest solemnly swore the *kahya* "on the Bible and the Cross to be a father to all the *ustas*, *kalfas*, and *çıraks* of the trade."³³ The council's meeting place was called *lonca-odası*, and regular meetings always began with prayer.³⁴ The privilege of voting and being elected was reserved only to the *ustas* as the established masters of the trade.³⁵

The income of the treasury of each *esnaf* consisted of membership dues and fines, which varied in every section of the empire. In 1826 the monthly dues for each jeweller in Van was twenty piastres.³⁶ The coppersmiths and blacksmiths of Erzurum submitted ten per cent of their income to the *esnaf's* treasury while the merchants of the same city reserved one-fifth of their profits for the organization.³⁷ The money was then utilized by extending loans to member and non-member businessmen on interest.

The regular expenses of each *esnaf* included taxes to the government and the central administration of the *millet*, gifts to members

³²Yusarjan, 1929, #1, p. 27.

³³Luma, 1898, p. 329.

³⁴ABCFM, Armenian Mission, IV, #1, 17 January 1846.

³⁵Msak, 1890, #98.

³⁶Luma, 1898, p. 197.

³⁷Ibid.

on happy occasions, assistance to needy members and their families, and general donations to the orphans and the poor of their own community.³⁸ In addition to these regular expenditures, the *esnafs* made substantial contributions to the catholicosates of Ejmiacin, Sis, and the patriarchate of Jerusalem to relieve their financial burdens. Similarly, they often came to the rescue of the patriarch of Constantinople and the local diocesan bishops by paying their debts and bribes to Ottoman officials.³⁹ As a result of their financial contributions, the Armenian *esnafs*, as organized groups, began slowly to take part in the affairs of their *millet*.

The earliest recorded lay intervention in the affairs of the Armenian patriarchate of Istanbul came in 1612 when a group of laymen, led by influential Hoca Astuacatur, reacted against the despotic rule of patriarch Grigor Kesaraci, and demanded his resignation. Grigor, fully cognizant of the group's intentions, appointed four lay representatives to negotiate with Astuacatur. The ensuing consultations resulted in the resignation of Grigor and election of Zakaria Veneci to the patriarchal office. The imperial *berat* which confirmed the election of Zakaria was acquired through the efforts of Astuacatur who seems to have had the ear of Nasuh Paşa, the Grand Vezir of Sultan Ahmet I.⁴⁰ In 1655 patriarch Yovhannes fell from office, and, in the absence of a qualified bishop, twenty-four vicars, under the leadership of Hoca Ruhican, transacted the affairs of the office for almost four years. From 1689-1692 the affairs of the patriarchate were again administered by a group of lay vicars, this time led by one Hamamci Sahin.⁴¹ Thus, the pioneering efforts of Hoca Ruhican and his associates laid the foundation upon which the future Armenian constitutional life in the Ottoman empire was to be erected. The aristocratic lay influence in the *millet's* central administration was established, and the laity was to play

³⁸ *Msak*, 1888, #134.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Grigoris Galemkerean, *Kensagrut'iwnner Erku Hay Patriark'neru ew Tasn Episkoposneru* (1915), pp. 42-49.

⁴¹ For the complete list of these lay vicars, see C'amc'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, III, p. 672.

even a greater role in the administrative and financial affairs of the patriarchate in the next century.

The earliest participation of the *esnafs*, as organized groups, in the affairs of the Armenian patriarchate, dates back to the early part of the eighteenth century. In 1725 patriarch Kolot called a general assembly at the cathedral to elect a new catholicos. In order to give this election a national character and support, Kolot invited, in addition to the high-ranking clergy and the magnates of Istanbul, the leaders of all the *esnafs* of the capital. Almost unanimously Karapet Ulneci was elected as Catholicos of All Armenians, and his election was accepted by Armenians in every part of the world. Thus, the foundation of general assemblies was laid without much difficulty, and, henceforth, the elections of the Armenian patriarchs of Constantinople took place through similar assemblies. It is important to note, however, that the delegates to these assemblies were not elected by the populace but rather appointed by the patriarch. Moreover, the elections in these assemblies did not take place by secret ballot. Instead, candidates were nominated by the most influential magnates and the consensus of the delegates was designated by the raising of their hands.⁴² The number of the delegates participating in the general assemblies, convened before the nineteenth century, cannot be easily determined. However, the minutes of the general Assembly of March 18, 1829, carefully preserved in the archives of the patriarchate in Istanbul, shows ninety delegates who have approved the decisions of the assembly by their signatures.⁴³

Besides the election of patriarchs these assemblies appointed various committees for the administration of educational and charitable institutions. These institutions comprised all the schools of the *millet* and the hospital in Istanbul which included a home for the aged, an orphanage, and a section for the mentally ill. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century these institutions were, for the most part, financed by the *amiras*. During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the

⁴²Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 384.

⁴³*Atenagrut'iwnk' Azgayin Endhanur Zolovoc'*, 1830, p. 9.

esnafs began to also take active part in the financial support of educational institutions. At a general assembly, convened on 20 November 1831, the leader of each *esnaf*, on behalf of his guild, was made to sign a promise to support the expenses of a particular school in Istanbul. Consequently, the *esnaf* of the jewellers assumed the financial burden of the school at Langa,⁴⁴ the *esnaf* of the *tüccars* financed the school at Top-Kapu, and the *esnaf* of the tavern-keepers supported the school at Kanlı-Kilisi.⁴⁵ Moreover, the patriarchate, following the example of the Jewish community, established a special fund for the poor in 1832, and each *esnaf* was required to contribute a fixed sum.⁴⁶

The general assembly of March 19, 1834, consisted of the bishops, the *amiras*, and the representatives of the *esnafs*, elected a committee of ten for the administration of the schools, the hospital and other institutions of the *millet*. This committee, acting as an advisory board to the patriarch, was totally comprised of *amiras*. The *esnafs*, who had begun to contribute their share in the financing of the national institutions, had not yet earned the privilege of representation on such community, and, in the ensuing three decades, they were to play a decisive role in the eventual establishment of the constitutional life within the Armenian *millet*.

⁴⁴*Masis*, 1893, p. 148.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

CHAPTER III

THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The Latin Missions

In addition to the two major Christian *millets* of the Ottoman empire, there were groups of foreigners, chiefly Catholic merchants residing in Istanbul and other cities, who lived under provisions of a formal treaty drawn up between the sultan and the foreign country. The general tenor of these treaties was exemplified in the Treaty of 1503 between Sultan Bayezid II and Venice. This treaty provided that a Venetian consul would reside in Istanbul, grant permission to Venetians to travel in the empire, and settle all disputes between them. Similar treaties were signed with France in 1535, 1604, and 1673. Finally, as a result of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), all Catholic foreigners of the empire were placed under the protection of the French Ambassador in Istanbul.* Taking advantage of the privileges granted by these treaties Latin missionaries from Europe began to labor in the Ottoman empire. Almost completely unsuccessful in their attempts to convert Muslims, the Catholic missionaries concentrated their efforts upon the indigenous Christian subjects of the empire.

Sporadic attempts, throughout the centuries, have been made by the Church of Rome to subject the Armenian Church to the Papacy. Active Romanist teaching among in Armenians, however, dates back to

*This is of course an error, France not being a party to the treaty which in fact recognized to Russia the right of protection of the Christians subjects of the Ottoman empire, n. of ed.

the foundation of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (1622) by Pope Gregory XV. The aim of the *Congregatio* was "to spread Catholicism among the gentiles of the world and to bring the non-Catholic heretics and schismatics under the papal authority."¹ Five years later the College of Propaganda was opened by Pope Urban VIII at Rome, where novices from all over the world received a highly disciplined theological training. Upon graduation and ordination into the priesthood these well-trained missionaries were sent to work within their respective ethnic groups.

Subsequent to the founding of the College the Latin missions among the Armenians received a new impetus. In 1662 Clement Galano, a Theatin monk, was sent to work among the Armenians of the Ottoman capital. Under the powerful protection of the French government the Catholic missions soon prospered in Istanbul. They were especially successful with the Armenian aristocracy, as evidenced by the conversion of several wealthy Armenians including the families of Tiwzean, Tnkrean, and Gelcean *amiras*.² They also gained ground in the major cities of the empire. In 1688 they founded a large mission at Erzurum whose branches extended their operations to Kars, Bayezid, and Trebizond.³ By 1735 they were powerful enough to own four of the seven Armenian churches in Angora.⁴ In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV Lambertini established the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of Lebanon with jurisdiction over Syria and Cilicia, and in 1758 appointed the first Armenian Pontifical Vicar at Istanbul whose authority extended over the Ottoman capital, Armenia, and Asia Minor outside of Cilicia. The Armenian vicar was vested with authority to ordain priests with the approval of the Latin Pontifical vicar of the capital.⁵

¹Leo, *Haykakan Tpagrut'iwn* (1901), I, pp. 85-86.

²Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," pp. 173-174.

³ABCFM, *Armenian Mission*, I #169, 1842.

⁴C'amc'ean, *Patmut'iwn*, III, p. 814.

⁵Leon Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening: A History of the Armenian Church, 1820-1860* (1909), p. 39.

The reaction of the Armenian patriarchate to the Latin missionary was, from the beginning, antagonistic and suppressive, since they attempted to undermine the authority of the Armenian church. Moreover, it was to the interest of the *millet's* central administration to prevent any schism which may reduce the number of tax-paying members from its communion. The policy of the Ottoman government was also against multiplication of sects. It was a fundamental law of the empire that every non-Muslim must belong to one of the recognized *millets*. To secede from one *millet* in order to join one not officially recognized by the government was equivalent to renunciation of all civil rights and privileges, and exposed the offender to the grim consequences of outlawry, including the penalty of death.⁶ Until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, converts to Catholicism from the members of the recognized *millets* were still legally subject to the authority of their respective *millet* leaders.⁷

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the dissensions between the papists and the Armenian nationals in Istanbul came to a head. In 1707 the papal Armenians of the capital ceased to attend the national churches, and began to frequent the Latin churches of foreigners. As a result, the central administration of the *millet* embarked upon a vigorous persecution of papists under patriarch Awetik'. The papal Armenians were not only denied the ordinances of baptism, matrimony, and burial, but also punitive measures, in the form of fines, exile, and imprisonment, were inflicted upon them.⁸ These persecutions, however, failed to draw the papists back into the fold of the mother church, as evidenced by their celebration of mass in private homes.⁹

In the early part of the nineteenth century a more realistic and compassionate attitude was manifested by the Armenian patriarchate toward the papal Armenians. Unsuccessful to suppress the illegal

⁶Cyrus Hamlin, *My Life and Times* (1893), p. 283.

⁷Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2355.

⁸Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 195-198.

⁹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2365-2366.

worship maintained in the homes of the papists by severe punishments, a more conciliatory policy was pursued by the *millet's* central administration to heal the existing breach. By this time, however the Armenian papal clergy were divided into two antagonistic factions. On the one hand was the party of Collegians, named after the College of Propaganda where its members had received their training. This group denied the validity of baptism and other sacraments of the Armenian Church, and demanded complete conformity of the Armenians to the Roman Catholic Church in doctrine and worship.¹⁰ On the other hand was the faction of the Mxit'arists, named after their founder, Mxit'ar Abbot, whose headquarters was the monastery of St. Lazarus at Venice. The Mxit'arists were distinguished by a more faithful adherence to Armenian tradition than the Collegians. For exemple, they insisted on the preservation of the Armenian language and rejected Latin in the liturgy. They had an important following among the people of Istanbul, including the influential families of *amiras*.¹¹ In their attempts at unity the Armenian nationals found their support in this group.

The first serious conciliatory effort came on 3 July 1810 when patriarch Yovhannes invited the clerical and lay leaders of the papists to a conference to discuss the possibilities of unity. The catholics presented their conditions for return to the mother church in a document which contained five doctrinal points concerning Christology, Purgatory, the Holy Spirit, the sacrament of Extreme Unction, and the supremacy of the Pope.¹² Yovhannes appointed a committee of nine ecclesiastics and eight laymen to examine the five points which had divided Catholicism and the Armenian Church for centuries. After a careful study the committee recommended rejection of the papal conditions "since acceptance of these five points would constitute total submission of the Armenian Church to the papacy."¹³ Thus ended the first efforts to draw the papists back into the mother church.

¹⁰Leo, *Tpagrut'iwn*, p. 86.

¹¹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2321.

¹²Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 67-68.

¹³Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2323.

The second attempt at unity was again undertaken by the mother church when patriarch Polos called a special conference on October 23, 1817 inviting a considerable number of influential papal Armenians, including twelve *amiras*. The patriarch eloquently presented the orthodox doctrines and teachings of the mother church through the writing of St. Gregory the Illuminator and St. Nerses Snorhali, both of whom were venerated by the papists. At the end of the conference it was agreed to form a special committee, containing equal number of representatives from each side, to examine the Armenian Book of Liturgy and the Book of Sacraments, and make recommendations for certain changes. In the next few days the delegates of the Armenian patriarchate were appointed but the papists failed to send their own representatives. Although the papal laity and the Mxit'arist clergy genuinely favored unity with the mother church, the party of the Collegians and the pontifical vicar appeared to be uncompromising, and were successful in preventing the formation of the committee.¹⁴ Thus the second effort for union also proved abortive this time due to the opposition of one segment of the papal clergy.

The third effort toward a reconciliation was undertaken under pressure from the Ottoman government. An imperial decree of January 18, 1820 directed patriarch Polos "to again negotiate with the papists and pacify the community".¹⁵ Similar instructions from the Porte were received by Yarut'iwn Amira Pezcean and Karapet Amira Palean. Chiefly through the efforts of these two magnates two committees of three and four, appointed by the patriarch and the Mxit'arists respectively, were formed to find a solution to the existing breach. The patriarch's committee included two priests and a layman, while the papal committee was comprised of four priests.¹⁶ The two committee met alternately at the homes of Pezcean and Palean *amiras* for three months and discussed the original five doctrinal points. Finally the two committees agreed on certain changes, and a declaration of faith, known

¹⁴Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 83.

¹⁵Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 145.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

as *Call to Love*,¹⁷ was drawn up, which may be considered as a compromise between Latin and Armenian doctrines. On April 2, 1820 patriarch Polos summoned a synod which not only adopted the declaration of faith but also removed from the Book of Ordination the anathema against the Council of Chalcedon and Pope Leo the Great. Moreover, the names of three anti-papal saints were dropped from the Armenian liturgy.¹⁸ Thus the negotiations for complete unity were ostensibly brought to a successful end, and the union was outwardly manifested on April 11 when seven papal priests entered the communion of the mother church and pledged allegiance to the patriarch.

But this union received no sympathy from the Collegians who, from the beginning, made every attempt to frustrate the efforts toward unity. To them the solution of the problem lay only in the complete subjugation of the Armenian Church to the papacy. Consequently, they secured the influence of the French Ambassador at the capital to induce the Latin Pontifical Vicar of Istanbul to recall a former decision which had reluctantly allowed the papal clergy to participate in the proposed five-point doctrinal discussions with the nationals. They were also able to persuade the pontifical vicar to issue a letter of excommunication against the seven papal priests who had returned to the mother church. Moreover, they agitated the Armenian populace by distributing a distorted version of *Call to Love* in which the picture of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the patron saint of the nationals, was replaced with that of the pope. On August 7, 1820 a Galatian fanatic papist, posing as an Armenian national, went to the quarter of Armenian shoemakers in Istanbul, entered every shop and as he displayed the distorted version of the declaration of faith, said: "Do you not know, brethren, that our patriarch has accepted the pope of the Franks? Look at this picture, brethren! Does this look like our St. Gregory the Illuminator?"¹⁹ As a result, the naive shoemakers spread the rumor throughout the capital that

¹⁷The full text of the declaration in classical Armenian will be found in Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 122-126.

¹⁸Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p.146.

¹⁹Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 161.

the Armenian patriarch had turned papist. The following morning men from all quarters of the city poured in and a huge crowd surrounded the patriarchate and demanded an explanation from the patriarch. The latter sent out two of his bishops, Markos and Yakob, to assure the mob that the rumors were without any foundation, but they were beaten and driven away. The crowd then forcibly entered the patriarchate and broke the furniture. Meanwhile, Patriarch Polos had escaped from the back door and found refuge in a Turkish house. Peace was restored only when the *Ağa* of the Janissaries came to the patriarchate with over 500 troops and arrested some of the demonstrators.²⁰

Under these circumstances, the presence of the seven papal Armenian priests who had returned to the mother church was an eyesore to the populace. As patriarch Polos was planning to send them abroad, they fled to the Latin churches at Beyoğlu, recanted for their apostasy and returned to the Church of Rome. Those papal Armenians who had followed the seven priests into the mother church also returned to the fold of the Catholic Church. Thus the last effort for peace and unity in the Armenian community of Istanbul ended once again without much result.

It had now become apparent that the Collegians were against any form of unity with the mother church. Subsequent to their failure to subject the Armenian Church, as a whole, to the papacy, the Romanists concentrated their efforts on the establishment of an independent patriarchate of their own. In the fall of 1827 the papists, led by Yakob Amira Tenkerea, presented Sultan Mahmud II with a petition to constitute them as a separate community. Two years later, foreign sympathy came to their assistance. At the close of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, France and England demanded of the sultan the return of all the papist exiles and the establishment of a civil organization for the Catholics of the empire independent of the Armenian patriarch.²¹ Consequently, the papists were allowed freedom of worship on the sole

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 163.

²¹ABCFM, Armenian Mission I, #169, 1842.

condition that they should build their own churches and not attend those of the foreigners. Finally, on May 24, 1831 the Catholics of the Ottoman empire were accorded formal civil recognition by Sultan Mahmud II. The imperial edict which established the Catholic *millet* began thus:

Whereas the tax-paying Catholics of the Empire have hitherto been under the jurisdictions of the Greek and Armenian patriarchs, without a bishop of their own, and on account of the Catholic rites being different from the Greek and Armenian liturgies, have been unable to observe their own rites, and compelled to frequent the churches of the foreigners and to ask them to perform their marriages and other rites, have experienced great distress and suffering.

Therefore, I, on this 21st day of the month of *Rejeb*, in the year 1246, in order that they may refrain from attending the churches of the foreigners and be able to perform their rites in their own churches, have appointed Yakob C'uxurean as *piskopos* over all Catholics living in my imperial City and other parts of my dominions.²²

Thus bishop C'uxurean became the head of all the Catholic subjects of the empire with powers almost comparable to the Armenian patriarch. The only difference was in the title *piskopos* (bishop) which was changed into "patriarch" by the Sublime Porte in 1835.²³

It is not surprising that Catholicism gained a foothold among the Armenians of the empire. The superiority of its clergy to the native Armenian in education and discipline, and its constant contact with the west, combined to render Armenian Catholicism a movement of undeniable power. The next two decades marked a considerable degree of progress for the Armenian papists. In 1844 the papal Armenians in

²²The title "patriarch" was used by the head of the Catholic community only after 1835 with the permission of the Sublime Porte.

²³Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2437.

Constantinople were estimated at from 10,000 to 13,000 souls.²⁴ Their priests were educated abroad, and could generally speak one or more European languages. However, the rival interests of their clergy, as they happened to have been educated at Rome or Venice, produced no inconsiderable degree of strife in the community. In addition, the denationalizing policy of Rome to replace the ancient Armenian liturgy with the Latin Mass prevented, to a great extent, the progress of Catholicism among the Armenians. Moreover, with the advent of lay education and enlightenment, the old doctrinal differences between the Catholic and the Armenian church gradually began to lose their force.

The impact of the Romanist missions on the Armenian *millet* was primarily educational. Many Armenians, all sons of wealthy urban aristocrats, began to go to Europe, particularly Rome, to receive a western education. Karapet, the palace chief physician in 1761, had graduated from the university of Padua. Polos Şasean, a graduate of the medical school in Rome, became the palace chief physician in 1770. Yovakim Oluluxean, a graduate of the Vienna University, wrote several books on medicine which were published in 1783 and 1785.²⁵ In the realm of music Grigor Gapasagalean, a graduate of Rome, published the first musical setting in western notation for the Armenian liturgy in 1794, while Papa Hambarjum introduced western musical transcription to the Turks.²⁶ Moreover the Romanist missionary activities provided an incentive for the education of the national clergy. In 1818 Yovhannes Kolot, the progressive Armenian patriarch, founded a seminary in Üsküdar which, within a short period of time, produced over thirty educated clerics.²⁷ Kolot's brilliant pupil and successor, Yakob Nalean, founded the patriarchal academy at Kum Kapu in 1755. Most of the future religious leaders and educators of the Armenian *millet* were graduates of this institution.

²⁴ ABCFM, Armenian Mission I, #115, 1844.

²⁵ The original manuscripts of these works are preserved at the St. Lazar monastery in Venice.

²⁶ *Bazmavep*, 21 March 1903.

²⁷ Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 1923, 1934, 1935.

The several printing establishments in Istanbul, where among other works translations from western literature were published, are also attributed to the Latin missionary labors among the Armenians. In 1676 Eremia Çelebi opened a printing press where several books on grammar and geography were printed.²⁸ In 1699 Astuacatur Dpir, a papist, founded another printing establishment publishing mostly translations from the works of Latin Church fathers.²⁹ In 1750 Step'annos Petrosean opened a printing press where translations from ancient Greek and French authors were printed.³⁰ From 1715-1764 over one hundred-forty books on grammar, geography, logic, philosophy, and religious subjects were printed in Istanbul.³¹

The Protestant Missionary Activities

The first American Protestant mission commenced at Istanbul in 1831, on the arrival of William Goodell, who was impressed with the fact that the Armenians were, more than other Christians in the empire, open to Protestant missionary influences.³² Originally, the American mission to Istanbul was intended for the benefit of the Greek as well as of the Armenian people. The mission to the Jews began in 1832 with William Schauflier. The former of these missions became, in the course of time, enlarged and extended, so that in 1856, it was divided into two, the Northern and the Southern Missions. In the same year the Jewish Mission ceased to have a separate existence, and its members united their labors with those of the two Armenian Missions.³³

By 1845 the Protestant missionary movement had already made some headway throughout the empire. Although it is difficult to furnish

²⁸Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," 109.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 115-119.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 137.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 136-137, 147.

³²Arpee, *Awakening*, p. 93.

³³ABCFM, Armenian Mission I, #85, 29 January 1844.

any satisfactory estimate of the numbers of Armenian converts, they were found in Istanbul, Bursa, Nicomedia (İzmit), Trebizond, Tokat, Amasya, and other cities. In each of these places the number was small, sometimes not more than two or three. In the capital, the number of Armenian Protestants in 1844 was less than one hundred.³⁴

The mission high school, opened at Beyoğlu in 1834, offered free education and thus attracted a number of students from the mother church. In 1840 the school was transferred to Bebek on the Bosphorus under the supervision of Cyrus Hamlin. The purpose of the mission school was, in addition to providing a general education, to prepare future ministers from the native Armenians. The curriculum included, among other subjects, English, etymology, moral philosophy, history of the Reformation, and theology.³⁵ The religious education offered at Bebek was contrary to the teachings of the Armenian Church. The missionaries taught against the seven sacraments of the church, the intercession of saints, confession, and other doctrinal matter.³⁶

The Protestant female boarding school at Hasköy, in the midst of an Armenian community, also attracted pupils from the mother church. Three-fourths of all students, who had been in the school any considerable length of time, were converted to Protestantism.³⁷ Besides a good intellectual training in the fundamental branches of common education, the school emphasized the formation of such domestic habits as would give the students self-reliance and simplicity in their manners and dress. Consequently, wives of native ministers, teachers, and pious laymen were furnished by this school. In short, graduates of the female boarding school later became efficient helpers in the missionary works at the capital and in the provinces.

From its inception, the Protestant missionary activities met the opposition of the Armenian patriarchate. In 1837 the parents of all

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*, #103, 18 February 1844.

³⁶Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 296-297.

³⁷ABCFM, *Armenian Mission III*, 3126, 1855.

students at both schools were ordered by patriarch Step'an to withdraw their children from the institutions. Two years later, Step'an issued a patriarchal letter forbidding any Armenian to participate in the Protestant activities.³⁸ Not only the participants, but all those who concealed facts about the Protestants were severely punished. As a result, many artisans were driven out of their trades, and expelled from their houses.³⁹ In 1846 every Armenian Protestant was required to sign a nine-point confession of faith to be readmitted into the mother church. Those who would not sign it were cursed by the church's anathema, their goods were confiscated by the patriarchate, their debtors forbidden to pay them their debts, and their creditors commanded to enforce payment.⁴⁰

In spite of these persecutions, however, the Protestants gradually prospered. The first Protestant Church in Istanbul was established in 1846. Churches were also organized in Nicomedia, Adapazar, and Trebizond. By the end of 1846 the active membership of these four churches was about 140, and the entire Protestant community numbered over one thousand souls.⁴¹ In the next three years churches were also established in Erzurum (1847), Aintab and Bursa (1848). Moreover, foreign assistance came to their rescue from these persecutions when, through the powerful influence of Sir Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador, the Protestants of the empire were accorded formal recognition by the Ottoman government on November 27, 1850. The imperial *ferman* of Sultan Abdülmecid established the Protestant *millet* in the following words:

Whereas, hitherto those of my Christian subjects who have embraced the Protestant faith, in consequence of their not being under any specially appointed superintendence, and in consequence of the patriarchs and primates of their former sects,

³⁸The text of the patriarchal letter will be found in Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 268-269.

³⁹ABCFM, Armenian Mission #1, 17 January 1846.

⁴⁰Cyrus Hamlin, *The Armenian Controversy* (1883), p. 1; ABCFM, Armenian Mission #2, 1846.

⁴¹Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity* (1946). p. 269.

which they have renounced, naturally not being able to attend to their affairs, have suffered much inconvenience and distress;

and

Whereas, by reason of their faith, the abovementioned are already a separate community,

Therefore, it is my Royal compassionate will, that... a respectable and trustworthy person, acceptable to and chosen by themselves, from among their own number, be appointed with the title of Agent of the Protestants, who shall be attached to the Prefecture of the Police.⁴²

Strengthened by the imperial recognition of their status the Protestants began to expand their activities without fear of persecution. In 1854 they had fifteen churches throughout the empire with 2,300 registered members.⁴³ By 1859 the number of their churches was almost doubled, including parishes in Diyarbekir and Maraş.⁴⁴ From 1839-1859 over hundred-fifty religious and educational books were printed in the native languages of the empire.⁴⁵ In 1854 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions provided the Protestants of the Ottoman empire with a brief and concise constitution, which was, in essence, an abbreviation of the by-laws of the American Evangelical Church.⁴⁶

The Protestant constitution, based on the representative principle and on lay control, was comprised of four short chapters, and dealt only with civil matters. It provided for a representative assembly which was elected by the local missions. The assembly was empowered to deal with the national budget, to elect the Agent and the members of the central administration, and to appoint committees for the management of

⁴²Prime, *Forty Years in the Empire*, pp. 483-484.

⁴³Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," p. 238.

⁴⁴ABCFM, *Armenian Mission*, #15, 1859.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, #203, 21 June 1859.

⁴⁶For the English text of the document, see ABCFM, *Armenian Mission*, #113, 1855.

the educational activities of the community. The officers of the central administration included a chairman, a secretary, two treasurers, two auditors, a librarian, and the Agent. The committee of education exercised a general supervision over all schools directing the course of study and rules of discipline, while the committee of publication was authorized to superintend the printing of all types of publications.

The Protestants were not a *millet* in full sense. Unlike the Armenian and the Catholic *millet* leaders, the Protestant Agent, who had only nominal authority over all Protestants of the empire, was always an Armenian layman. Moreover, the predominant lay control, which was the essence of the organization of the Protestant community, furnished an example to the Armenian nationals. When copies of the Protestant constitution, printed in Armenian and Armeno-Turkish were distributed among the people by Protestant Armenians, the central administration of the Armenian *millet* came to realize that increased lay participation in *millet* affairs would be imperative to prevent more defections to Protestantism.⁴⁷

Like the papist movement, the Protestant missions also had a positive impact on the educational activities of the Armenian *millet*. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century the need was increasingly felt in the Armenian *millet* for secondary schools and colleges to counter the already existing Protestant educational institutions. Thus in 1836 the Nersesean High School was opened at Hasköy which provided accommodations for over six-hundred students.⁴⁸ In 1838 two salaried *amiras* contributed the major costs for the foundation of the first Armenian college in the Ottoman empire, which was to become the subject of a bitter controversy between the *sarrafs* and the *esnafs*, thus marking the real beginning of the populist movement within the Armenian *millet*.

⁴⁷Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," pp. 209-210.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 163.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF TANZIMAT

Ottoman Decline and Reform to 1839

The history of the Ottoman empire, like the history of other states, represents a series of ages of transition. The empire reached its height in power, wealth, and brilliance in the sixteenth century under Süleyman the Lawgiver. Ironically, the seeds of Ottoman decline are also discernible in this age. But the gradual weakening of the empire was becoming more apparent in the seventeenth century, and continued progressively down into the nineteenth century.

The scope of this work does not permit a detailed discussion of the causes for the decline of the Ottoman empire. Suffice it to say that the gradual deterioration resulted in part from the lack of genuine contact with the West, and in part from corruption and anarchy in the government, the army, and even in the ranks of the religious and judicial hierarchy. The administration suffered at all levels, beginning with the sultan himself. With few exceptions, the sultans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lacked the vigor and general personal quality of able rulers. From the beginning of the seventeenth century these rulers, before accession to the throne, were kept in luxurious but enervating confinement in the imperial palaces. Unlike their predecessors, who received practical experience in provincial government before inheriting the throne, the sultans of these two centuries came into office inexperienced and with dissipated tastes. Hence the Ottoman political system which had developed with the sultan as the keystone of the arch of power, began to crumble.

The whole Ottoman administration became corrupted as well. As early as the seventeenth century most of the highest posts in the government were filled by incompetent imperial favorites who had not worked up through the ranks by merit. Moreover, the method of recruitment of slaves was gradually abandoned, so that the grand vezirate and other high offices were administrated by free-born Muslims with family connections and interests. As a result of the growing change in methods of recruitment and promotion, the Ottoman bureaucracy suffered a catastrophic fall in efficiency and integrity. The same decline in professional and moral standards can be seen in the Muslim Institution, as judges grew avaricious for fees and bribes.

Most striking of all was the decline of the Ottoman armed forces. The Janissary corps, formerly the pride of the empire, gradually became valueless in battle and suffered a series of defeats at the hands of Western Europe and of Russia. Members of the corps became accustomed to gifts generously distributed by each new sultan, which in actuality constituted the purchase of Janissary approval. They could exercise considerable power by the threat of rebellion, and were usually difficult to control. In the provinces they became oppressive and overbearing, taking without payment whatever they wanted from the population. A considerable number of Janissaries were even engaged in various professions while drawing military pay from the government.

The system for providing *sipahis* from military fiefs became also deteriorated. Most of the fiefs were allocated not to fighting men, but to imperial favorites, including officials of the central administration and even women of the harem. Simultaneously, these fief holders sold the concession of collecting the taxes in a given area to a tax farmer who then squeezed the population to receive not only his purchase price but also a generous profit. The fief holders and tax farmers enjoyed the income, but seldom produced fighters for the sultan. In fact, some of

these notables arrogated to themselves a considerable measure of local autonomy and became strong enough to defy the central government.¹

But despite the decay in the Ottoman administration and the armed forces the empire managed to survive for three centuries after the first signs of internal deterioration appeared. The administrative system, corrupted as it became, still included some men of integrity and of remarkable ability. A few sultans and a number of Ottoman statesmen initiated some reform efforts concerning the armed forces. Sultan Abdülmecid I (1774-1789) secured French specialists to teach new methods in the army, and founded a school for army engineers where French instructors worked with Armenian interpreters.² But when Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) established a new regular army, trained and dressed along European lines, the reactionary forces, encouraged by the *ulema* and headed by the Janissaries, deposed him in 1807 and killed him in the following year.

It was Mahmud II (1808-1839), the last sultan of the direct *Osmanli* line, who at last exterminated the Janissary corps on June 15, 1826 and replaced it with the more effective and responsive new army, to be known as the *Asakir-i Mansurei- Muhammediye*, the Triumphant Muhammedan Soldiers. By the suppression of the Janissaries a centuries' old institution, once the terror of Europe, lately the terror of the sultans and the civil population, was finally destroyed. The new army opened the way for more western influence. In 1834 a military academy was established, and new army instructors from Prussia and Austria were obtained, including the famous Helmuth von Moltke, to train the new army. Moreover, Mahmud crushed the powers of the disobedient and unmanageable provincial governors or *derebeyi*, and thus strengthened the authority of the central administration. Military expeditions brought such regions as Iraq and Kurdistan once again under the control of the sultan. Rebellious *derebeyis* were either killed or

¹Helmuth von Moltke, *Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835 bis 1839* (1876), p. 223.

²Lewis, *Emergence of Turkey*, p. 49.

replaced by more loyal governors. It is apparent that Mahmud attempted no general westernization in the methods of provincial government, but his concern for a better treatment of the minorities was clearly expressed in one of his appeals to the non-Muslims which began thus: "You Greeks, you Armenians, you Jews are all servants of God and my subjects like the Muhammedans. Although your faith is different, the same law and my imperial will protect you all. Pay the taxes which I have imposed upon you, for these taxes are designated for your comfort and benefit."³

Among other reforms Mahmud founded a medical school where French was the language of instruction. In 1831 the *Moniteur Ottoman*, the first official newspaper of the Ottoman empire, was founded, which was followed a few months later by its counterpart in Turkish, the *Takvim-i Vekaye*. From 1834 on small groups of military and medical students were sent to study in Paris, London, and Vienna. Finally, a school designed to train governmental officers, the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*, was opened in 1838.

More immediately effective than these innovations were Mahmud's destruction of the Janissaries and crushing of the provincial governors. These two accomplishments contributed much to the preservation of unity and centralized government in the empire, which was to be the primary objective of all the reformers. Significantly, in each field of reform, the creation of a new order was to be preceded by the destruction of an old one.

The Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane

The destruction of the Janissaries had a great impact upon the non-Muslim subjects of the empire who had lived under its tyranny for centuries. The Treaty of Andrianople (1829), which established the

³Moltke, *Briefe über Zustände*, p. 13.

independent Kingdom of Greece, was an important landmark in the relationship of the Ottoman empire to the Powers of Europe. It set a precedent of active European military intervention in behalf of a non-Muslim community of the empire. Henceforth, the Ottoman government made every effort to prevent foreign interventions in its internal affairs.⁴

Mahmud II died in 1839 and was succeeded by his son Abdülmecid whose reign was characterized by constant efforts at reform and westernization. The new sultan was determined to continue his father's work, and was supported in this by his foreign minister, Mustafa Reşid Paşa, a remarkable statesman who was to become the real architect of the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. In addition to his experience in the high offices of the Ottoman government, the ambassadorships in Paris and London had provided Reşid with the knowledge of the West and with complete command of French. On November 3, 1839 four months after Abdülmecid's accession, a reform edict, *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane (The Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber) was issued in the name of the sultan. This imperial rescript was the first of the reforming edicts which are collectively known as the *Tanzimat* (Reorganization) in Ottoman history. The *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane was the work of Reşid Paşa who believed that people of all creeds within the empire would be treated equally.⁵ More significantly, however, the *Hatt-i Şerif* was the Porte's demonstration to Europe that the Ottoman empire was capable of self-preservation and reorganization.

The *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane contained three specific reform measures. First it promised to guarantee the security of life, honor, and property of all Ottoman subjects. Secondly, it pledged to end the system of taxfarming and institute the collection of fixed taxes by government

⁴Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 166.

⁵X. Abovyan, *Erkeri Liaskatar Zolovacu* (1958), VIII, pp. 248-249.

officials. Thirdly, it promised to establish a regular system of military conscription.⁶

The most remarkable promise of the *Hatt-i Şerif* was in the statement "these imperial concession extend to all our subjects, of whatever religion or sect they may be."⁷ It was this principle of equality of persons of all religions that represented the most radical breach with Islamic tradition, and was therefore quite shocking to most Muslims. Although the laws and traditions of Islam and the policy and practice of the Ottoman empire prescribed tolerance and protection for the non-Muslim subjects of the state, the infidels were still considered separate and inferior, and were moreover clearly marked as such. To give up this principle of inequality required of the Muslims an effort of renunciation that was considered an offense against both religion and common sense.⁸ It is not to be supposed, therefore, that the *Hatt-i Şerif* secured immediate equality for all Ottoman subjects. It was not in the nature of Ottoman decrees to overcome bigotry, passion, and prejudice.

Despite this opposition, however, equality before the law among all Ottoman citizens became for the first time solemnly announced official policy. Previously, in a legal dispute between a Christian and a Muslim, the verdict would often be biased in favor of the latter. Armenians were usually barred from giving testimony in Ottoman courts. At best the testimony of two non-Muslim witnesses was sometimes accepted as equal to the hear-say testimony of one Muslim.⁹ As a result, the Muslims could plunder, rape, and even kill Christians and still remain unpunished. Moreover, it was customary for the Muslim judges to accept generous bribes, especially when the case was between a Christian and a Muslim. The usual bribe to save a Muslim criminal

⁶Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (1954), pp. 119-125; For the English translation of the edict, see J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East* (1956), II, pp.

⁷Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, p. 115.

⁸Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë, p. 177.

⁹Sahak Ter Movsesian, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (1924), II, p. 693.

who had murdered a Christian was 3,000 piastres, and the sum of 1,500 piastres was usually considered adequate to free a Muhammedan who had blinded a non-Muslim.¹⁰ Following the promulgation of the *Hatt-i Şerif* mixed tribunals and mixed police courts, composed of Muslims and non-Muslims, were established for the first time. A further step toward equality was the acceptance of Christian testimony against Muslims in these tribunals. Moreover, Sultan Abdulmecid established the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Akhâm-i Adliye*) which completed a new penal code in 1840 reaffirming the principle of equality of all Ottoman subjects and abolishing capital punishment without a trial.¹¹ It was hoped that such general guarantees of equal protection and rights would strengthen the integrity of the empire, diminish separatist tendencies, and prevent foreign intervention.

The second principle proclaimed by the *Hatt-i Şerif* was the abolition of tax-farming. In 1840 the leading *sarrafs*, the bankers and moneylenders who either bought the farm of taxes themselves or lent funds to Ottoman officials for the purchase, were summoned to Istanbul and given notice that their contracts were cancelled. A direct collection of taxes by administrative officials was established which lasted about two years. Although the new system lessened the exactions on the peasantry in some regions, it too became involved in corruption and failed to produce sufficient revenue for the government, so that on March 11, 1842, tax-farming was reintroduced.

The *Hatt-i Şerif* also promised to establish an orderly system of military conscription, with the term of service reduced from lifetime to four or five years. Traditionally Christians were prevented from serving in the army and instead were required to pay an exemption tax. According to the promise of the *Hatt-i Şerif* non-Muslims were to serve equally with Muslims in the armed forces, but the Muslims could hardly accept Christians as their officers.¹² Upon the request of the Ottoman

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 694.

¹¹Lewis, *Emergence of Turkey*, pp. 106-107.

¹²Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 177.

government patriarch Matt'eos admonished all male members of his *millet*, through a patriarchal encyclical (1847), to enlist in the Ottoman army instead of paying the traditional exemption tax.¹³ But the Armenian soldiers of the imperial army were allowed to use only inferior weapons.¹⁴ In 1841, a small number of Armenian students were admitted in the Ottoman medical academy. Beginning in 1858 forty Armenian students were permitted to study at the academy each year while sixteen others were enrolled in the imperial engineering school along with sixteen Greek and six Jewish students.¹⁵ Upon graduation these non-Muslims served in the Ottoman army as physicians, pharmacists and engineers with military ranks.

The Limitations of the Patriarch's Temporal and Spiritual Powers

After the promulgation of the *Hatt-i Şerif* and the establishment of the mixed tribunals the civil powers of the *millet* leaders diminished considerably. The prerogative of sending lay members of the *millet* into exile at will was lost permanently, and the patriarch's traditional privileges were confined to religious and personal matters such as divorce, fasting and church attendance. He could still inflict corporal punishment upon lay members of his community who failed to obey the religious regulations. For example, an Armenian who did not follow the rules of fasting during the week preceding Easter usually received about twenty-five lashes on his back by the *vekil*.¹⁶ After 1840 even the religious prerogatives of the patriarch were limited to some extent. In 1840 the first Armenian Judicial Council was established following the example of the Ottoman Council of Judicial Ordinances of 1839. It is presumed that the formation of this council was ordered by the Ottoman government.¹⁷ Its members were comprised of four married priests and

¹³Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 322.

¹⁴Leo, *Hayoc' Patmut'iwn*, p. 367.

¹⁵Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë", pp. 177, 178.

¹⁶*Masis*, 20 March 1893, #3983, p. 163.

¹⁷Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë", p. 187.

four *amiras*, all appointed by the patriarch. The vicar of the patriarch presided over the meetings of the council which primarily dealt with divorce cases.¹⁸ Although the patriarch reserved the right to designate the members of this council, the presence of laymen in such a council was an innovation that represented a radical breach with the Armenian tradition in the Ottoman empire, and was therefore an important beginning for the participation of laity in religious affairs.

The Limitations of Amiras' Powers

The most significant reforms touching the administrative structure of the Armenian patriarchate were brought about by the limitation of the banker *amiras'* economic powers and influence. With the abolition of tax-farming the Armenian bankers and moneylenders, who previously could secure the purchase of the farm taxes by advancing funds to Ottoman officials, lost their contracts. As a result, some of these wealthy *amiras* were financially ruined, and their influence with Ottoman officialdom was accordingly decreased. Within their *millet* the prestige of these magnates, who until then had assumed the major portion of the operating expenses of the patriarchate and the charitable and educational institutions in the capital, received a considerable blow from which they never really recovered. Their influence in the community decreased in direct proportion with their declining support for these institutions. Moreover, an imperial *irade* (rescript) of March, 1, 1840 obligated the Armenian patriarch to collect the Ottoman taxes from the members of his *millet* throughout the empire and submit them with collective responsibility to the imperial treasury. Simultaneously, Armenian churches, monasteries, and other religious properties, which had been hitherto exempted from imperial taxes, became taxable. The only exceptions were the religious institutions of the capital. Consequently, the patriarchate was burdened with additional heavy financial responsibilities.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 188.

This financial crisis compelled the patriarchate to turn to the populace for help. On March 7, 1840, only six days after the receipt of the imperial *irade*, patriarch Yakobos, unable to solicit the financial support of the banker *amiras*, appointed a Committee of Twenty Four to manage the finances of the patriarchate and the national institutions. This committee consisted of two salaried *amiras* (governmental employees) and twenty-two representatives from the various *esnafs* at the capital. Het'um Meremkulean, from the *esnaf* of jewellers, became the chairman of the committee.¹⁹ For the first time in the history of the Armenian community the general management of the *millet's* finances was entrusted to a body in which the overwhelming majority were the artisans. One of the important factors which greatly contributed to this development was a split in the *amiras* which occurred over the question of the first Armenian college established at Üsküdar in 1838. On the one side of the split were the banker *amiras* and the wealthy merchants; on the other side were the salaried *amiras* who were soon joined by the artisans.

The college at Üsküdar was opened primarily by the generous donations of two imperial architects, Karapet Amira Palean and his brother-in-law Yovhannes Amira Serverean. Fifty students, mostly sons of artisans and salaried *amiras* from Istanbul, comprised its first class.

Accommodations with dormitory facilities were provided for two hundred students to be admitted in classes of fifty in the course of the following years. Most of the expenses of the college were to be met by an annual subsidy of 120,000 piastres from the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem. Also, twenty *amiras*, mostly bankers, promised each to provide the expenses for one poor student. In addition, a tuition of 3,000 piastres was to be charged to each well-to-do student.²⁰

Following the abolition of tax-farming (1839) the banker *amiras* as already noted lost their contracts, and some were financially ruined.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Kecean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, pp. 73-74.

Consequently, they were unable to continue their support for the college. But most of them were not, from the beginning, very enthusiastic about the college as they considered it the project of the salaried *amiras*. In fact, several bankers influenced the Armenian religious authorities in Jerusalem to withdraw their subsidy of 120,000 piastres.²¹ As a result, the majority of the students who came from the families of the *esnafs* were sent home. It was at this crucial time that the Committee of Twenty Four assumed the management of the *millet's* finances without the support and cooperation of the banker *amiras*.

The Committee of Twenty Four, comprised mostly of inexperienced artisans with insufficient financial strength, joined with the salaried *amiras* in support of the college. The artisans were probably aware of the odds against which they were to operate, but with the higher education of their children at stake they did not hesitate to assume the responsibility. Moreover, this was their first opportunity to bring their prestige and influence into the *millet's* central administration.

To keep the doors of the only native school of higher learning among the Armenians of Istanbul open, the artisans received the unreserved assistance of patriarch Yakobos who was an ardent supporter of the college. Taking advantage of his right to collect the imperial taxes from his coreligionists Yakobos imposed a national tithe on every Armenian to support the college. Furthermore, a tax of 5 piastres was levied on every Armenian applicant for a traveling passport. Until then the general contribution of the populace for the *millet's* finances was in the form of voluntary donations, baptismal, wedding, and funeral fees etc. Yakobos also promised to provide 6,000 piastres himself for the tuition expenses of two students.²² Moreover, on April 6, 1841 an association of three hundred artisans and small merchants, known as the *Miakam Enkerut'iwn* (One-Willed Association) was

²¹Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë, p. 190.

²²Kecean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 74.

formed to support the college.²³ But obviously these measures were not sufficient. The Committee of Twenty Four was unable, without the support of the banker *amiras*, to raise the necessary funds for the management of the *millet's* finance. Embittered against the bankers, and with no other course open to them, the Committee of Twenty Four reluctantly resigned. After a few unsuccessful attempts to bring the bankers and the supporters of the college together, patriarch Yakobos also resigned, and was succeeded by Step'anos Alawni who invited ten banker *amiras* to manage the *millet's* financial affairs.

Several months later the artisans, still determined to keep the college open, but with no new financial strength, presented Sultan Abdülmecid with a petition to reinstate the Committee of Twenty Four in office. The matter was examined by the Ottoman Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, and the Sublime Porte nominally reinstated the Committee, but the necessary imperial *ferman* to confirm the appointment was not issued. It is generally believed that the prevention of the issuance of the *ferman* was the work of the banker *amiras*. On August 14, 1841 a delegation of approximately two hundred people, representing the various Armenian *esnafs* in the capital, and organized by the members of the Committee of Twenty Four, submitted another petition to the sultan for the same purpose. To this dramatic demonstration the Sublime Porte reacted swiftly. Every member of the Committee of Twenty Four was arrested and cast into prison. It can be presumed that this too was the work of the bankers. Learning of the imprisonment of the artisans, a crowd of over three thousand Armenians from every walk of life, including the principal of the college, and led by Meyhaneci Iskenter, marched on the Sublime Porte on August 25, 1841, demanding the release of the prisoners and the resignation of the banker *amiras*. Consequently, the artisans were immediately released and the mob was dispersed under assurances by the grand vezir Rifat Paşa of the sultan's interest in their request. But on September 16, 1841 seven of the leaders of the demonstration, including the principal of the

²³A. Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn ev Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwnë T'iwrk'iaiyum* (1912), pp. 6-7.

college, were quietly sent into exile, and the college was closed by the government on October 3 as the principal cause of turmoil in the community. The decision of the government, probably instigated by the banker *amiras*, hardly restored peace within the *millet*. On November 9, 1841 the artisans presented the Sublime Porte with a strong protest against the administration of the *amiras* stating that "after the promulgation of the *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane, we can no longer be the slaves of the bankers."²⁴ As a result, the Porte intervened in behalf of the *esnafs* and an imperial edict of December 12, 1841 confirmed the reinstatement of the Committee of Twenty Four to office. But the artisans were again faced with insurmountable financial difficulties. Shortly afterwards, a significant development in the Ottoman empire enhanced the cause of the bankers. As a result of the failure of the direct system of collection of imperial taxes to produce sufficient revenue for the government, tax-farming was officially reintroduced by Abdülmecid on March 11, 1842. In the new system the right to collect the imperial tax was given to an Ottoman official known as *İhtisab Ağası*. As a result, the patriarch's power to collect the national tithe and other taxes which were received in conjunction with the imperial tax, was lost. And since there was no law by which the banker *amiras* could be forced to contribute their share toward the expenses of the *millet*, the artisans had no other choice but to relinquish once again the leadership of the administration to the *amiras*. On November 18, 1842 the Committee of Twenty Four resigned and the banker *amiras* took over the *millet's* administration.

Instead of reinstating the ten-member finance committee on March 19, 1834, the bankers divided the financial administration of the *millet* among three *amiras*. Yarut'iwn Erkanian was elected director of the finances for the patriarchate. Misak' Misak'can became financial director of the National Hospital, and Polos Asnanean was given the responsibility for the care of the orphans and the poor.²⁵ As the chairman of the National Assembly, Yarut'iwn Amira had become the

²⁴Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 197.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 200.

most influential Armenian notable of his time, and enjoyed the respect of the artisans as well. He, more than anyone else, was fully aware of the incapacity of the bankers to manage the *millet's* finances without the cooperation and support of the *esnafs*, especially after 1842 when tax-farming was reintroduced whereby they could rely only on voluntary donations of the *millet's* members. The only fundamental solution seemed to lie in a cooperative endeavor between the *amiras* and the *esnafs*.

The conflict between the two factions subsided and the way for a joint administration was paved when, through the efforts of Yarut'iwn Erkanian, Matt'eos C'uxacean was elected to the patriarchal throne on July 17, 1844. Enjoying the respect of both *amiras* and *esnafs*, Matt'eos was able to secure a compromise between the two groups. Soon after his accession patriarch Matt'eos formed the Mixed Council comprised of sixteen *amiras* and fourteen *esnafs*.²⁶ This council not only acted as an advisory board to the patriarch but also assumed full responsibility for the management of the *millet's* finances. With the formation of the Mixed Council the central administration of the millet ceased to be the monopoly of any one group. This was the beginning of a new administration in which both the aristocracy and the artisans had their representatives. For the first time in the history of the *millet* the management of the community's affairs was responsibly assumed by both factions on the basis of complete equality. As a tacit approval of the happy development, the Ottoman government reopened the Armenian College in 1846 and restored it to the patriarchate.

²⁶Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, pp. 8-9.

CHAPTER V

THE LIBERAL LAITY AS AGENT OF SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE

The Young Armenians and Their Ideology

While the struggle for the control of the Armenian *millet's* central administration continued between the artisans and the banker *amiras*, many young Armenian students, mostly sons and relatives of wealthy families, came into intimate contact with western life and thought in various European, particularly French and Italian, institutions of higher learning. On their return home, these Young Armenians,¹ armed with scientific knowledge and ideas about democracy, were to play a role of immense importance in the transformation of their *millet*.

The first Ottoman Armenians who received advanced western education went to Italy, which was the home of the Armenian Catholic Mxitarists. Most of these students specialized in medicine, while a few, like K'ozman K'ëomiwrcean and Mouradgea d'Ohsson, the famous historian, concentrated on the humanities. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, more than twenty Armenians graduated from the universities of Rome, Padua and Pisa.² In 1834 the Mxitarists founded the Muratean College at Padua where most of the students were Ottoman Armenians. The overwhelming majority of the graduates of this

¹The term "Young Armenians" is used for this group throughout this work because of the similarities of their objectives and methods with those of the Young Ottomans.

²Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 225.

institution were Armenian Catholics and took no active part in the affairs of the Armenian *millet*. Nevertheless, their contribution to the Armenian reform movement, particularly in the field of education and translation, cannot be denied.

Subsequent to the westernized military reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, the teaching in the Ottoman medical, military, and naval academies was given partly in French and the instructors included several foreigners brought from Europe.³ Thus French had become the first foreign language officially adopted in Ottoman schools. The Armenians followed the government's policy, and French became the dominant foreign language in the Armenian college and secondary schools of Istanbul.⁴ As a result, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, most of the Armenians who desired a western education went to the French capital.

The first two Ottoman Armenians who studied in Paris were Gaspar Sinanean and Serovbe Vic'enean, better known as Servic'en. They both specialized in medicine and came from wealthy families.⁵ Servic'en later was to become one of the principal architects of the Armenian constitution.

Yakob Krcikean accompanied Reşid Paşa when the latter became ambassador to Paris (1835-1838) and London (1838-1839). As Reşid's official interpreter, Krcikean came into close contact with western leading statesmen, and was influenced by French ideas.⁶ It can be assumed that Krcikean belonged to an affluent family, since as a child he received private tutoring in several European languages.

From 1840-1848 two groups of students went to Paris. The first group, which comprised the great majority, included the sons and

³Lewis, *Emergence*, p. 83.

⁴Alpoyaccan, 'Sahmanadrut'iwne, p. 228.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 229.

relatives of the rich *amiras* and well-to-do families, while the second was primarily comprised of poor but bright students whose education was supported by philanthropist *amiras*. Encouraged by the Ottoman educational measures initiated by Reşid Paşa, and headed by his disciples Âli Efendi and Fuad Efendi,⁷ an educational drive was undertaken within the Armenian *millet* under the auspices and patronage of Karapet Amira Palean, Yovhannes Amira Severcean, Mkrtic Amira Cezayirlean, Yovhannes Amira Tatean, and Polos Otean. The aim of this collective venture was to provide "the necessary manpower with western knowledge for the enlightenment and the progress of the *millet*."⁸

The first group of students included Nikolos Palean, son of Karapet Amira, who later drew the preliminary sketches of the Armenian constitution.⁹ Grigor Otean, son of wealthy Polos Otean, who later became a valuable advisor to Midhat Paşa,¹⁰ and played an important role in framing both the Armenian constitution of 1863 and the Ottoman constitution of 1876, also belonged to this group.¹¹

Among the second group special mention is to be made to Nahapet Rusinean, son of a poor painter, who became the moving spirit of the Armenian constitutional movement. Rusinean's education in medicine was sponsored by Mkrtic' Amira Cezayirlean. This group included also intellectuals and authors, like Karapet Iwt'iwcean, son of a presser, who, later, as the editor of *Masis*, the influential Armenian journal of the 1850's, became the forefather of Armenian journalism. From 1840-1850 more than sixty Armenians graduated from French schools and returned to Istanbul.¹²

⁷Lewis, *Emergence*, pp. 111-112.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

⁹Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, pp. 260-261

¹⁰Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 134.

¹¹Varandean, *Haykakan, Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, p. 257.

¹²Alpoyaccan, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 225-235.

Significantly, a great majority of the Young Armenians, irrespective of their social origins, received their European education in scientific fields. Although personal economic considerations may have played an important role in their choice of certain areas of concentration, a considerable amount of encouragement to follow the "practical" fields of study was provided by the contemporary Armenian press. In *Hayastan*, the official organ of the patriarchate, Nikolos Zorayean, a noted educator and himself educated in Paris, exhorted the Armenian students thus: "What our people need most are young men who would study agriculture, mechanics, industry, trade, and medicine."¹³ It was hoped that these men would, upon their return, eventually further the welfare and the national awakening of their people. Thus in the 1840's Yarut'iwn Palean, Nahapet Rusinean, Mozean, Tomas Xorasancean, Yovsep Payrean, Yakob Arzuman, Yovsep Sismanean, and many others, studied medicine in the French capital.¹⁴ Mkrtic' Alat'on, Georg St'imaracean, and Yokob Amasean studied agriculture at the Grignon agricultural school in Paris.¹⁵ Nikolos Palean and Step'an Serverean followed architecture, while Karapet Iwt'iwcean became the first Armenian who studied economic and was greatly impressed by the theories of J. B. Say and Adam Smith.¹⁶ Mkrtic' Muhentisean and Abraham Sakayean followed engineering and photography respectively.¹⁷

In contrast, a small number of Armenian students concentrated on the humanities. Step'an Oskanean, while teaching at Sainte Barbe French secondary school, studied literature and languages with Edgar Quinet, Michelet, and Jules Simon at the Sorbonne and Collège de France.¹⁸ Yakob Dividean studied political science, while Karapet

¹³*Hayastan*, 5 February 1849.

¹⁴Hrand Asatur, *Dimastuerner* (1921), p. 2.

¹⁵Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë, p. 232.

¹⁶Asatur, *Dimastuerner*, p. 32.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

Iwt'iwcean, in addition to his studies in economics, audited courses on history at the Collège de France and the Sorbonne.¹⁹

In Paris, most these young men were given the opportunity to acquaint themselves with European political systems and progressive ideas. There they lived and studied in an atmosphere filled with echoes of the French Revolution, the positivism of August Comte, and the ideas of Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Michelet, and Guizot.²⁰ Some students witnessed the revolution of 1848, and almost all were filled with an ardent love for freedom. Moreover, the French intellectual and social atmosphere brought together the sons and relatives of conservative Armenian aristocrats and liberal merchants and artisans, and thus broke the traditional social structure which separated their compatriots back home. The Armenian Muratean College of Padua was moved to Paris in 1846 where, at the inauguration ceremonies, most of the Young Armenians heard Lamartine, the principal speaker, utter the following words about the regeneration of the East:

La République Française envisage la grande question de la régénération orientale... Les germes de la nationalité, plus puissants rameaux, se développent en France... L'étude de votre belle langue arménienne est utile aux Français et réciproquement.²¹

At the Muratean College these young men often came together to discuss the "miserable" life of their compatriots in the Ottoman empire. They were not only unhappy about the domestic situation of the empire, but also were quite discontented with the central administration of their *millet*. Their complaints were best described in Otean's own words: "In those days what the *millet* had was a poor administration, poor schools,

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁰Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, pp. 251-252.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

and an obsolete language."²² The disparity between the written language and the vernacular Armenian had become so wide that a reaction was almost inevitable. Like Latin and Classical Greek, *Grabar* (Classical Armenian) had become, obsolete, and a new language, based on the vernacular, was necessary.

The bloodless French revolution of 1848 had impressed these young men who "dedicated themselves to the noble task of peaceful transformation and reform of their *millet*."²³ Leading this group was Nahapet Rusinean, who was thoroughly imbued with the ideas of constitutionalism and popular representation. It was said that Rusinean was an admirer of Montesquieu, and was greatly impressed by the politics of Rousseau.²⁴ Although a physician by education, Rusinean was an excellent orator, a poet, and a philosopher, who had been able to kindle a reforming fire in the hearts of his friends.²⁵

United by a common knowledge of European civilization and an equal concern at the unhappy situation of their *millet*, these young men decided to take action against the ills of the Armenian community in the Ottoman empire, particularly at the capital.²⁶ They did not wish to join a revolutionary group, or align themselves with the young Ottomans. They preferred to confine their organized activities to their own *millet*. Consequently, they decided to form a society whose aim would be to change the educational and administrative structure of the *millet*.²⁷

On April 27, 1849, the Young Armenians formed the *Araratean Enkerut'iwn* (Ararat Society) in Paris, which brought together almost all the Armenian students in the French capital. The society was a non-sectarian and non-political organization, and thus drew members from

²²Nahapet Rusinean, *Dasagirk' P'ilisop'ayut'ean* (1879), p. 2.

²³Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 237.

²⁴Varadean, *Haykakan Särzman Patmut'iwn*, p. 252.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 263.

²⁶Saruxan *Haykakan Xndirn*, pp. 11-12.

²⁷Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 243-244.

the Armenian Catholic community as well. On 7 June 1849, they published a proclamation in Paris in which the purpose of the organization and its program action was described as follow:

Only the elite of a nation can comprehend the true significance of the word 'nation'... It is because of ignorance that our nation has reached this miserable condition... the happiness of a nation can only come through education... The aim of the *Araratean Enkerut'iwn* is to bring progress to the Armenian nation and to provide for all its needs... Happiness of a nation is contingent upon the education of its children... In order to provide such education, the four walls of a building are not sufficient... We need cultural and educational societies to prepare qualified teachers, to publish books and periodicals, to promote reading, and justly reward authors, editors, and translators...²⁸

The proclamation was signed by Yovhannes Vahanean and Yovsep' Sismanean. The former later became an official in the Ottoman Ministry of Justice, while the latter was one of the most esteemed Armenian novelists of his time. At the end, the proclamation made a general appeal to the Armenian people to make generous sacrifices for education.

The Implementation of the Young Armenian Ideology

The impact of the Araratean Society's proclamation was quickly felt within the Armenian *millet*. It was evident that the progress of the *millet* depended on the immediate reform of its schools, its language, and the central administration.²⁹ Several short-lived educational societies were formed by graduates of the Muratean College in Kum Kapu, Üsküdar, Ortaköy, Samatya, and other localities of Greater Istanbul, to promote educational activities. In 1849, Grigor Alat'on founded the

²⁸For the complete text of the proclamation, see *Arsaloy's Araratean*, #366, 23 June 1850.

²⁹Rusinean, *Dasagirk P'ilisop'ayut'ean*, p. 3; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 328.

Armenian Agricultural Society bringing together the Armenian students of the Ottoman Agricultural School. Alat'on was the principal of the school, and hoped to promote, through the society, agricultural studies among the Armenians, and thus raise the economic standard of his compatriots.³⁰ By this time, Yakob Krcikean, with the assistance of Alat'on and Georg St'imaracean, had already written a book on silk manufacturing, and Nikolos Zorayean had published his *Telekut'iwnk Tntesagitut'ean Vray* (Informations on Economics). In 1850, Grigor Pestimalcean formed the *Usumnakan* Society which published Teroyenc's *Kalakavarut'iwn* (Politeness) and the works of Marugë Polosean and others, all aiming to improve the manners of the people.³¹ In 1851, Dr. Servic'en published his *Baroyakan Skzbunk* (Moral Principles) familiarizing his compatriots with the general principles of civil rights and duties, and Karapet Tawutean, who later became governor-general of the Lebanon, published his two-volume *Hin Germanacwoc Orensdrut'ean Patmut'iwne* (History of the Legislation of Ancient Germans).³²

More significant, however, were the foundings of new elementary and secondary schools. In 1847 there were twenty-four Armenian elementary schools in the capital. Through the efforts of the Young Armenians, who were either related to, or educated by the support of, the salaried *amiras*, and thus had earned their continual financial assistance, the number of schools was increased by eighteen in the next decade. In 1859, there were forty-two Armenian schools in Istanbul with 5,531 pupils (4,376 boys and 1,155 girls), and 197 teachers.³³ The following statistical figures, on the two colleges, the two high schools for girls, and eighteen elementary schools in Constantinople, were officially presented to the Ottoman government in

³⁰ *Arsaloys Araratean*, 7 January 1849, #328.

³¹ Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 251, 253.

³² This work was originally published in French (1845), and received awards from the Prussian king and the Berlin Academy.

³³ Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2634, 2640.

1859 by Dr. Barunak Bey, who was appointed by the government to inspect the Armenian schools in the capital:³⁴

Location	Pupils		Teachers
	boys	girls	
Üsküdar College	276	230	12
Hospital College	245	21	18
Ortaköy (Girls)	-	50	5
Narli Kapu (Girls)	-	50	2
Hasköy	334	170	14
Samatia	330	55	14
Pera	268	150	6
Kum Kapu I	264	-	6
Balat	212	5	11
Ortaköy	190	-	11
Üsküdar	185	-	4
Beşiktaş I	172	55	8
Yeni Kapu	165	-	7
Narli Kapu	120	-	5
Kum Kapu II	187	70	7
Beşiktaş II	110	70	4
Pera Suburb	81	-	11
Kadiköy	65	34	3
Galata	47	-	6
Makriköy	26	-	1

In the elementary schools pupils were taught grammar, reading, arithmetic, geography, history and religion. The curriculum of the secondary schools included, among other courses, algebra, physics, history, music, Turkish, French, and Armenian.³⁵ The curriculum of the two Armenian colleges included, besides courses on religion, philosophy, ethics, mathematics, Turkish, Armenian, French, Italian, and English.³⁶

³⁴ K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 126.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109

³⁶ *Masis*, 2 July 1852.

However, apart from the establishment of a few elementary schools, real educational progress in the provinces had to await the founding of permanent philanthropic and educational societies. The number of such organizations, whose objective was to provide free education to all, increased considerably after the 1860's under the impact of the Armenian constitution.

Armenian journalism, which was essentially an innovation of the *Tanzimat* period, played a considerable role in the *millet's* reform movement. The first official newspaper of the Ottoman empire, *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, was published in French (1831) with a Turkish segment called *Takvim-i Vekaye*. An Armenian section, *Lroy Gir Meci Terut'ean Osmanean*, was added the following year which, after many interruptions, was finally printed in Armeno-Turkish.³⁷ Journals in Armenian were introduced in the next decade. In 1840 *Arsaloys Araratean* was founded by Paris educated Lukas Paltesarean with the slogan "the enlightenment of a nation comes from education and knowledge"³⁸ as its motto. In the same year *Azdarar Biwzandean* began to be published as a weekly in Istanbul. In 1846 *Hayastan*, the official organ of the patriarchate, was printed weekly with traditionalist Teroyenc' as its editor. In a sense, *Hayastan*, became the mouthpiece of the conservative *amiras* in the central administration. In 1849, however, the Young Armenians, through the influence of the salaried *amiras* in the *millet's* central administration were able to force Teroyenc' to resign from the editorship and replace him with Mkrtic Alat'on, a Young Armenian. The controversy continued until 1852 when, finally, the name of the paper was changed into *Masis* with Karapet Iwt'iwcean, another Paris educated Young Armenian, as the editor. From 1852-1907 *Masis* became not only the mouthpiece of the Young Armenians, but also the most influential Armenian journal in the Ottoman empire. Gradually, the number of Armenian journals increased, but most of them were short-lived. With few exceptions, the great majority of the editors of these papers were educated in European, particularly French,

³⁷Asutur, "K. Polsoy Hayere," p. 207.

³⁸Alpoyacean, 'Sahmanadrut'iwne," p. 257.

schools, and had liberal tendencies. Unfortunately, circulation figures for these newspapers are not available, and almost all of them were published weekly or periodically. The following list includes all the journals which were published from 1832-1855:

Lroy Gir Meci Terut'ean Osmaneian (1832-1840), Istanbul; *Stemaran Pitani Giteleac'* (1839-1854), Izmir; *Azdarar Biwzandean* (1840-1841), Istanbul, editor, Xac'atur Oskanean; *Arsaloys Araratean* (1840-1886), Izmir, editor, Lukas Palt'azarean; *Yaytarar Gir Lroy Meci Terut'ean Osmaneian* (1841-1848), Istanbul; *Hayrenaser* (1843-1846), Istanbul, editor, Xac'atur Y. Melik'selumeanc'; *T'akvimi Vakaye* (1843), Istanbul; *Germanioy Ekelec'woy Dipuacnere* (1845), Izmir; *Ceritie Hawatis* (1846), Istanbul; *Hayastan* (1846-1852), Istanbul, editors, Patueli Teroyenc' and Mkrtic' Alat'on; *Surhandak Biwzandean* (1847-1850), Istanbul; *Banber Partizakan* (1849), Istanbul, editor, Yovhannes Mkrean; *Hayrenaser* (1850-1853), Istanbul editor, Abraham Muratean; *Banaser* (1851-1853), Istanbul, editor, Yovhannes Hisarean; *Burastan S. Sahakean* (1851-1853), Istanbul; *Masis* (1852-1907), Istanbul, editor, Karapet Iwt'iwcen; *Noyean Alawni* (1852-1853), Istanbul, editors, Sahak Aprozeyan and Grigor Markosean; *Mecmuayi Hawatis* (1852-1863), Istanbul, editor, Vardan Paşa; *Arp'i Araratean* (1853-1856), Izmir, editor, Yarut'iwn Teteyean; *Ėntani Imastaser* (1854-1855), Istanbul, editor, V. Sofalean; *T'ut'ak Haykazeian* (1854-1855), Izmir, editor, Priest Vert'anēs; *Astlik Arewelean* (1855-1856), Istanbul; *Arcui Vaspurakan* (1855-1864), Istanbul and Van, editor, Mkrtic' Xrimean; *Awetaber* (1855-1915), Istanbul, publication of the American Missionary Society; *Axpare K'onst'ant'ine* (1855-1858), in Armeno-Turkish; *Zohal* (1855), Istanbul, editor, Patueli Teroyenc', in Armeno-Turkish.³⁹

As a result, the Armenian *millet* was affected by an unprecedented cultural renaissance. Works of Lamartine, Hugo, Goethe, and many others, were translated into Armenian. Grigor C'ilinkirean translated

³⁹Minas T'coleolcan, *Dar Me Grakanut'iwn, 1850-1950* (1955), pp. 67,68.

Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Lamartine's *Raphael*. Later, he also rendered into Armenian Alfred de Musset's *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*. Eugène Sue's *Juif Errant* (Wandering Jew) was translated into Armenian by Karapet Iwt'iweean, and his *Mystères de Paris* was ably rendered into Armenian by Matt'ëos Mamurean. The latter also translated the following works of Voltaire: *Zadig ou la Destinée*, *Candide ou l'Optimisme*, and *Janeau et Colin*. Moreover, Mamurean translated Goethe's *Werther*, Alexandre Dumas' *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, and Jules Verne's *L'île mystérieuse*. Among the translators from French special mention is to be made to Step'an Oskanean who translated Chateaubriand's *Le Dernier des Abencerages*. The influx of western ideas occurred primarily through these translations which, prior to their publication in complete book form, appeared in segments in the contemporary Armenian journals. Poetry, satire, and drama, which were not altogether new creative literary genres to Armenian literature, greatly flourished.

Following the Ottoman example, the central administration of the *millet* formed the first Armenian Educational Council on 22 October 1853. The council, like its Turkish counterpart, *Encumen-i Daniş*, was modelled on the *Académie Française*, and consisted of fourteen members, all of them graduates of European institutions of higher learning. Dr. Servic'en was elected chairman of the Educational Council, while the triumvirate which consisted of Nikolos Palean, Nahapet Rusinean, and Grigor Otean became the moving spirit of the council.⁴⁰ The program of the council included the encouragement of letters, the advancement of the language, the founding of new schools, and the coordination of the educational activities throughout the empire.⁴¹ The main instrument of reform was of course to be education, and the Young Armenians gave a central place to education in their projects of reform.

⁴⁰*Biwzandion*, October 27-November 9, 1903; for the complete list of the members of the Educational Council, see Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 334; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2638; Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," p. 240.

⁴¹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2634; Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," pp. 240-241.

The group began to work immediately. Their first target was the language reform. They again followed the Ottoman example, for there was a parallel Turkish movement for linguistic and literary reform. Ahmet Cevdet's *Kavaid-i Osmaniye*, the first work on Turkish grammar and "a landmark in the Turkish language reform",⁴² was published in 1851. In the same year Grigor Otean had published a pamphlet entitled *Aracarkut'iwn Asxarhabar Lezun Kanonaworelu ew Hasarakac' Lezu Ėnelu Vray* (Proposal to Modify the Armenian Vernacular and to Make it the Common Language), advocating that *Grabar* had become obsolete and could not be considered the language of the people any longer.⁴³ Nahapet Rusinean, ever since his school days in Paris, had conceived the idea of a modern Armenian. Moreover, he had worked on a grammar book which he revised consulting Grigor Otean, Nikolos Palean, and Timot'eos T'nkrean. After receiving the approval of the Educational Council the book, entitled *Ullaxosut'iwn Ardi Hay Lezuin* (Correct Speaking of Modern Armenian), was published in 1853. In the introductory notes, Rusinean stressed the importance of converting the vernacular into a literary language by explaining how Latin and Classical Greek were replaced by Italian and Modern Greek.⁴⁴ The book became the subject of a bitter controversy between the Young Armenians, who called themselves *Lusaworeal* (Enlightened), and the conservatives, led by the traditionalist Patueli Teroyenc', who professed an unquestionable adherence to *Grabar* and were labeled *Xavareal* (Obscurantists).⁴⁵

The turmoil induced by *Ullaxosut'iwn* was further intensified when, in 1855, Rusinean published a yearly calendar without first obtaining the approval of the *millet's* central administration. Until 1865, the power to grant permission for the publication of books was the prerogative of the patriarch. Books that were printed without his approval were soon collected and burned, and the author was severely

⁴²Lewis, *Emergence*, p. 116.

⁴³Arsaloys Araratean, #423, 1892, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁴T.V. T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Tok't'. Nahapet Rusineani," *Handes Amsoreay*, 1902, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁵Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 230-242.

punished.⁴⁶ The conservatives took advantage of the situation and presented both *Ullaxosut'iwn* and the calendar to the serious consideration of the central administration. As a result, Rusinean and Martiros Miwhentizean, the printer of the calendar, were brought before the central administration for trial. A formal anathema against both men was prevented only when the patriarch personally intervened.⁴⁷ On 25 January 1855, the use of *Ullaxosut'iwn* and the calendar was officially prohibited by a patriarchal declaration. Moreover, every Armenian printing establishment was required to submit a written pledge not to print any book without the consent of the administration.⁴⁸ In a letter, dated 15 February 1855, Grigor Otean attributes the opposition chiefly to the power of the conservative clergy.⁴⁹ However, Rusinean, in his haste to introduce reforms, often ignored the power of the conservatives, and neglected the traditions of his church. Moreover, he usually tried to impose his ideas upon others with an unusual tenacity.⁵⁰

Attempts to reform the language were also carried out in the pages of Armenian journals. From 1852-1907 *Masis* became the most widely read Armenian journal in the Ottoman empire. It became the mouthpiece of the Young Armenians and was edited for over three decades by Karapet Iwt'iwcean, the forefather of modern Armenian journalism. Iwt'iwcean not only introduced western ideas to his people, but also made attempts to purify the Armenian vernacular language from foreign, particularly Turkish, words, by presenting to his readers a daily list of Armenian terms. Gradually, *Masis* became the "mirror" of the new language, and other journals followed its example.⁵¹

The third original objective of the Young Armenians was to bring about significant changes in the *millet's* central administration. In 1844

⁴⁶ Alpoyacean, "*Sahmanadrut'iwnë*," p. 329.

⁴⁷ Asatur, "K. Polsoy Hayerë," pp. 240-241; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2637.

⁴⁸ Torgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," pp. 139-140.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁵⁰ Hrand Aşatur, *Dimastuerner* (1921), p. 67.

⁵¹ Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2640.

Patriarch Matt'eos had succeeded in bringing the *esnafs* and the *amiras* together by forming the Mixed Council of Thirty (sixteen *amiras* and fourteen *esnafs*), which acted as an advisory board to the patriarch. But Matt'eos was not long able to maintain a cordial and harmonious relationship between the two hostile factions. When the *amiras* interfered with his jurisdiction in the appointment of diocesan bishops, Matt'eos defied them and played the role of champion of popular rights. The indignant *amiras* appealed to the Porte complaining that the patriarch was managing the affairs of the *millet* without their consent. By this time Reşid Paşa was appointed Grand Vezir for the second time, and Yakob Efendi Krcikean, one of the Young Armenians, had become his interpreter and advisor. The Porte, after carefully examining the matter, supported the patriarch in so far as he had insisted on distinguishing between the spiritual and civil spheres of his administration. An imperial edict was issued on 7 May 1847, ordering the *millet* to elect two separate and independent governing bodies, one for the civil and the other for the spiritual administration of the *millet*. The acquisition of this significant edict, which was chiefly attributed to Yakob Krcikean, underscores the influence of the Young Armenians with the Turkish leaders of the Tanzimat period, replacing that of *amiras*.⁵² Two days later, Matt'eos invited the clergy, the *amiras*, and the representatives of the various *esnafs*, who were for the first time elected from the members of their respective guilds,⁵³ to an assembly at the patriarchal cathedral. The imperial edict was read and separate elections were held for two councils.

The Supreme Civil Council, which consisted of twenty lay members, was to look after secular education, *millet* property, and justice. The Spiritual Council, comprised of fourteen clergy from Istanbul, was concerned with dogma, ordination of clergy, and religious education. The Supreme Civil Council included five *amiras*, ten artisans, two Paris educated architects, two government officials, and Yakob

⁵²Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 319; K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanocin*, p. 12.

⁵³Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë, p. 311.

Krcikean, who was elected its *logothete* (executive secretary).⁵⁴ Both councils were to be presided over by the patriarch. On 20 May 1847, the results of the elections were confirmed by the Porte, and thus the separation of civil and religious spheres of administration was formally established.

From 1847-1860 the affairs of the Armenian *millet* were managed by these two councils, whose elections were held biennially by the general assembly.⁵⁵ Their mode of elections, however, was not uniform. Every two years, the patriarch notified the *amiras* and the *esnafs* to send in a fixed number of representatives for a national assembly. Usually, the assembly elected both the Civil and Spiritual councils. However, on three different occasions (1847, 1849, 1853), the Supreme Civil Council, after being elected by the assembly, appointed the fourteen members of the Spiritual Council.⁵⁶ Such problems were created merely because no regulations for the creation and functions of committees and sub-committees existed. These and other irregularities necessitated the framing of written regulations for the proper management of the *millet's* affairs. The golden opportunity was to be provided by the promulgation of the *Hatt-i Hümayun* in 1856 which, among other provisions, contained a clause about the reorganization of the non-Muslim *millets* of the empire.

⁵⁴Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 245.

⁵⁵Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 320-321.

⁵⁶K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Biwandanocin*, pp. 93-94.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

With the establishment of two separate governing bodies for the management of the *millet's* civil and spiritual affairs, the patriarch's authority and the *amiras'* power and influence were, to a considerable degree, curtailed. However, in view of the absence of written regulations, the jurisdictions of each body was not clearly specified. The conservative *amiras* in the Supreme Civil Council still acted independently of the other members of the Council. They often appointed and dismissed sub-committees at will. In a letter, dated 15 February 1855 and addressed to Xac'atur Partizpaneian in Paris, Grigor Otean described the independent actions of certain *amiras* thus: "... Recently, Karapet Amira Palean and Yovhannes Amira Tatean illegally appointed three bishops to the Spiritual Council and empowered the Council with authority to administer the educations and printing of the *millet*."¹ Thus the lack of clear definition of the jurisdictions of the governing bodies and various committees had signaled the necessity for written regulations.² This need was first expressed by Yakob Krcikean, Reşid's advisor and interpreter. As the *logothete*³ of the Supreme Civil Council, Krcikean had brought the matter of written regulations before the Council on two different occasions (1853 and 1854) "to put an end to personal capriciousness by clearly defining in writing the mode of

¹Handes Amsoreay, 1902, p. 140.

²K'ec'ean, *Patmul'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 94.

³The *logothete* acted as both chairman and secretary of the Supreme Civil Council.

creation, the functions and the dissolution of subordinate bodies,"⁴ meeting each time opposition from its conservative members. Gradually, however, the number of *esnaf*s in the Supreme Civil Council, who supported Krcikean's constitutional ideas, increased. The first Supreme Civil Council, elected by the General Assembly of 1847, consisted of nine *amiras*, ten *esnaf*s, and *logothete* Yakob Krcikean. By 1853 the number of the *amiras* in the Council was reduced to five, and by 1855 only two *amiras* were remained in the Council. The following are the two complete lists of the Supreme Civil Councils of 1847 and 1855 with the corresponding professions of their members, which clearly reflect the decrease of conservative elements:⁵

Supreme Civil Council of 1847:

1. Yovhannes Amira Tatean, Director of Imperial Powder-works.
2. Polos Amira Tatean, Director of Imperial Powder-works.
3. Karapet Amira Palean, Imperial Architect.
4. Yovhannes Amira Serverean, Imperial Architect.
5. Mik'ayel Amira P'ismisean, Banker.
6. Mak'sut Amira Sarimean, Banker.
7. Georg Amira Eramean, Banker.
8. Mkrtic Amira Cezayirlean, Banker.
9. Misak' Amira Misak'ean, Banker.
10. Yovhannes Elia C'elepean, Baker.
11. Yovhannes C'opanean, Jeweller.
12. Yovhannes Surenean, Watchmaker.
13. T'ovmacan Mardirosean, Merchant.
14. Astuacatur Sarafean, Tailor.
15. K'erovbë Paspazirkeanean, Silk Manufacturer.
16. Sargis Paspazirkeanean, Master Swordmaker.
17. Grigor T'iwsiwzean, Linen Manufacturer.
18. Karapet T. Grigorean, Muslin Manufacturer.

⁴Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 347.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 311-317.

19. Sahak Kiwc'iwk Hogobian, Timber-maker.
20. Yakob Krcikean, Government Employee.

Supreme Civil Council of 1855:

1. Sahak Ağa Apro, Government Employee.
2. Karapet Amira Palean, Imperial Architect.
3. Yovhannes Amira Tatean, Director of Imperial Powder-works.
4. Polos Ağa Asnanean, Clerk.
5. Nikolos Ağa Asnanean, Clerk.
6. Ealup Ağa Ealupean, Profession not known.
7. Yakob Ağa Noratunkean, Baker.
8. Yakob Ağa Mupahacean, Profession not known.
9. Yarutiwn Ağa Bingeanc'i, Jeweller.
10. T'ovmacan Gayserlean, Merchant.
11. Grigor Ağa Markosean, Government Employee.
12. Grigor Ağa Alat'onean, Jeweller.
13. Yovhannes Ağa Surenean, Watchmaker.
14. Nsan Ağa Reisean, Merchant.
15. Galust Ağa Kostandean, Clerk.
16. Grigor Ağa T"iwsiwzean, Linen Manufacturer.
17. Georg Ağa P'anosean, Baker.
18. Awetis Ağa Eazmacean, Muslin Manufacturer.
19. Yakob Ağa C'olak'ean, Silk Manufacturer.
20. Mik'ayel Ağa Luruean, Profession not known.

It is said that Krcikean had confidentially asked the leaders of the Educational Committee to embark upon framing a constitution as early as 1853. Although this was no official request, it came from a man who not only had the ear of Reşid Paşa, but also had won the respect of the intellectuals. Consequently, Dr. Servic'en, Nikolos Palean, Nahapet

Rusinean and Grigor Otean began to work on a draft which laid the foundations for the future constitution.⁶

Meanwhile several members of the Young Armenians were beginning to be employed in the different branches of the Ottoman government. Since 1850 Yartut'iwn Tatean, Sahak Apro, Serkis Hamamcean, Grigor Markosean, Step'an Arzumanean, Minas Minasean, and others held important positions in the *Hariciye* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).⁷ Gradually, the prestige of the *amiras* with Ottoman officialdom was being replaced by the influence of the Young Armenians. From 1850-1876 almost every grand vezir and foreign minister had an Armenian advisor. While Krcikean was Reşid's counselor, Hamamcean and Seferean advised Âli Paşa. Sahak Apro was an advisor to Fuad Paşa and Yovsep Vardanean (=Vardan Paşa) was a valuable counselor to Damad Mehmet Ali Paşa. Later, Vahan Efendi became an advisor to Cevdet Paşa while Grigor Efendi Otean not only advised Midhat Paşa for many years but also participated in the discussions on the Ottoman constitution.⁸ Moreover, several Young Armenians had cultivated personal friendships with liberal leaders in the Ottoman government. Dr. Servic'en was the personal physician of Âli Paşa and Dr. Rusinean had become the family physician of Fuad Paşa. As a result of these friendships, the Young Armenians possessed certain amount of prestige and influence which, at the right moment, was to be used for the benefit of the *millet*.⁹

Through the efforts of the Young Armenian, the matter of a written constitution was brought before the National Assembly of 30 June 1855. The participants of this assembly included the clergy, the *amiras*, the *esnafs*, educators, writers, editors, physicians, government employees, and even officers in the army.¹⁰ The assembly elected the

⁶Torgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 206.

⁷Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 350.

⁸Acarean, "Hayoc' Derë," p. 11; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 134.

⁹Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 351.

¹⁰*Masis*, 28 March 1857.

Sahmanadrakan Yanjnazolov (Constitutional Committee) to formulate a comprehensive written constitution for the *millet*. This committee consisted of two bishops, seven priests, and twelve laymen, including Rusinean, Otean, Iwt'iwcean, Alat'on, two *esnaf* leaders, and six governmental employees.¹¹

The Constitutional Committee began to work seriously, and after several months of hard labor completed the draft and presented it to the Supreme Civil Council. Karapet Amira Palean, who was still influential in the Council, and Patueli Teroyenc', who was the secretary of the Spiritual Council, strongly opposed the approval of the draft. The result was a bitter struggle between the liberal and conservative members of both the Supreme Civil and Spiritual Councils. Some members of the Spiritual Council supported the acceptance of the draft, which may be construed as an attempt at emancipation from the dominance of Karapet Amira and his conservative followers.¹² While the struggle went on, a decisive stimulus to the attainment of Armenian constitutionalism was provided by the Ottoman government.

The Hatt-i Hümayun

At the end of the Crimean War, Britain and France urged the Turks toward further westernization and reform. Before the Treaty of Paris could be concluded, it was essential to demonstrate to Europe that the Ottoman empire was worth saving. Hence, under European pressure, a new edict, the *Hatt-i Hümayun* (Imperial Rescript), was issued by Sultan Abdulmecid on 18 February 1856. The *Hatt-i Hümayun*,¹³ like the *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane, concerned all the subjects of the sultan, Muslim or not.

¹¹Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 15.

¹²*Melu*, 21 December 1856.

¹³In Turkish and Armenian this edict is usually called *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Decree).

The new edict was more specific in its details and certainly more extensive in scope than the *Gülhane Charte*. Among other promises, the *Hatt-i Hümayun* provided that

... All the privileges and spiritual immunities granted by my ancestors *ab antiquo*, and at subsequent times, to all Christian communities or other non-Mussulman persuasions established in my empire, under my protection, shall be confirmed and maintained.

Every Christian or other non-Mussulman community shall be bound within a fixed period, and with the concurrence of a commission composed *ad hoc* of members of its own body, to proceed, with my high approbation and under the inspection of my Sublime Porte, to examine into its actual immunities and privileges, and to discuss and submit to my Sublime Porte the reforms required by the progress of civilization and of the age. The powers conceded to the Christian patriarchs and bishops by the Sultan Mahomet II and to his successors shall be made to harmonize with the new position which my generous and beneficent intentions insure to these communities.

... The property, real or personal, of the different Christian ecclesiastics shall remain intact; the temporal administration of the Christian or other non-Mussulman communities shall, however, be placed under the safeguard of an assembly to be chosen from among the members, both ecclesiastics and laymen, of the said communities.¹⁴

Framing the Constitution

The promulgation of the *Hatt-i Hümayun* encouraged the Armenian constitutionalists in their attempt to bring the first draft of the constitution before the National Assembly. Meanwhile the conflict between the Supreme Civil Council and the Spiritual Council was intensified by the

¹⁴Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, pp. 150-151.

resignation of Patriarch Yakob, who was known to be in sympathy with the Young Armenians.¹⁵ Finally, a National Assembly was convened by the *locum-tenens* on 18 October 1856. In order to secure order this assembly was presided over by Küçük Said Bey from the Sublime Porte.¹⁶ The assembly reelected Yakob to the patriarchal throne almost unanimously. Moreover, it elected a new Supreme Civil Council which was totally comprised of Young Armenians and *esnafs*. For the first time, the *amiras* were absent in a council which was duly elected by the National Assembly.¹⁷

After hearing the report of the Constitutional Committee, the assembly elected a new committee, composed of two bishops and four laymen, to examine the first draft of the constitution. This examining committee worked harmoniously with the Constitutional Committee, and revised almost every article.¹⁸ Unfortunately, however, the debated issues and the subsequent changes are unavailable in the contemporary sources.

The National Assembly of 22 March 1857 was especially convoked by Patriarch Yakob to confirm the revised version of the constitution. More than three hundred ecclesiastical and lay delegates from all walks of life were chosen by patriarchal invitation to attend the assembly.¹⁹ Each article of the constitution was discussed and certain changes were made. At the end, the constitution was approved and every member was required to sign the decision.²⁰ The text of this constitution is not preserved, but it can be surmised from Grigor Markosean's opening remarks²¹ in the assembly that the draft contained twelve articles and dealt with the patriarchate, the schools of the *millet*,

¹⁵*Presse d'Orient*, 22 November 1856.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 23 November 1856.

¹⁷Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2707; K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁸*Melu*, 31 March 1857.

¹⁹*Masis*, #270, 28 March 1857.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹For the complete text of Markosean's remarks, see Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 364-366.

and the national institutions.²² The approved draft was sent to the Porte for imperial ratification. After several months of delay the Porte declined to ratify the draft, stating that "*imperia in imperio* cannot be allowed."²³ In reality, however, the reason for the rejection of the draft was the strife within the *millet* between the conservatives and the constitutionalists. The intrigues and "capriciousness" of the *amiras*, who obviously still exercised some influence with Ottoman officialdom, once again prevailed, and their "opposition to law and order within the *millet* drowned the newlyborn constitution."²⁴ Thus, the first serious attempt at Armenian constitutionalism failed, and the *millet's* central administration suspended the execution of the draft's provisions.²⁵

As a reaction to the Porte's rejection of the 1857 draft, Dr. Servic'en, Rusinean, Palean, Otean, and a few other Young Armenians began to work on another draft with an attempt to make it acceptable to the conservatives.²⁶ In November 1858, the National Assembly elected a new Supreme Civil Council which included, among others, Dr. Servic'en, the leader of the constitutionalists and the personal physician of Fuad Paşa. Through his congenial personality and perseverance Servic'en was able to secure the appointment of a new constitutional committee in the National Assembly of February 1859. It is noteworthy that three important Young Armenians were absent from the committee. Yakob Krcikean was sent to Paris as the First Dragoman of the Ottoman Embassy. Nikolos Palean died in 1858 at the age of thirty-two, and Dr. Servic'en, by virtue of his membership in the Supreme Civil Council, was prevented from participating in the committee. This second Constitutional Committee was comprised of two bishops, seven priests, and fifteen laymen including Rusinean and Otean who became the

²²Brief summaries of this draft will be found in K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 94; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2707.

²³K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, pp. 95, 138.

²⁴*Masis*, #423, 24 December 1859.

²⁵Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 370; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2706.

²⁶Step'anos Palasanean, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (1890), p. 470.

moving spirit of the group.²⁷ In fact, Rusinean is said to have formulated the draft, using as a guide the 1857 draft.²⁸

The second Constitutional Committee completed its work and presented the new draft to the National Assembly of 18 December 1859. The latter, instead of approving the draft in haste, appointed an examining committee to compare the draft with the 1857 version and, working together with the Constitutional Committee, make, if necessary, certain changes. The committee consisted, almost exclusively, of conservatives. The two committees completed their work, and on 20 May 1860, in the cathedral of Galata, ceremoniously exchanged copies of the revised draft which were signed by the members of both groups.²⁹

The revised draft, which was given the title *Armenian National Constitution* by Nahapet Rusinean, represented a compromise between the liberal views of the members of the Constitutional committee and the conservative ideas of the members of the Examining Committee.³⁰ Again, the contemporary sources make no mention of the specific views of the liberals and the conservatives. With no group to oppose it, however, the National Assembly of 24 May 1860 unanimously approved the Armenian National Constitution.³¹ The clergy was first to extend its approval which was followed by the *amiras*, the intellectuals, and the artisans.³² Before its adjournment, the assembly was presented with a petition, signed by many Armenians of the capital, demanding the

²⁷Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 389; Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 16.

²⁸T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 208.

²⁹Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 386-387; T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 209; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2707.

³⁰Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2707; K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, pp. 138-139.

³¹Armenian text in *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'*, 1860; Perperean, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 389-432; French trans. by M.E. Prud'homme in *Revue de l'Orient. de l'Algérie et des colonies*, July and August, 1862. Summaries in K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, pp. 138-140; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 411-418; Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, pp. 17-28; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2708; Gustave Rolin-Jacquemyns, *l'Arménie, les Arméniens et les traités*, 1877, pp. 16-20.

³²K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 138.

immediate execution of its provisions.³³ As a result, the assembly dissolved the Supreme Civil and the Spiritual Councils and replaced them, in accordance with the new constitution, with the Political and Religious Councils respectively. Thus, under popular pressure the Armenian National Constitution was put into effect without imperial ratification.³⁴

The principal architects of the constitution were Nikolos Palean, Dr. Servic'en, Grigor Otean and Nahapet Rusinean. According to Otean, Nikolos Palean was the conceiver and promoter of the Armenian constitution.³⁵ Moreover, as Rusinean testified before the National General Assembly of 1870, Palean had sketched the preliminary lines of the constitution when he was a student in Paris.³⁶ Palean's efforts for a written constitution become particularly significant when they are considered against his family background. His father, Karapet Amira Palean, was an ardent conservative who bitterly opposed the progressive ideas and the constitutional programs of the Young Armenians.³⁷ Despite his father's opposition Nikolos worked quietly with his liberal friends, but often stayed away from public debates and demonstrations.³⁸ He died in 1858 at the age of thirty-two.

Dr. Servic'en, the oldest of the group, came from a wealthy family and was more moderate and patient than his younger colleagues. He had studied medicine in Italy and France, and later became Fuad Paşa's personal physician and friend.³⁹ As the chairman of the Educational Council of 1853, Servic'en wisely led the group. As a result of his moderation he was respected by both the conservatives and the liberals.

³³ Alpoyacean, "*Sahmanadrut'iwnë*", p. 388.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 389; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2707, 2708.

³⁵ Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, p. 258; Rusinean, *Dasagirk'*, p. iii.

³⁶ *Minutes of National General Assembly, 1860-1870*, p. 99.

³⁷ Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 245.

³⁸ T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 206.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

In fact, the revisions of various drafts of the constitution were attributed to his prudence and farsightedness.⁴⁰

Nahapet Rusinean, an eloquent orator, a linguist, and a physician profession, was the moving spirit of the group. His father, a painter, died when he was a young boy. In 1840 he was sent to Paris by two *amiras* and Otean's father to study medicine. In the French capital, while pursuing his medical education, Rusinean audited courses on literature and philosophy at the Sorbonne, and was heavily influenced by the ideas of Lamartine, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hugo, and Chateaubriand.⁴¹ It was at the Sorbonne that he was confronted, for the first time, with the principle of popular vote and other constitutional ideas.⁴² On his return home Rusinean became, upon the recommendation of Dr. Servic'en, the family physician of Fuad Paşa. His early attempts at reform, within the Armenian *millet*, were concentrated on education and language. His *Ullaxosut'iwn* (Correct Speaking), with all its shortcomings, was the result of a creative mind, and possessed the value of a pioneering effort.⁴³ In 1856 he was invited to become a member of the Imperial Medical Society, and two years later became a member of the editorial staff of its official publication, *Gazette Médicale d'Orient*. In 1858 he was appointed by the Ottoman government an official physician for the Military Hospital of Istanbul where he served until 1860.⁴⁴ In the *millet's* assemblies Rusinean was considered to be the most liberal deputy, constantly conceiving new projects for reform. Unfortunately, in his haste for change, Rusinean did not comprehend the slowness and stealth by which society changes.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, as a brilliant orator, he, more often than not, dominated over the mentality of the *millet's* assemblies. At his funeral

⁴⁰Handes Amsoreay, 1893, p. 332.

⁴¹Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, pp. 257-258.

⁴²T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 99.

⁴³K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 107.

⁴⁴T'orgomean, "Kensagrakan Rusineani," p. 206.

⁴⁵Varandean, *Haykakan, Xndirn*, p. 247.

Patriarch Nerses called him the "Solon of the Armenian National Assemblies."⁴⁶

Grigor Otean was the youngest member of the group. He also came from an affluent aristocratic family, and his early teachers included Paris educated Karapet Iwt'iwcian. It was Otean who encouraged Rusinean to publish the *Ullaxosut'iwn* in 1853. He too studied in Paris (1851-1854) and was influenced by the progressive ideas of the revolution of 1848.⁴⁷ However, Otean was more objective and subtle in his views than Rusinean. His most cherished word was *orenk'* (law) which he believed to be the basis of the organized life of a community.⁴⁸ In the framing of the Armenian National Constitution Otean played an important role with Rusinean and Servic'en. Moreover, as chairman or secretary of general assemblies, he became one of the most esteemed statesmen of the Armenian *millet*.⁴⁹ Later, as a close advisor to Midhat Paşa, he participated in the discussions of the Ottoman constitution.⁵⁰

In spite of its popularity, the Armenian National Constitution had opponents who were anxiously awaiting an opportunity to manifest their antagonism.⁵¹ The excuse was provided when the National Assembly of 17 February 1861 approved a new regulation for the election of the patriarch of Jerusalem. According to the new rule, bishops who were not members of the Jerusalem Brotherhood,⁵² could be eligible for

⁴⁶Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 247.

⁴⁷Rusinean, *Dasagirk'*, p. xx.

⁴⁸Asatur, *Dimastuerner*, p. 78.

⁴⁹Vahan Zardarean, *Yisatakaran: Hay Erewelineru Kensagrut'iwnnerë, 1512-1912* (1912), IV, pp. 123-124.

⁵⁰Mikayël Kazmararean, *Grigor Otean* (1910), p. 15; Varandean, *Haykakan Sarzman Patmut'iwn*, p. 257; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 134, 153-154, 289-290.

⁵¹Yovsep' Vardanean (=Vardan Paşa), *Sahmanadrakan Csmartut'iwnner u anonc' Partaworut'iwnnerë* (1863), p. 56.

⁵²The Brotherhood consisted of the bishops and celibate priests of the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem whose primary task was to be the guardian of the Armenian Holy Places in Jerusalem. Traditionally, the Armenian Church was, and still is, one of the three Christian communities which enjoyed equal privileges and rights in Holy Places with the Greek and Roman Churches.

election to the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem, whereas, traditionally, the patriarchs of Jerusalem were chosen from the ranks of the Brotherhood.⁵³ Through this new regulation the central administration of the *millet* attempted to subject the Jerusalem Brotherhood to the patriarch of Constantinople. This jurisdictional dispute with the patriarchate of Jerusalem lasted over six months until an encyclical from the catholicos of Ejmiacin, supreme head of the church, defending the position of the Brotherhood, was read in every Armenian church in the capital, causing riots in the streets and even bloodshed in some churches.⁵⁴ In consequence of these public disturbances the Ottoman government intervened. It was the general policy of the Ottoman government to maintain peace within the non-Muslim communities so that European intervention, in the form of protection of the Christians of the empire, could be avoided.⁵⁵ Thus the Porte demanded the resignation of Patriarch Sargis, and on 17 October 1861 appointed a temporary *locum tenens* and a mixed council of ecclesiastics and laymen to manage the affairs of the *millet*. Also, the government appointed a committee of four clergy and eight laymen, including Dr. Servic'en, to examine the Constitution of 1860. Most of the members of this Porte-appointed committee had taken active parts in the Constitutional Committee of May 1860. By appointing, therefore, these men to examine the constitution, which was formulated by most of them, the Porte expressed a tacit vote of confidence for the constitutionalists.

The Porte-appointed committee presented the revised version of the Constitution of 1860 to the Porte in February 1862. The latter, with an intention to establish peace within the *millet*, sent the following official communication to the *locum tenens*, on 14 February 1862:

⁵³ Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2710, 2711.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 2720; Alpayacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 396.

⁵⁵ Alpayacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 398.

Prudent and Dear Sir,

The imperial Firman concerning reforms requires that each community shall take into consideration within a given time the privileges and prerogatives which it enjoys, and, after due counsel, shall decide upon the reforms which are in accordance with the circumstances, the civilization and the learning of the present time. It shall present a list of such reforms to the Sublime Porte in order that the authority and rights granted to the spiritual heads of each community may be placed in harmony with the position and new conditions secured to each community. In accordance with these behests, the outlines of a Constitution for the Armenian nation have been prepared by a Committee composed of certain honourable persons. But at the same time it has been considered appropriate that the ecclesiastical and lay members of the General Assembly should select by a majority of votes a Committee of seven, to whose consideration the above-mentioned project should be submitted. We therefore beg you to despatch within a few days the summons to hold the election of that Committee, and to direct that the Committee shall meet at the Sublime Porte the Committee and functionary appointed specially for this purpose. We beg you also to send us the names of the seven persons thus elected.⁵⁶

In accordance with this imperial request, the National Assembly of 20 February 1860 elected a committee of seven laymen including Rusinean, Otean Mkrtic' Alaton, two government employes, and two *esnafs*.⁵⁷ This committee, known as the National Committee, worked with the Porte-appointed committee to revise the constitution of 1860. After some changes the two committee submitted the new draft, with a nine-point report explaining the necessary changes, to the Porte for imperial ratification. The nine-point report may be considered a clear outline of the revised draft. It stated that

⁵⁶Lynch, *Armenia*, II, p. 445; Armenian text of the communication in *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'*, 1863, p. 1; Turkish text in Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi* (1950), pp. 161-162.

⁵⁷Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 400.

a. The office of the patriarch as the medium between the nation and the Sublime Porte should remain as it was in the old system.

b. The organization of the National General Assembly should be reformed. The national delegates, instead of being elected by the *esnafs*, should be elected by the different Quarters in Istanbul.

c. The administration of religious affairs should belong to the Religious Council, the administration of political affairs to the Political Council, and that of mixed affairs to the Mixed Council, which shall consist of the two Councils together.

d. The Religious and Political Councils should manage through appointed committees all national affairs including churches, schools, hospitals, monasteries, and other national institutions.

e. The center of the administration should be the national patriarchate. The patriarch, as the official head of the patriarchate, should preside both over the National General Assembly and over the two Councils, and he should under the inspection of the National General Assembly manage all the affairs concerning the nation directly or indirectly.

f. The administration of the provinces should be connected with the central administration. The diocesan bishops should preside over local assemblies which should be organized in the same way as those in Istanbul, and they should be the managers of those local assemblies.

g. The provincial assemblies should be responsible to the central administration. Each one of the committees of the central administration should be responsible to the council to which it belongs. The councils should be responsible to the assemblies, and the patriarch should be responsible on the one hand to the Imperial Government and on the other to the nation through the National General Assembly.

h. If the Ottoman government should command the patriarch to give his opinion on any question, the patriarch should act according to the decision of the National General Assembly under his presidency, and if he be ordered to communicate to the Imperial Government the opinion of the nation, then he should convoke the National General Assembly and communicate to the Government the final decision of that Assembly.

i. The central administration has three kinds of obligations. First towards the Imperial Government, that is to preserve the nation in perfectly loyal subjection and to secure to the nation in general and to individuals in particular the preservation of their rights and privileges on the part of the Government. The second obligation is to the nation,

to treat it in true compassion and in a paternal way. The third is to the see of Ejmiacin, to act in accordance with the religious regulations and laws of the Armenian church.⁵⁸

For unknown reasons the reply of the government was delayed, and the people began to show signs of unrest. On 1 August 1862 several hundreds of people marched to the patriarchate and demanded information from the central administration about the fate of the constitution. Upon the evasive replies of the administration, the crowd entered the patriarchate, and broke the furniture of the Assembly hall.⁵⁹ As a result, sixty Turkish troops were sent to restore order, and reestablish the central administration. Dr. Barunak K'rtik'ean, chairman of the Mixed Council, after receiving a solemn promise by Selim Paşa of the Porte to expedite the ratification of the constitution, agreed to continue in office.⁶⁰ Finally, on 17 March 1863 the Porte sent the following formal communication officially granting imperial ratification to the Armenian National Constitution.⁶¹

To the Prudent Representative of the Patriarch Elect of Istanbul

The Constitution drawn up by the Committee formed at the Sublime Porte for the reforms of the condition and administration of the Armenian Patriarchate, after having undergone certain modifications concerning secular affairs only, was presented to His Imperial Majesty, and, having been approved by His Imperial Majesty, the Imperial Decree, making

⁵⁸*Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1863), pp. 3,7.

⁵⁹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2728; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 402.

⁶⁰Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2728, 2729; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 402.

⁶¹For the official Turkish text of the constitution, see *Düstür*, II, pp. 938-961; Armenian and Armeno-Turkish texts will be found in *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1863), pp. 11-54; Atom, *Sahmanadrut'iwnë*, pp. 125-164; French trans. in George Young, *Corps de Droit Ottoman* II, pp. 79-92; English trans. in Lynch, *Armenia*, II, pp. 448-467. Summaries in Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2730; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," pp. 406-421; Uras, *Tarihle Ermeniler*, pp. 167-174; Télémaque Tutundjian, *Du pacte politique entre l'Etat ottoman et les nations non musulmanes de la Turquie; Avec un exposé de la constitution arménienne de 1863* (1904), pp. 61-104; Mekitar B. Dadian, *La Société arménienne contemporaine; les Arméniens de l'empire ottoman* (1867), pp. 23-27.

a law of the features contained in it, was issued to be handed to your Beatitude.

In enclosing to you the above-mentioned Constitution, we commission you to superintend the perfect execution of those features according to the high will of the August Emperor.⁶²

On 23 March 1863 the National Assembly was convened to hear the imperial ratification and accept the constitution. A committee of ten laymen was elected to execute the constitution. Following the elections according to the provisions of the ratified constitution, the first National General Assembly convened on 20 September 1863 with Dr. Servic'en and Grigor Otean as chairman and secretary respectively. Members for the new Political Council and the Religious Council were elected, and the *millet* was thus launched on its constitutional life.

⁶²Lynch, *Armenia*, II, p. 448; Armenian text of ratification in *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1863), p. 8.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION

The ratified constitution of the Armenian *millet* contained ninety-nine articles in five chapters. It provided for a National General Assembly which elected the patriarch, the Political Council, and the Religious Council. The assembly was to consist of hundred and forty deputies representing the Armenians of Istanbul and the provinces. One-seventh of this number, that is twenty deputies, were to be clergy delegates. This proportion revealed a considerable decrease of the ecclesiastical power in the Assembly. Previously, all the bishops, the *vardapets* (celibate priests), and the married archpriests of the capital took part in the General Assembly. Surprisingly, the new system caused dissatisfaction only in the higher ranks of the clergy.¹ The great majority of the *k'ahanas* (married parish priests) not only did not protest against this provision, but were among the first to approve the constitution.²

The election of the ecclesiastical deputies to the National General Assembly was held at a convention of all the clergy in the capital. Bishops, *vardapets* (celibate priests) and *k'ahanas* (married priests), at least thirty years of age and ordained five years ago, were eligible for election, provided that they did not hold any office in the provinces.

Four-sevenths of the total number of deputies in the Assembly, that is eighty lay delegates, were to be elected by the different quarters in Istanbul, and the remaining two-seventh (forty deputies) were to be lay

¹Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, cols. 2707-2708.

²Perpercan, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 427; K'ec'ean, *Patmut'iwn Hiwandanoc'in*, p. 138.

delegates from the provinces.³ The provinces, which comprised over ninety per cent of the Armenian population,⁴ had only two-sevenths of the total representation in the assembly. Moreover, the constitution contained a provision (article 70) whereby the deputies of a province did not have to be inhabitants of the same locality.⁵ Consequently, residents of the capital often became deputies for certain provinces. Perhaps this was partially justified by the lack of education and political consciousness among the Armenians in the provinces.

The bases for the right to vote and be elected of the lay deputies were the *millet* tax and personal merits. Among those mentioned as eligible to be elected were employees in the government, physicians, authors, school teachers, and persons who had rendered some valuable service to the *millet*. Moreover, those convicted of crime or condemned by some *millet* council for fraud, or the insane were specifically deprived of their rights as electors. Candidates were to be at least thirty years of age, and well acquainted with the laws of the country and with the affairs of the *millet*.⁶ The right to examine the circumstances of the elections and the qualifications of those elected belonged to the Political Council, but the final confirmation was in the hands of the National General Assembly.

The manner of election in Istanbul varied from that of the provinces. The basis for the number of deputies in the capital was the total number of the dues-paid electors in Istanbul, whereas, in the provinces, the number of the general inhabitants decided how many delegates each section should send.⁷ The central administration prepared, with the aid of the general census kept at the Chancellery of the patriarchate, the list of all eligible voters both for the capital and the provinces. The lay deputies of the quarters of the capital were to be

³ *Azgyin Sahmandrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1863), p. 39.

⁴ See above, chapter II.

⁵ *Azgyin Sahmandrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1863), pp. 44-45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

elected by the eligible voters of Istanbul, whereas the deputies of the provinces were to be chosen by the elected representatives, in a general Assembly, of each province.⁸

The term of office of both lay and ecclesiastical deputies to the National General Assembly was ten years, and one-fifth of their total number was to be changed every two years. During the first eight years this fifth part was to change by lot, and a new group was chosen by election for ten years. Voting, in all cases, was to be secret. Voting by proxy was permitted provided the ballot was signed by the elector.⁹

The National General Assembly was to convene biennially to hear the report of the National Administration, to examine the *millet's* biennial revenues and expenditures, to elect new members for the Political and Religious Councils, and to settle the national taxation for the following two years. Besides its regular biennial sittings, the Assembly was to have special sessions to elect the patriarch of Istanbul, to send delegates for the election of the Catholicos of All Armenians, and to revise, if necessary, the National Constitution. However, for such extraordinary sessions, the consent of the Ottoman government was to be obtained beforehand.¹⁰

The constitution provided for two kinds of *millet* taxes. The *general tax*, for the expenses of the central treasury, was to be collected by the patriarchate, while the *special tax*, for the expenses of the local quarter, was to be collected by the councils of quarters. The amount and manner of collection of the *general tax* was decided by the Political Council and confirmed by the National General Assembly, but the special tax was arranged by the local council. The distribution and collection of the tax which the provinces were to pay to the central treasury was decided by the National General Assembly and confirmed

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

by the Porte. In order to acquire the right of an elector, a person was to pay annually at least seventy-five piastres as his *millet* tax.¹¹

The first chapter of the constitution dealt with the National Central Administration of the *millet*. The Religious Council was elected biennially by the National General Assembly from a list prepared by the convention of the clergy in the capital. It consisted of fourteen clergymen, who were to be at least thirty years of age, but not necessarily deputies to the National General Assembly. The election of the Religious Council was to be confirmed by the Ottoman government. The duties of the Council were to develop the religious sentiment in the *millet*, to preserve the traditions of the church, to improve the conditions of the clergy and secure the welfare of their future, to supervise the teaching of Christian principles in the national schools, and to arbitrate religious disputes within the community. Moreover, it authorized the ordination of *vardapets* (celibate priests) both in the capital and the provinces, and of *k'ahanas* (married priests) of Istanbul. The provincial married priests, who usually served as pastors of local parishes, needed only the authorization of provincial religious councils. All elections in the Religious Council were held by secret ballot.¹²

The patriarch was to be elected by the National General Assembly, and his election was to be confirmed by the Porte.¹³ Although the patriarchate was subordinate to the Assembly, the patriarch was still recognized as the chief executive and president of the Assembly and of all councils, and the medium for the execution of the orders of the Ottoman government. He was to be an Ottoman subject and at least thirty-five years of age.

The process of the patriarch's election was quite elaborate. First, the *locum tenens*, who is elected by the Mixed Council and approved by the Ottoman government, prepared the list of all the bishops in the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

empire. Then, the Religious Council, considering the religious merits of the bishops, prepared by secret ballot a list of candidates, in the order of the number of votes received by each bishop. The list was then submitted to the Political Council which, reviewing their political merits, elected by a majority of votes five candidates and presented them to the National General Assembly. At the same time the list chosen by the Religious Council was hung in the hall of the Assembly. The National General Assembly, after learning from the two lists the qualification of the candidates, elected the patriarch from the Religious Council's list by secret ballot and by a majority of votes.¹⁴

The duties of the patriarch were to supervise the exact execution of all provisions of the constitution, and act in accordance with its principles. Although he had no authority to dissolve or change the Political and Religious Councils and other committees, the patriarch could propose their dissolutions to the National General Assembly if he considered their conduct contrary to the constitution.¹⁵

The patriarchate was to have a Chancellery with three departments. The department of correspondance handled the documents sent and received by the patriarchate. The bureau of registration arranged and preserved the minutes and other papers of the general Assembly, the councils and committees. The department of census not only recorded the vital statistics of the members of the *millet*, but also issued official certificates of baptism, marriage, and divorce. The Chancellor, who was nominated by the patriarch and elected by the Political Council, served also as the secretary of the National General Assembly.¹⁶

Like the Religious Council, the Political Council was also elected every two years by the National General Assembly, and its election was to be confirmed by the Sublime Porte. It was to be comprised of twenty competent laymen who were familiar with the *millet's* affairs, and were

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

acquainted with the laws of the Ottoman government. They were nominated in the National General Assembly and their election was held by secret ballot. The Political Council managed the temporal affairs of the *millet* through seven committees. The term of office of the members of these committees was two years, but half of their numbers was to be changed at the end of each year by appointment.

The Educational Committee, appointed by the Political Council, consisted of seven educated laymen. Its duties were to finance and inspect the general education of the *millet*, to improve the condition of teachers, to prepare textbooks, and to assist the various societies in their educational endeavors. The committee held the annual final examinations in the national schools and gave diplomas to successful students.¹⁷

The Economic Committee was also composed of seven laymen, whose duty was to inspect the financial administration of all national institutions in the capital and their properties. No national property could be sold or bought without the knowledge of the Economic Committee and without the consent of the Political Council and the confirmation of the patriarch. Moreover, it was the responsibility of the Economic Committee to inspect periodically the finance of the National Hospital, to supervise the management of wills, and present reports to the Political Council.¹⁸

The Judicial Committee consisted of four *k'ahanas* (married priests) and four married laymen, well versed in law and at least forty years of age. The president of the Judicial Council was, *ipso facto*, the vicar general of the patriarch. Unlike the other committee the members of the Judicial Committee were to be elected by the Mixed Council (joint meeting of Political and Religious Councils) by a plurality of votes. The duty of this council was primarily to settle disputes between husbands and wives, and to examine question referred to it for solution by the Sublime Porte. If any person protested against the decision of the

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

Judicial Committee, the matter was then examined by the Mixed Council.¹⁹

The Committee for Monasteries, comprised of seven persons, was to supervise the execution of the rules of each monastery. A set of rules was prepared by the Mixed Council for each monastery to ascertain, arrange, and regulate their revenues and expenditures. The abbot of each monastery was elected by its brotherhood, and the election was confirmed by the patriarch and the Mixed Council. The abbot was to be a *vardapet* (celibate priest), over thirty years of age, and an Ottoman subject.²⁰

The Committee of Finance was also composed of seven laymen, well versed in financial affairs. The duty of this committee was the administration of the National Central Treasury. The revenues of the central treasury included the national taxes, the incomes from the Chancellery for baptismal and wedding certificates, and the wills and donations of individuals and organizations. Its expenditure consisted of the routine expenses of the patriarchate, the Chancellery, the financing of the national schools, and assistance to needy persons and other miscellaneous expenses. The Committee on Finance was to collect the revenues and dispense the expenditures with the knowledge of the Economic Committee.²¹

The Committee on Wills consisted of three ecclesiastics and four laymen, elected by the Mixed Council. Its function was to manage the wills in favor of the *millet*. It was to supervise the execution of the wills according to the intention of its makers.²²

The Hospital Committee was comprised of nine persons to manage the Holy Savior National Hospital, its estates and revenues, and

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

to administer it with the assistance received from the central treasury. Two members of this committee were to be physicians with diplomas. The hospital had four departments, one for the sick who were poor, the second for the aged, the third for the insane, and the fourth for the education of orphans.²³

Each Armenian quarter in Istanbul was to have a *Talakan Xorhurd* (Council of Quarter), consisting of five to twelve members according to the locality. The Council of Quarter was to be elected by the people of the quarter for a term of four years. Its duties included the management of the church, the schools, and the poor of the quarter. The council was to keep a regular register of all births, marriages and deaths in the quarter. The Council of Quarter was directly responsible to the various central committee for its different activities. For example, it was responsible to the Educational Committee for its educational activities, and to the Judicial Committee for its judiciary affairs. The rules to guide the Council of Quarter was prepared by the Mixed Council.²⁴

With respect to some general regulations, the constitution provided that every council or committee was to have its officers, a chairman and a secretary, who were elected annually. No meeting could be held without the presence of the majority, and decisions were to be taken by a plurality of voices. In case of a tie, the decision would depend on the vote of the president.²⁵ In the Mixed Council (joint meeting of Political and Religious Councils), in order to arrive at a decision, each council was to vote separately. If the majority of both councils arrive at the same decision, then the question was settled, otherwise, the matter was referred to the National General Assembly.

In the provinces, the local administration represented a miniature of the national central administration. The diocesan bishop or the metropolitan presided over the Provincial General Assembly, the

²³*Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.



Provincial Council, and was to preserve the constitution intact. Every quarter in the provinces was to have its council, its treasury, and its officers, similar to those in the capital. The diocesan bishop was elected by the Provincial General Assembly, and his election was to be approved by the patriarch and the National Mixed Council and confirmed by the Sublime Porte. The provincial assemblies were organized on the same plan as those of the central administration, and had similar functions.²⁶ Although the administration of the *millet* was, to a certain extent, decentralized to give the provinces a free hand in the management of their own affairs, the provincial committee still operated under the control of their national counterparts at the capital. At the end of each year the provincial committee submitted annual reports to the national committee in Istanbul.²⁷

Finally, the revision of the constitution was to be the exclusive right of the National General Assembly. However, its fundamental principles, outlined in the preamble, were regarded to be unchangeable.

In order to be ratified by the Ottoman government the constitution of 1860 had to go through certain changes, some of which damaged its perfection while others contributed to its sophistication. The ratified text contained ninety-nine articles while the 1860 version consisted of hundred and fifty articles. The ratified text incorporated several articles of the 1860 version into one, and thus, the total number of articles in the new text diminished. The order of topics in the 1860 constitution also went through some significant changes. For example, article 1 in the 1860 version dealt with the National General Assembly, while in the new text preference was given to the patriarch in the first article, and the National General Assembly was transferred to article 57. This and other similar changes become significant when one compares their contents. The 1860 version was more liberal and the jurisdictions and obligations of elected bodies and appointed committees were clearly specified.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

²⁷Atom, *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwné*, pp. 65-69.

Naturally, these changes were made to satisfy the opponents of constitutional ideas. The constitution was to be ratified by a government in which religious fanaticism and conservatism still played a considerable role. Perhaps, that is why the preamble in the 1860 version, which contained the following six democratic fundamental principles, was omitted in the ratified text.

1. Each individual has obligations towards the nation. The nation, in its turn, has obligations towards each individual. Again, each individual and the nation have their respective rights over one another. Hence the nation and its constituents are bound together by mutual duties, so that the duty of one is the right of the other.

2. It is the duty of each member of the nation to share according to his means in the expenses of the nation, willingly to accept any services asked of him by the nation, and to submit to its decision. These duties of the individual are the rights of the nation.

3. The duties of the nation are to care for the moral, intellectual, and material wants of its members, to preserve intact the creed and traditions of the Armenian Church, to diffuse equally the knowledge necessary to all men among the children of both sexes and of all classes, to watch over the prosperity of national institutions, to increase the national income in any possible lawful way and wisely to administer the national expenses, to improve the conditions of those who have devoted themselves for life to the service of the nation and to secure their future, to provide for the needy, peaceably to adjust the disputes that may arise among the members of the nation — in a word, to labor with self-denial for the progress of the nation. These obligations on the part of the nation are the rights of its members.

4. The authority which is elected to represent the nation and to supervise and administer the regular performance of these mutual obligations is called the National Administration. To this body is committed, by special permission of the Ottoman Government and by virtue of the Constitution, the care of the internal affairs of the Armenians of Turkey.

5. In order that the administration may be national it should be representative.

6. The foundation of this Representative Administration is the principle of rights and duties, which is the principle of justice. Its

strength is to be found in the plurality of voices, which is the principle of legality.²⁸

Moreover, article 8 of the 1860 version, which provided that the Porte would guarantee the rights of the *millet* and its members, was totally omitted in the ratified text.²⁹ Nowhere in the ratified constitution is there a mention about the collective security of the *millet*.

On the other hand, the ratified text contained new articles which were beneficial to the community. They provided for a minimum imperial interference in the *millet's* affairs. The sultan reserved the right to confirm the elections of the patriarch and the members of the Political and Religious Councils, and to ratify new amendments to the constitution. With regard to the membership of the National General Assembly, the 1860 version allowed Armenian employees in the higher echelons of the Ottoman government to participate in the Assembly with the privilege of voting. In the ratified text (article 65) this discrepancy was corrected and membership of the Assembly was confined only to those who were elected by the people.

It is safe to assume that the ratified Turkish text of the Armenian National Constitution was translated from the original Armenian text, since all the members of the Porte-appointed and *millet*-appointed committee, whose task was to revise the 1860 version, were Armenians. Surprisingly, however, the official Turkish text differs from the Armenian text in some details. The first discrepancy between the two texts was in the title of the document. The Armenian text was entitled *Azgayin Sahamanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* (National Constitution of the Armenians) with an Armeno Turkish sub-title *Nizamnamei Milleti Ermenian* (Regulations of the Armenian Millet),³⁰ whereas the title of the official Turkish text was *Ermeni Patrikliği Nizamati* (Regulations of the

²⁸*Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* (1860), pp. 11-12.

²⁹Rolin-Jacquemyns, *L'Arménie*, p. 18; Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, p. 17.

³⁰*Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'* 1863.

Armenian Patriarchate).³¹ By virtue of use, however, the translation of the Armenian title is generally accepted in the western world. Also, the term *Azgayin Endhanur Zolov*³² (National General Assembly) in the Armenian version is changed into *Meclisi Umumi*³³ (General Assembly) in the Turkish text, omitting the word "national." Moreover, the word *Erespoxan* (Deputy or Representative) is translated as *Milleti Vekilleri* (Vicars of the *Millet*), instead of the word *mebus* (deputy or member of parliament), throughout the Turkish text. Similarly, the term *iane* (donation, usually to a fund) is used for the Armenian *azgayin turk'* (national tax or dues). The exact Turkish equivalents for the Armenian terms, which brought to mind western ideas and constitutional concepts, were omitted, no doubt intentionally, in order not to antagonize the members of the *ulema*.³⁴

As a whole, the ratified constitution represented a great victory for the laity. It vested the legislative authority of the *millet* in a representative Assembly in which the lay participation was extensive. The Armenian constitution seems all the more progressive when it is compared with the regulations of the other non-Muslim communities of the empire.³⁵ In the Greek *millet* the clerical control was partially maintained, while in the Jewish general Assembly the rabbis constituted one-fourth of the total number of deputies.³⁶

The other non-Muslim communities of the empire followed closely the constitutional developments of the Armenian *millet*, to derive similar benefits from the proclamation of the *Hatt-i Hümayun*. In the Greek community the reform movement was not so self-generating as in

³¹*Düstür*, III, p. 961.

³²*Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwn Hayoc'*, (1863), p. 39.

³³*Düstür*, II, p. 955.

³⁴P'iwzand Eliayean, "Hayoc' Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwnë," *Sp'iwrk'*, October 6, 1966; Saruxan, *Haykakan Xndirn*, pp. 17-18; Atom *Azgayin Sahmanadrut'iwnë*, pp. 10-12; Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, col. 2730; Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwnë," p. 408.

³⁵For the administration of non-Muslim *millets*, see Young, *Corps de droit*, II, pp. 12-65, 99-160.

³⁶Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 126-131.

the Armenian *millet*. The clerical control in the Greek community remained more dominant than in the Armenian administration. It must be pointed out that the extensive lay participation of the Armenian constitution was less in keeping with the general mentality of the period than the small degree of popular participation provided by the Greek regulations. An explanation for this dissimilitude may be found in the democratic traditions of the Armenian Church where lay participation in church affairs was permitted.

The Jewish constitution of 1865, like its Armenian counterpart, represented a victory for the laity.³⁷ It had two similar councils, one for the management of spiritual and the other for the civil affairs of the community. Both councils and the *Hahambaşı* (chief rabbi) were elected by a general Assembly where the laymen possessed the dominant voice. Perhaps the only difference between the Armenian and the Jewish constitutions was the fact that the former was more complete, and its provisions included provincial organization. The latter lacked provincial organization, and allowed delegates from the provinces in the general Assembly only to elect the chief rabbi.³⁸

The Armenian Protestant constitution preceded the Armenian by four years. It differed from the Armenian in that it dealt only with civil matters. However, both are based on the representative principle and suffrage.

It is beyond the scope of this study to present a detailed comparison of the Armenian document and the Ottoman constitution of 1876. Suffice it to say that direct Armenian influence on the Ottoman constitution came through the Armenian members of the Ottoman constitutional commissions. Grigor Efendi Otean, Vahan Efendi, Under-Secretary for Justice, and Camic Efendi, member of the State Council,

³⁷Turkish text in *Düstur*. II, pp. 962-975; French trans. in Young, *Corps de droit*, II, pp. 148-155.

³⁸Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 130.

were members of the first Ottoman Commission.³⁹ Otean, one of the principal architects of the Armenian constitution and for years a close friend and advisor to Midhat Paşa, was among the more influential on the Commissions.

Contrary to general expectations, the Armenian National Constitution did not, at first, operate smoothly. Its relatively complex administrative machinery prevented the effective operation of the *millet's* affairs in the early years of its constitutional life. In fact, as a result of bitter disagreements between the Political and Religious Councils, the constitution was suspended by the Porte (1866) for three years. Perhaps, due to lack of political consciousness, it was difficult to arouse public interest in voting, even in Istanbul. In the general elections of 1863, out of a possible 3,658, only 1,899 votes were cast for the deputies of the capital.⁴⁰ It was evident that a lengthy process of public education was essential to teach the populace the fundamental principles of constitutional government.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the Armenian National Constitution commenced a new era of social and intellectual development within the *millet*. During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the new ideas of constitutional government took root under the impact of the Armenian constitution. The cultural renaissance, which had already begun to effect the *millet* earlier, flourished, and a national consciousness began to be developed. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Armenians' demands for reforms in the eastern provinces seriously strained the relations between the government and the *millet*. As a result of these deteriorating relations, the Armenian National Constitution, which from 1869-1892 had operated smoothly, was, practically, in abeyance, although the Ottoman government did not, after 1869, officially suspend it.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 369,370.

⁴⁰Arpee, *Awakening*, p. 192.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the Armenian *millet* from a clerico-feudal rule to a constitutional democracy illustrates the complex relations between the community's religio-aristocratic and middle-class forces. For this reason, it perhaps presents a valuable case history.

In general, an attempt was made in the preceding pages to trace the course of democratization of the Armenian *millet*. This gradual transformation is clearly that of a society forced to change under the stress of an organized middle-class. The fundamental principle, however, which provided the necessary motivation for the initial change, seems to lie in the traditions of the Armenian church where, lay participation in church affairs was allowed ever since the early centuries of Armenian Christianity. Moreover, the Ottoman government, whose general policy throughout the centuries had been one of toleration for the religious traditions of the non-Muslim communities of the empire, has, through imperial *berats* and *fermans*, sanctified gradually increasing lay participation in patriarchal elections and civil management of the Armenian *millet*. The earliest attempts at reform, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were not so much towards a change into something new, but towards reestablishing the tradition of the church. Consequently, the concept of general assemblies and the representative principle were established in the *millet* during the eighteenth century.

It was in the nineteenth century that the traditional structures and institutions of the Armenian *millet* became affected by the impact of western civilization. The influx of French political ideas, the Romanist

and Protestant missionary activities, and the Ottoman attempts of the Tanzimat period, forced by external pressures, to promote change, provided decisive stimuli to the already existing Armenian populist movement. As a result, the Armenian *millet*, which had already embarked upon a constitutional form of government, was the first among the non-Muslim communities to take advantage of the tolerance provided by the *Hatt-i Hümayun* of 1856 to endow itself with a comprehensive written constitution.

The content of the Armenian constitution clearly indicates that despite the European background of its principal architects, most of the provisions of the document were modifications of privileges which the Ottoman sultans had granted the Armenian *millet* through imperial decrees. With the exception of the direct election system,¹ the major provisions of the Armenian National Constitution represent merely the written form of these historical prerogatives acquired through the steadfast perseverance of the Armenian people.

Finally, the Armenian constitution may be said to have commenced a new era for the Ottoman empire as a whole. Sixteen years after its ratification, the experiment in constitutional government for which it had served as a basis extended to the whole population of the empire through the promulgation of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876.

¹ The principle of direct election was a French influence on the Armenian constitution. For details, see Alpoyacean, "Sahmanadrut'iwne," pp. 390-391.

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