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The constitutional revolution of 1908 and its aftermath in Trabzon

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**THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION OF 1908
AND
ITS AFTERMATH IN TRABZON**

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De graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,

op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. Mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker

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Selim Ahmetoğlu

geboren te Trabzon

in 1979

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Promotiecommissie: Prof. Dr. Manon van der Heijden
Prof. Dr. Jan Lucassen (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Dr. Uğur Üngör (Universiteit Utrecht)

to whom I have lost:
my father, Yusuf Ahmetoğlu (1944-2009)
and
my Hoca, Dr. Yavuz Selim Karakışla (1961-2016)

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“The worst sort of worker does his best only towards sunset!”

INTRODUCTION

The events discussed in this study took place in Trabzon, a major port city in the northeast of Turkey. While there is a lack of definite information about who originally founded the city or when, evidence suggests that in the middle of the 8th century BC, a Milesian colony was established there, and the first known document to mention the city was the *Anabasis*, which dates from around 400 BC.¹ As a port city, Trabzon was the site of numerous political struggles in antiquity and was under the dominion of the Persians, Alexander the Great, the Kingdom of Pontus and the Roman Empire. After the Roman Empire split, the city fell under Byzantine rule. When Alexios Komnenos fled the infamous sack of Istanbul in the year 1204, he made Trabzon the center of the Empire of Trebizond.² In the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Trabzon by Sultan Mehmed, the Conqueror in 1461, the city quickly became a major Islamic center. Sultan Selim I served as governor there for twenty-four years before becoming sultan and Sultan Suleiman, the Magnificent was born in the city.³

In the years of the Ottoman Empire, Trabzon was a key point on the trade route that extended between Europe and the Persian territories to the east.⁴ As a result, Trabzon, which served as the seaport for cities such as Erzurum, Gümüşhane, Bayburt, Van, Muş and Ağrı, became even more important as a trade route thanks to technological developments in seafaring and flourished in the process. Non-Muslim traders in Trabzon grew wealthy through trade with points in Europe, as did Muslim merchants, who started to play a more active role in the city's political, economic and cultural life.⁵ During the course of Ottoman modernization which was hastened by the Edict of Gülhane, Trabzon was an important indicator of the changes that were happening around the

1 Heath Lowry - Feridun Emecen, "Trabzon", *DİA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2012, vol. 41, p. 296.

2 Ibid, pp. 296-297.

3 Ibid, p. 297.

4 A. Üner Turgay, "Trabzon", *Doğu Akdeniz'de Liman Kentleri 1800-1914*, (eds. Çaylar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren, Donald Quataert), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994, p. 45.

5 Kudret Emiroğlu, "Vilayet Salnamelerine Göre Trabzon'da Bürokrasi ve Eşraf", *Kebikeç*, No: 14, 2002, p. 163.

empire,⁶ and at the turn of the twentieth century, Trabzon was still a major center in the region thanks to its social dynamism.

A Brief Historical Overview

On the morning of the 24th of July in 1908, the governor of Trabzon received an official telegram from the capital Istanbul, and like the governors of the other provinces around the empire, he was in for a shock, as were the residents of the capital who happened to pick up a newspaper and read the brief official announcement that had been published on the first page. The announcement, which marked the end of an era, stated that Sultan Abdülhamid II had reinstated the constitution and that work would soon get underway to reopen parliament. It was revolutionary because with that change, Sultan Abdülhamid's nearly thirty years of autocratic rule had come to an end and elected representatives would now be involved in running the country along with the sultan. The Second Constitutional Period had now officially begun.

Before delving into an examination of the events that set into motion dramatic transformations in that era, it would be useful to overview what a well-known Turkish historian referred to as "the longest century in the history of the Empire."⁷ The Ottoman Empire had made efforts at modernization and Westernization throughout the nineteenth century as a way of trying to cope with the political, economic and social developments in Europe brought on by the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution.

The attempts at modernization and Westernization launched by Sultan Selim III, most of which concerned the empire's military forces, were driven further by his successor Sultan Mahmud II, who didn't hesitate to force state bureaucrats and society to adapt to new changes. Through his reforms, Sultan Mahmud II was determined to not only restructure the military but also the state itself. In order to succeed in his efforts, he had to take important steps in two regards. The first of those was a radical revamping of the economy, as he needed funding, and the second was education, as that was seen as being crucial in making sure that the reforms held.⁸

When Abdülmecid I succeeded Sultan Mahmud II as sultan in 1839, he pushed his father's multifaceted reforms even further, and under his rule, crucial

6 For further information see: Hamdi Özdiş, "Taşrada İktidar Mücadelesi: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Trabzon Vilayeti'nde Eşraf, Siyaset ve Devlet (1876-1909)", [PhD Dissertation, Ankara: Hacettepe University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of History], 2008.

7 İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, İstanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2005.

8 Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 29th Edition, 2014, pp. 67-75.

steps forward were made, particularly in terms of developing a constitution and social rights. The Tanzimat reforms, which were instituted in 1839 with the implementation of the Edict of Gülhane, represented a major transformation as regards new rights, social life and the functioning of the state.

The Tanzimat reforms, which introduced the ideas of constitutionalism into Ottoman governance for the first time, launched a process that bolstered the efforts at modernization that would impact the empire throughout the nineteenth century. For that reason, it came to be known as the Tanzimat Era. In those years, major reforms were introduced which had an impact on the military, the central bureaucracy, governance of the provinces, taxation, education and communication. In addition, the era was marked by judicial reforms and a focus on developing a system of consultation within the administration.⁹

The Crimean War, which lasted from 1853 to 1856 and resulted in the defeat of the Russians by the Ottomans with help from the French and the British, was crucial as well. Following the war, the Congress of Paris was held, upon which the Reform Edict was enacted by the Ottoman state. The edict was critical in that it granted new rights to religious minorities living in the empire and marked a major step forward in that regard.¹⁰ While these developments were occurring, however, the empire was also being rocked by problems, both domestically and abroad. When Sultan Abdulmecid was succeeded by Abdülaziz in 1861, an autocratic system of rule persisted despite the protests of state elites and intellectuals who had been swayed by the tenets of constitutionalism.

The ongoing power struggle between the sultan and bureaucratic elites and intellectuals came to a halt in 1876 in a palace coup which resulted in the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz. As a result of the coup, which had been masterminded by Midhat Pasha and Hüseyin Avni Pasha, Murat V was reinstated as sultan. However, after ruling for just ninety-two days, it was decided that he was unfit to rule for psychological reasons and he too was deposed. A deal was struck with Prince Abdülhamid about instituting a constitutional form of rule, and he took to the throne as Sultan Abdülhamid II.

In Turkey today, the era of Sultan Abdülhamid II's rule is one of most contentious times of Ottoman history. When he ascended to the throne on the 31st of August in 1876, his first order of business was to enact a constitution. After completion of elections which were held between December of 1876 and January of 1877, the Ottoman parliament officially took office on the 19th of March in the same year, but it was short-lived. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Ottomans suffered a crushing defeat which resulted in

9 Ibid, p. 92.

10 Ibid, pp. 87-89.

the Russian army marching towards the gates of Istanbul, and on the 14th of February in 1878, Sultan Abdülhamid II dissolved parliament for an indefinite period of time.¹¹

Thus began a roughly thirty-year period of autocratic rule under Sultan Abdülhamid II, which the opposition referred to as an “era of tyranny.” As he tried to manage the country single-handedly through the creation of a strong centrist platform, he nonetheless perpetuated the reforms that had been gradually introduced starting in the early nineteenth century. In that way, the Tanzimat reforms proceeded apace under his rule but only in certain regards,¹² as political rights and freedoms were eroded; Sultan Abdülhamid II went to great lengths to suppress and quash any and all opposition to his personal rule.

Despite his efforts, however, all around the country various illegal organizations emerged that were opposed to the existing system. First was the Society of Ottoman Union (*İttihad-ı Osmani*), which was founded by military medical students in Istanbul in 1889. Soon after, however, the group’s activities came to light and some were arrested while others fled the country. Under the leadership of Ahmet Rıza Bey, the opposition in Paris expressed their opposition to the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II through various newspapers and journals, particularly the newspaper *Meşveret*. Others got organized in cities like Geneva and Cairo, where they also used the press to voice their opposition. Mizancı Murat Bey fled to Europe only to be followed by Prince Sebahattin Bey, and their participation in the opposition created tensions about who would be its leader. After a while, Mizancı Murat struck a deal with Sultan Abdülhamid II and returned to Istanbul, and when Prince Sebahattin had a falling out with his followers at a congress held in 1902, Ahmet Rıza Bey took over as the leader of the main opposition.¹³

A new organization, the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) was created by this main opposition movement. While it also used the press to express its members’ dissatisfaction with the personal ruling regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II, it was not very effective. However, a development in 1907 breathed new life into the movement. In 1906, some civil bureaucrats in Thessaloniki and soldiers from the 3rd Army who were disgruntled with the Ottoman leadership rallied together and formed the Ottoman Freedom

11 Ibid, pp. 121-122.

12 Ibid, p. 122.

13 For further information, see: Zürcher, *ibid.*; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Young Turks in Opposition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, İstanbul, 1945; Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1095-1908*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Gelişmeler 1876-1938*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2001.

Association (*Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti*), which then contacted the opposition in Paris to propose that the two groups unite their forces. As the result of secret meetings held between members of the organizations, it was ultimately decided that they would establish a new organization, the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (*Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), which was founded in October of 1907. Under the banner of the slogan “unity of the people” (*İttihad-ı Anasır*), they sought to get the constitution reinstated and reestablish parliament. In a short period of time, they easily managed to pull numerous others into their ranks, especially soldiers from the 3rd Army in Macedonia and civil bureaucrats.¹⁴

Because of the mounting economic and social problems that the Ottoman Empire was facing, it was becoming easier to find supporters for the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, particularly from the educated segments of society, and developments abroad were fueling support as well. When British King Edward VII and the Russian Tsar Nicholas II held a summit at Reval, the stage was set for action to be taken, as the decisions that were made at the meeting directly threatened the geographical and political integrity of the Ottoman Empire. A revolt, which began when certain officers loyal to the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress headed to the mountains with their troops, proved to be too difficult to put down, so Sultan Abdülhamid II opted to agree to reinstate the constitution in full and reestablish the parliament. On the 24th of July in 1908, the official announcement went out saying the constitution would be reinstated and parliament would reconvene.¹⁵

Although the movement initially tried but failed to dethrone Sultan Abdülhamid II, the launch of the Second Constitutional Period on the 24th of July in 1908 marked one of the most important shifts in Ottoman history, as political, economic, cultural and social changes began occurring with unprecedented rapidity.

The Aims and Subject of the Study

This study aims to examine the political, economic, cultural and social events that occurred in Trabzon, an important provincial city that had a uniquely multicultural population consisting of Turks, Greeks, Armenians and a smaller number of Iranians. The timeframe of the study is the first six years (1908-1914) of the Second Constitutional Period, a time when changes and transformations

14 For further information, see: Zürcher, *ibid.*; M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks 1902-1908*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; Feroz Ahmad, *İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914*, Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2004.

15 Zürcher, *ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

were occurring at an unprecedented rate in Ottoman lands. This study takes as its subject the developments that occurred in Trabzon, which at the time was the provincial center of an area that includes the present-day provinces of Samsun, Ordu, Giresun, Trabzon, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane and Bayburt.

Within the scope of this study, a wide range of issues are discussed in light of the changes that were occurring under the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress, including the activities of the Unionists, the relationship between the center and the periphery, how local nobles perceived the Committee of Union and Progress and its politics as well as vice versa, and the extent to which the Committee's political, cultural, economic and social policies had an impact on local life. In short, the main aim of this study is to bring to light the political, economic, cultural and social changes and transformations that occurred in Trabzon under the Committee's leadership between 1908 and 1914.

Sources and Methods

In order to achieve the primary goal of this study, I carried out a detailed examination of the available sources. First, I thoroughly examined the sources at the Ottoman archives and scanned all of those that pertained to the period 1908-1914 and Trabzon, whereupon I obtained printouts of those related to Trabzon and the Committee. After sorting the printed documents, I wrote transliterations of the texts. As a result of this process, I was able to examine the period and Trabzon through the perspective of the documents I had obtained. At this point, it should be noted that many of the documents I used were from the *Dahiliye Nezareti* section of the Ottoman Archive, followed by the *Maarif Nezareti*, *İradeler* and *Yıldız* sections. It is extremely unfortunate that the archives of the Committee of Union and Progress and the Committee's Trabzon branch no longer exist, as that marks a great loss for studies of Turkish history and the history of Trabzon. Nonetheless, I tried to make up for the absence of that material with the existing primary sources.

In the second stage of my research, I felt that it was necessary to obtain sources that offered a different perspective so that I could examine the information obtained from the Ottoman archival documents in a comparative manner. To that end, I sought out the reports of foreign consulates that existed in Trabzon at the period of time under study. After a long and laborious process, I was able to obtain the reports of the British Consulate, which are sorted by subject, and incorporate the information obtained therein into my study. A search on the Internet revealed that the relevant reports of the American Consulate are located at archives in Washington, DC. However, because I could not obtain the funding needed to go there, I was unable to obtain those reports. Because of a

language barrier, I was also unable to peruse the reports of the German, French, Austria-Hungarian, Russian and Greek consulates. However, the reports of the British Consulate contained a wealth of information, so I was able to carry out a comparison of their accounts with those offered in the Ottoman documents. Previous studies about Trabzon had not included the British sources, so that aspect of this study is particularly useful for enriching our understanding of the history of the city.

After completing my archival research, I identified newspapers and magazines from the period that were published in Trabzon. Once I had figured out which libraries and museums in Turkey had those in their collections, I determined which issues they had. My research indicated that the newspapers *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, *Feyz*, *Tarık* and *Haber Anası* could be found in the collections of various libraries and museums, as well as the magazines *Envâr-ı Vicdan* and *Kehkeşan*, so I then ascertained which copies were available for perusal and created an index for each of them. Working from that index, I examined the issues, identifying which articles pertained to my subject, and created transliterations. These periodicals were extremely useful for this study because they revealed the spirit of the era in light of the daily developments that were occurring. One of the sources that constituted the backbone of this study was the newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which was the mouthpiece of the Committee of Union and Progress in Trabzon, and hence is an invaluable source for historical research on the Second Constitutional Period for the area. Thanks to the information I was able to glean from these periodicals, I obtained a clearer picture of Trabzon for the years 1908-1914 in terms of local developments, conflicts between the opposition and members of the Committee, and the economic, social and cultural life in the city. Another point that makes this study original is the fact that I examined all of the existing copies of these periodicals, particularly *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.

Once I had completed my primary source research, I turned to secondary sources, and I found that there is an abundance of books, articles, theses and dissertations that have been written about Trabzon, although few of them deal with the Second Constitutional Period. However, those that do focus on the period are quite weak in terms of references to the primary sources mentioned above. All the same, it would be useful to point out that the works of Şakir Şevket, Mahmut Goloğlu, Kudret Emiroğlu and Melek Öksüz do turn to primary sources in their studies on the period in question for Trabzon. While Şakir Şevket's *Trabzon Tarihi*, which has been referred to as the first urban study for the Ottoman era, and Mahmut Goloğlu's *Trabzon Tarihi: Fetihden Kurtuluşa Kadar* do include references to primary source materials, they fall short in terms of academic sources considering the time period in which they were written.

However, Kudret Emiroğlu's articles and his work on *Trabzon Salnameleri*, and Melek Öksüz's fine studies on the era are deserving of commendation. The majority of the few other studies on the period tend to mirror one another in the sense that they repeat the same formulas, including both correct and incorrect points, and hence are not very pioneering. This study, on the other hand, fills a major void in the field by taking up a comparative approach of varying perspectives on the political, economic, cultural and social life in Trabzon for the years 1908-1914 and employing a wide array of primary sources based on local and foreign archival material and periodicals that were locally published.

Work Plan

This study consists of an introduction, four main chapters with subsections, and a conclusion. The first main chapter deals with political life in Trabzon for the years 1908-1914. After providing a historical overview of the political situation in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it discusses the developments that took place in Trabzon before and after the 24th of July in 1908, when the Second Constitutional Era began. The chapter then goes on to provide a discussion on perceptions of constitutionalism in Trabzon, the impact of the opening of the first parliament on the city, and reactions to the Press Law. After that, it offers a look at how the 31st of March Incident, which was a major turning point in Ottoman history, reverberated in the city. In addition, it discusses Committee members and the opposition, the elections that took place, and the visit of ex-Minister of Finance Cavit Bey to Trabzon. The chapter then goes on to explain in detail the effects of the Italo-Turkish War and the Balkan Wars on public opinion and how the local populace reacted to them. Other matters that come up in the chapter are the celebrations of the anniversary of the proclamation of the constitution, the governors of the era, and the consulates that existed in the city.

The second chapter, which takes up economic life in Trabzon for the years 1908-1914, starts with a general historical overview of the Ottoman economy. After discussing the economy in Trabzon before the proclamation of the constitution, it examines issues such as the railway and port projects, customs, agriculture and private enterprise. The chapter then goes on to deal with a variety of issues concerning trade in the city and offers a detailed look at how the boycotts of products from Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece impacted economic life in the city during the time period in question.

The third chapter deals with education and cultural life in Trabzon for the years 1908-1914. After taking up the matter of developments in the field of education before and after the proclamation of the constitution, the chapter

discusses the minority and foreign schools that existed in the city. The section concerning cultural life deals with the press and publications, as well as theater and the cinemas of Trabzon.

The fourth chapter concerns social and daily life in Trabzon. It discusses in detail the associations and clubs that existed in the city, the aid campaigns that were carried out, the health problems that arose, and natural disasters, as well as the foreigners and members of minority groups who lived in the city.

In summary, this study examines the local impacts of the policies of the Committee in the Second Constitutional Era, which played a major role in shaping developments of the time. By focusing on what was happening in Trabzon during the years 1908-1914, it sheds light on a period of time in Trabzon's history about which heretofore little was known.

Chapter I

POLITICAL LIFE IN TRABZON (1908-1914)

1.1. Political Developments in Trabzon before the Proclamation of the Second Constitutional Period

Trabzon was one of the places where the Young Turk opposition was able to organize during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Various sources mention that a dissident organization came into being there after 1902 a result of the efforts of the followers of Prince Sebahattin,¹ the work of which became tangible during the tax riots of 1905. After riots broke out in Kastamonu and Erzurum, they broke out in Trabzon as well.²

The power of the opposition movement in Trabzon became more tangible after Doctor Bahattin Şakir, one of the leading figures in the Committee, was arrested in 1905 and exiled to Erzincan. He spent five months there and was subsequently liberated with the help of Unionists in Erzincan. He then travelled back to Trabzon, again with the assistance of Unionists, and after hiding out in the city for a period of time he secretly boarded a French ship bound for Paris.³

After Doctor Bahattin Şakir arrived in Paris, the dissidents in Trabzon tried to increase the power they wielded. A letter that was posted to him from Trabzon noted the names of some of the dissidents, including Governor Ziver Bey; a judge by the name of Bahattin Efendi; Chief Secretary Süreyya Bey; Provincial Treasurer Abdurrahman Efendi; the luminaries Nemlizade Hacı Osman, Şükrü, Mayor Cemal, Mehmet Salih and Şevki Efendis; Kethüdazade Galip Bey; a merchant named Samancızade Ziya Efendi; Barutçuzade Ahmet Efendi

1 İsmail Akbal, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Trabzon'da Muhalefet*, Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2008, p. 35.

2 Kudret Emiroğlu, *Anadolu'da Devrim Günleri: II. Meşrutiyet'in İlanı*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999, p. 239.

3 Erdal Aydoğdu - İsmail Eyyüpoğlu, *Bahattin Şakir Bey'in Bıraktığı Vesikalara Göre İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, Ankara: Alternatif Yayınları, 2004, p. 355.

and Arif Efendi; Kırzade Şevket Efendi; Kozinzade Fevzi Efendi; Eyüpzade Ali Efendi; Arnavutoğlu Hasan Efendi; Hacıbilaloğlu Osman Efendi; Hamamcıoğlu İhsan Bey; and Tuzcuzade Rifat Efendi, who was based in Rize. Also, the list indicates that Mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey and Hacıbilaloğlu Osman Efendi were members of the Committee of Union and Progress whereas Chief Secretary Süreyya Bey was identified as being “one of them”—that is to say, part of Prince Sebahattin’s group. The rest were said to be mere sympathizers.⁴

Before the Second Constitutional Period, the largest operation carried out by the Unionists in Trabzon was the shooting of Hamdi Paşa, the commander of the Trabzon garrison. On 15 March 1907, Trabzon Military Reserve Battalion depot officer Lieutenant Naci Efendi shot and killed Hamdi Paşa at the end of the Friday prayer.⁵ Hamdi Paşa, who was 57 years old at the time, was the son-in-law of Zeki Paşa, the commander of the Fourth Army in Erzincan. He had been the commander of Trabzon garrison for 14 years.⁶ Naci Efendi, who was the seventh member of the Committee in the city, was court-martialled and condemned to death.⁷ The Paris headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress sent money to Naci Efendi’s family to help them get by.⁸ The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress stated that Naci Bey carried out the assassination under the Committee’s orders.⁹ However, documentation of Naci Bey’s interrogation indicate that Naci Bey had beaten the Trabzon Provincial Treasurer when his mother was unable to obtain her widow’s pension and was subsequently arrested. He confessed during the interrogation that after being released he had planned on killing the treasurer but when he was unable to do so he shot Hamdi Paşa instead.¹⁰

Hamdi Paşa’s funeral was held on 16 March 1907. In addition to the governor of Trabzon, the consuls of Austria, Greece, Iran, Italy and England attended the service.¹¹ After the death sentence was handed down by the court, Naci Efendi was hung on 12 July 1907 at 01.30 a.m. in *Şark Meydanı* (Orient Square) and his body was left hanging in the square until 8 a.m., when he was finally buried.¹²

4 Ibid., p. 361.

5 Ibid., p. 353.

6 PRO., F.O., 195/2269, 16 March 1907, p. 28.

7 Aydoğan and Eyyüpoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 355.

8 Ibid., p. 356.

9 Ibid., p. 355.

10 BOA., İ.AZN., 72-1325.Ca.8 (19 June 1907).

11 PRO., F.O., 195/2269, 16 March 1907, p. 28.

12 PRO., F.O., 195/2269, 12 July 1907, p. 59.

While the presence of Prince Sebahattin's group which had been active in Trabzon since 1902 is documented, the person who wrote letters to the Paris headquarters as a representative of the Unionists stated that Trabzon luminaries were hesitant to join the dissidents because they were afraid of losing the privileges they enjoyed under the despotic regime. Likewise, he noted that some city dignitaries were reluctant to join the Unionist organization.¹³

A report prepared by the British Consulate in Trabzon dated 1 June 1907 mentioned that there were exiles in Trabzon and Sivas. The report stated that because Trabzon was close to the Russian border, the Ottoman administration did not exile many people to the region. According to the report, most of the twenty-four exiles in Trabzon were state employees and three of them were Armenians who had participated in the attempted assassination of Sultan Abdülhamid II at Yıldız Mosque in 1905.¹⁴

Another report made by the British Consulate which is dated 8 June 1907 includes a general assessment of the provinces of Trabzon and Sivas for a period lasting from 16 February to 8 June 1907. In the report, the consul described his travels to those regions and noted that the new governor of Trabzon, Ziver Bey, took office on 19 February 1907 while the former governor, Reşad Bey, was relocated to Edirne.¹⁵ It also stated that Naci Efendi assassinated Hamdi Paşa, the commander of the Trabzon garrison, on 15 March 1907 and was subsequently sentenced to death. Even though Naci Efendi had personal reasons for committing the crime, under public pressure his sentence was upheld instead of being commuted to life imprisonment. It would seem that the authorities wanted to set an example by going through with the execution. It was also reported that Kazak Süleyman Paşa was appointed in Hamdi Paşa's place and arrived in Trabzon on 4 May 1907. Süleyman Paşa was from an aristocratic Caucasian family, the Anzar's of the Gabartay tribe, and his father had been an aide-de-camp for a former Russian Tsar. He had been stationed in Baghdad and was posted to Erzincan after serving in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. The report also noted that Nemlizade Cemal Bey's appointment as mayor of Trabzon in 1907 was well received by the public. Cemal Bey refused to be paid for his services on the grounds that he belonged to the wealthiest and most prominent family in Trabzon. While he was mayor, major urban developments occurred, including the construction of a new prison which could house 450 inmates as the old one was overcrowded with some 600 inmates.¹⁶

13 Aydoğan, Eyyüpoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 358.

14 PRO., F.O., 195/2269, 1 June 1907, p. 41.

15 PRO., F.O., 195/2269, 8 June 1907, p. 44.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

The report also mentioned some prominent people holding government posts in Trabzon, including notable figures such as: Ziver Bey, the governor of Trabzon; his deputy, Gregoire Vagleri Bey, who happened to be the only non-Muslim holding that position in all of the empire; a commander named Kazak Süleyman Paşa; Ankaralı Ahmet Hamdi Efendi, a financial officer; Burhanettin Bey, a judge; chief secretary Ahmet Süreyya Bey, who had worked at the embassy in Paris; a prosecutor named İhsan Bey; Ziyaeddin Bey, a civilian court chair; Hüseyin Rüşdü Bey, a penal court chair; a commercial court chair named Fikri Bey, who was Armenian; Tevfik Efendi, the director of the censorship board; city translator Antoine Efendi, who was the only Christian holding that post; police commissioner Hüseyin Ruhi Efendi; and gendarmerie commander Osman Bey. The total population of the *vilayet* of Trabzon was reported to be 1,254,800 while the *sancak* of Trabzon had 634,500 residents, the *sancak* of Gümüşhane had 124,900, the *sancak* of Canik had 328,000 and the *sancak* of Lazistan had 167,400. The city of Trabzon was said to have a population of 55,000, but no information was given about how many of the city's inhabitants were Turkish or Muslim or how many were non-Muslim.¹⁷

Another report dated 17 April 1908 which was penned by the British consul in Trabzon mentioned that twenty-five Armenian youths had been imprisoned for political crimes. The report also noted that the mothers of the detainees wrote a letter to the consul asking him to intervene on their behalf to get them released.¹⁸ Yet another report which was dated 14 July 1908 stated that two Russian officers named Colonel Averyanof and Colonel Maximof had obtained permission to travel around the province of Erzurum-Erzincan accompanied by a few Ottoman officers and after their travels they stopped in Trabzon. The officers were welcomed by a committee led by the governor and mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey on the Erzurum road and they stayed in Trabzon for one day. Afterwards they travelled to Batum on an Austrian ship registered to the shipping company Österreichischer Lloyd.¹⁹

The first incident in Trabzon involving the Young Turk movement dates to 1902. The first such group established in Trabzon was led by Prince Sebahattin. Later, Dr. Bahattin Şakir was exiled to Erzincan via Trabzon in 1905, which made it possible for the Committee of Union and Progress to establish a Unionist branch in Trabzon. The establishment of that branch played a significant role in Dr. Bahattin Şakir's escape to Paris.

17 Ibid., p. 44.

18 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 17 April 1908, pp. 79-81.

19 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 14 July 1908, p. 126.

1.2. Developments in Trabzon after the Proclamation of the Second Constitution

A freedom movement which first surfaced in Salonika and quickly spread to the Balkans forced Sultan Abdülhamid II to re-proclaim the constitution. The proclamation of the Second Constitution led to jubilation not only in the Balkans but also in the entirety of the Ottoman Empire, including Trabzon.

In a report prepared by British consul Francis Jones, it was noted that the governor, Ferid Paşa, met with the Muslim dignitaries of the city after receiving a telegram dated 24 July 1908 from *Babıali* (the Sublime Porte) and announced the proclamation of the Second Constitution and the reinstatement of the *Kanun-u Esasi*. At first, people doubted the veracity of the announcement but later it was understood to be real when it was publicly announced all over town. The report noted that while people rejoiced at the news, there were no public demonstration of jubilation at first.²⁰

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, a crowd of around ten or fifteen thousand people rallied at the post office to have a telegram sent which demanded that the governor, Ferid Paşa, and the prosecutor, İhsan Bey, be immediately removed from office.²¹ The Sublime Porte agreed and appointed Arifi Paşa as the new governor of Trabzon.²² Then another telegram signed “The Trabzon members of the Committee of Union and Progress” demanded the resignation of police commissioner Hüseyin Ruhi Bey, who had been implicated in the former governor’s corrupt dealings, and the Porte agreed.²³ Reports made by the British consulate indicated that Hüseyin Ruhi Bey had armed some inmates at the Trabzon prison with the aim of causing mayhem in the city.²⁴ In another report, it was noted that the former governor left Trabzon on a ship called the *Braila*. Major Safvet Bey, an important Unionist, and some other officials escorted him to the ship to ensure his safety.²⁵

Civil servants of all ranks were forced to resign as the result of public protests because they were known for their involvement with bribery and corruption in Trabzon and they were strongly disliked. For that reason, some counties were stripped of sub-governors and other civil servants, which led to the disruption of official business.²⁶ During this time, Ahmet Faik Hurşit (Günday) Bey was

20 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 25 July 1908, p. 138.

21 BOA., DH. MKT., 1278-6, 7. B. 1326 (5 August 1908).

22 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 202.

23 BOA., DH. MKT., 1277-50, 12. B. 1326 (10 August 1908).

24 PRO., F.O. 195/2303, 6 August 1908, pp. 153-154.

25 PRO., F.O. 195/2303, 8 August 1908, p. 158.

26 Ahmet Faik Hurşit Günday, *Hayat ve Hatıralarım*, 1960, p. 8.

appointed as a member of the retinue of the governor of Trabzon (*Maiyet Memuru*). He reported that even though there were daily protests in the city, nothing really changed and many dignitaries as well as all the civil servants under their protection kept their old posts; however, they now declared themselves to be Unionists.²⁷ Also, Faik Hurşit Bey claimed that the real public, the peasantry, were not yet visible in the protests and that no one had done anything to raise their awareness about what was happening. He stated that the Unionists were represented only by low-ranking officers in Trabzon who were unaware of the fundamental principles of constitutionalism. He stated that those officers antagonized people who were not members of the Committee of Union and Progress and thought that bringing them to ruin was a form of patriotism.²⁸

Major İrfan Bey was the head of the Unionists in Trabzon. He told Faik Hurşit Bey, who had complained of setbacks in Trabzon, that such obstacles would be overcome in due time and that everything was in order in Salonika.²⁹ Also, according to Faik Hurşit Bey some people in Trabzon, especially the owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* newspaper Naci Bey and its chief editor, a customs officer named Sadık Efendi, took advantage of the Committee of Union and Progress and used the power of the paper to intimidate dissidents.³⁰

With the general amnesty that was proclaimed after the Second Constitution, political prisoners were released in Trabzon as was done in the rest of the country. However, the governor of Trabzon claimed that the amnesty did not include Armenian political prisoners, and he resisted their release for a while.³¹ He ignored the Armenian bishop's pleas for their release as well as the British consul's insistence that they be set free, and he wrote to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for advice.³²

27 Ahmet Faik Hurşit Günday was born in Hemşin in 1883. He graduated from the Civil Service Academy and served as a member of the retinue of the governor of Trabzon province, the educational inspector of the province of Adana, the subdistrict governor (*kaymakam*) of Kiğı and Horasan, the district governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Divane, Malatya, Lazistan and Canik, and the governor of the province of Sivas. Günday was an member of parliament representing Ordu in the second term of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara starting in 1923. He was one of the founding members of the Progressive Republican Party and he was the elder brother of Ziya Hurşit, who was a member of parliament representing Lazistan during the first term of parliament; Hurşit was executed for the attempted assassination of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in İzmir in 1926. Günday died on 25 April 1967. (http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM_Album/Cilt1/index.html Last accessed: 13 December 2014).

28 Ibid., p. 17.

29 Ibid., p. 18.

30 Ibid., p. 19.

31 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 1 August 1908, p. 144.

32 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 1 August 1908, p. 146.

Faced with the governor's resistance, Ferid Bey and Major Savfet Bey, two important Unionists who had been exiled to Trabzon, organized a rally to demand that the governor, Ferid Paşa, take a vow of allegiance to Constitutionalism. During the rally, the governor was asked to release the Armenian prisoners. Ferid Paşa refused this demand, indicating that he had a telegram that expressed opposition to the idea. Then Unionist leader Ferid Bey and Ferid Paşa agreed to send a new telegram to the Ministry of Internal Affairs demanding that all political prisoners be released without discrimination. The response from Istanbul stated that the Armenian prisoners should be released immediately but the governor still refused to release them. So, the Unionists, led by Ferid Bey and Major Savfet Bey, organized a rally in front of the governorate building attended by fifteen thousand people demanding the release of the Armenian prisoners and then sent another long telegram to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the response, it was stated that the Armenian prisoners should be released immediately and that the governor as well as the prosecutor had been relieved of duty.³³

In mid-August, two officers from the Third Army in Macedonia travelled to Trabzon to promote the Committee of Union and Progress. Lieutenant Halil Bey from Salonika addressed a crowd of a few thousand people and said that Sultan Abdülhamid II declared that the Second Constitutional era had come about as the result of pressure from the Unionists, not his free will. The next day, Doctor Captain Server Bey gave a speech to a crowd of more than twenty thousand people about the incidents instigated by Armenians twelve years earlier and how their consequences could be resolved.³⁴ Server Bey then went to Rize for propaganda purposes.³⁵ Through this type of propaganda work they tried to convince the people that the Committee had forced Sultan Abdülhamid II to reinstate the constitution. In doing so, they wanted to demonstrate that the real driving force and protector of constitutionalism was the Committee and thereby increase its popularity in the eyes of the public in terms of opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid II.

On 1 September 1908, a large crowd of people from all walks of life gathered in Trabzon to commemorate the coronation of Sultan Abdülhamid II. The usual

33 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 4 August 1908, pp. 147-150.

34 Clashes between Muslims and Armenians occurred in Trabzon on 3 October 1895 after two Armenian militants assassinated high-ranking Ottoman officials in Trabzon's city centre. During the clashes, which continued for a week, eleven Muslims and 182 Armenians were killed and twenty-five Muslims and eighteen Armenians were injured. For more information, see Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *1895 Trabzon Olayları ve Ermenilerin Yargılanması*, İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2005, pp. 52-67.

35 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 15 August 1908, pp. 167-168.

chants of “Long live the Sultan!” were accompanied by chants of “Equality, Justice, Brotherhood and Liberty!” in both Turkish and Greek. Also, speeches were made in Turkish and Greek in the city square, where rallies were usually held. The most important speech made in Turkish was given by another staff officer named Vehip Bey who had travelled to Trabzon from Salonika aboard an Austrian ship that was registered with the Lloyd shipping company. Vehip Bey spoke about the importance of obeying government decrees and how the Committee would work to prevent social unrest. Vehip Bey concluded his speech by wishing the Sultan a long, prosperous life. Towards evening, the mayor, Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Efendi, made a brief statement announcing a municipal decision to change the name of the city square where Vehip Bey had spoken; it had formerly been known as *Gavur Meydanı* and *İskenderpaşa Mahallesi*, but it was going to be changed to Liberty Square.³⁶ Deposed governor Ferid Paşa was replaced by (Mutasarrıf) Arifi Paşa, the district governor of Mardin. He travelled to Trabzon from Samsun on a Russian ship called *Rostow* on 6 September 1908 to take up his post.³⁷ Süleyman Paşa, who had been appointed commander of the Trabzon garrison in 1907 after the assassination of Hamdi Paşa, was appointed governor of Diyarbakır thanks to his good relations with the Unionists in the city,³⁸ and in turn Süleyman Paşa was replaced by Ahmet Abuk Paşa.³⁹ For nine years Vagleri Bey had served as the deputy governor of Trabzon but he was replaced by İbrahim Selim Sussa, who was of Maronite descent and had formerly been stationed in Erzurum.⁴⁰

1.3. Perceptions of the Second Constitutional Period in Trabzon

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, Trabzon was one of the first cities to adopt a constitutional administration. Prompted by the efforts of the Unionists in Trabzon, many people quickly and sincerely adopted constitutionalism. Both state officials and citizens demonstrated their interest in the administration by organizing events. A British consulate report dated 25 December 1908 stated that the governor of Trabzon and all other civil servants, including the commander Paşa, officers, customs officials, Ottoman Public Debt Administration officials, post office employees, and Regie Company employees took another pledge of allegiance to the constitution on 24 December 1908.⁴¹

36 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 2 September 1908, pp. 182-183.

37 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 7 September 1908, p. 193.

38 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 12 September 1908, p. 201.

39 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 21 October 1908, p. 248.

40 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 31 October 1908, p. 263.

41 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 25 December 1908, p. 291.

The press in Trabzon explained the meaning of constitutionalism, the types of opportunities it would bring and the rights and obligations involved. In an article penned by Mehmed Halid which was published in the first issue of the newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was stated that all Ottoman citizens had become free and equal regardless of their wealth or religion and that everyone was the child, owner, servant and guardian of the Ottoman lands. The article stated that people could now work, travel, and invest freely and without fear; as long as they did not infringe on other people's rights, they were more or less free to do as they pleased. It was also argued that the problems of the pre-constitutional period were over but people had to get over of their initial shock, indecision and lethargy so they could get to work as soon as possible. The article noted that it was enough to hold rallies and give speeches but now it was time to move forward for a better life and social order.⁴² In the next issue, the writer continued his article, pointing out that people should not expect everything from the government but strive to succeed on their own. He also argued that the state administration was expected to get more organized and introduce a new system of governance, and that civil servants should not carry on as before. The article noted that state employees needed to provide quality service to citizens as required by their posts and be paid their salaries until a new system was established. According to the author of the article, bribery, corruption and nepotism had to be avoided or else the new constitutional period would not differ much from the absolutist regime.⁴³

In another article published in a different issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the author complained that the new governor had waited for orders from Istanbul as he did not fully comprehend the realities of constitutionalism yet. He also said that civil servants who had created problems with citizens had not been relieved of duty, which led to unrest. He also argued that the new governor had to eliminate those employees on his own initiative and convene the city council in order to identify and solve the problems of the city. Also, he recommended electing fair, honest and competent people as new representatives to establish the new order.⁴⁴ In another article, the claim was made that after the proclamation of the constitution, a chaotic atmosphere prevailed which was marked by a cacophony of voices. The author argued that some people wreaked havoc in society with their dreams of becoming a representative for the sake of personal

42 Mehmed Halid, "Ne Bekliyoruz?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 1, 19 Ağustos 1324 (1 September 1908), p. 2.

43 Mehmed Halid, "Ne Bekliyoruz? (ma'bad)", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 2, 23 Ağustos 1324 (5 September 1908), pp. 1-2.

44 Salim, "Açık Mektub", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 15, 8 Teşrinievvel 1324 (21 October 1908), p. 1.

interest. According to the article, as statesmen tried to fix things, everyone else should mind their own business so that the country could prosper.⁴⁵

An article written by Ş. Asım in the 20th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* talked about how constitutionalism had been put into place as the result of much effort and that it therefore needed to be respected and appreciated. The article stated that two important factors—unity and education—were needed to protect the new regime and overcome hardships. For that reason, the article suggested that in the prevailing atmosphere of brotherhood, members of parliament should be elected on the basis of their loyalty and competence rather than religious background and that Muslims and non-Muslims should interact at social clubs.⁴⁶ Yet another article stated that during the First Constitutional Period (1876-1878), members of parliament had pursued their own interests, bribed as they were by the positions and benefits offered to them. The article then listed what was expected of the new members of parliament and suggested that the biggest threats were bureaucrats and the senate. It said that the crisis that had started when Bulgaria annexed East Rumelia and confiscated Ottoman trains demanded attention and further argued that only through the benevolent, diligent efforts of parliament could the Ottomans save face after the debacle.⁴⁷

An article published in the 39th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* talked about how the Ottomans had been liberated from the shackles of absolutism, which stunned friend and foe alike. It also claimed that although the Reval Agreement had been drawn up as a means of putting an end to the Ottoman Empire, the proclamation of the constitution had thwarted Europe's aims. The article claimed, however, that even after nearly six months not enough had been accomplished and that precious time was being wasted; enterprises such as setting up factories, running mines and operating shipping companies had to be carried out by the state to block Europeans' imperial designs. It was also argued that enterprises of such magnitude required collective effort and therefore patriotic citizens needed to pool their capital and labour.⁴⁸

In an article titled "Towards Progress," the author stated that Ottoman society desperately needed to make scientific progress and pointed out how the government should go about doing that (new schools had to be built and

45 Telgrafçı H. Rüşdi, "Artık Yeter!", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 19, 22 Teşrinievvel 1324 (4 November 1908), p. 3.

46 Ş. Asım, "Fikr-i İttihada Hadim Makale", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 20, 25 Teşrinievvel 1324 (7 November 1908), pp. 2-3.

47 Salim, "Hasbihal", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), pp. 1-2.

48 "Ne Yapdık?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 39, 3 Kanûnisânî 1324 (16 January 1909), pp. 2-3.

existing ones had to be repaired, and textbooks needed to be provided). The author complained that even though nine months had passed since the declaration of constitutionalism, little progress had been made.⁴⁹

Ottoman intellectuals thought that constitutionalism was the only way out for the Ottoman Empire and that all of the empire's problems would be solved with a new regime in place. With the reopening of parliament, they expected that the various communities would enjoy equal representation and hence discriminatory tendencies would be eliminated. Also, it was argued that European states would henceforth not be able to interfere with the internal affairs of the Ottomans. For that reason, they went through a period of shock and disillusionment when the empire's problems persisted after the declaration of constitutionalism. Ottoman intellectuals demanded that not just statesmen but also intellectuals and ordinary citizens strive energetically to realize Ottoman modernization.

1.4. Celebrations in Trabzon for the Opening of Parliament

After the proclamation of the constitution, general elections were held and on 17 December 1908 (4 Kanûnievvel 1324) parliament was opened. This historic development was widely covered in the Trabzon press as well. An article in the newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentions that, as in the rest of the country, celebrations were to be held in honour of the opening of parliament following a thirty years of rule by an absolutist regime.⁵⁰ The location chosen for an honorary one hundred and one gun salute was Boztepe, and the guns were carried up the hill by the citizens. Also, the paper announced that the streets were to be illuminated at night and decorated on the day of the celebrations when the second branch of the Committee of Union and Progress in

49 “Şüphesizdir ki bugün bütün akvâm-ı mevcûde-yi cihân dâima insâniyete, insâniyetde terakkiye doğru yürümektedir. İnsâniyetin de rehber-i feyz ve sa’adeti ‘ilmdir, ma’ârifdir. ‘İlimsiz, ma’ârifsiz bir millet değneksiz köre benzer, elinden tutulmadıkça yürüyemez, yürüdükçe seyr ve hareketde muhafaza-i intizâma muvaffak olamaz. Bizde ise ‘ilm ve ma’rifet nüfus-u mevcûde i’tibârıyla ‘adeta mefkûddur. ... Biz hepimiz bilmeliyiz ki ekseriyeti vücûda getiren ‘avâmın tenvir-i efkârı ve bu sûretle anâsır-ı Osmaniye arasından vifâk ve ittihâdın teyid ve tahkîmi kuvve-i icrâ’iyenin ‘adaletle ifâ-yı ‘umûr etmesine vâbeste olduğu kadar da fazla ve udebâ-yı ümmetin mücâhede-yi kalemiyede bulunmasına muhtâc ve müftekirdir. ... Mâdem ki hep terakki diye feryâd ediyoruz. İşte ilk vazife hükûmet ile berâber milletin fıkren terakkisi için ediblerimiz, hekimlerimiz, ‘alimlerimize teveccüh etmektir.”

M. Sadık, “Terakkiye Doğru”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 70, 25 Nisan 1325 (8 May 1909), p. 1.

50 “Meclis-i Mebusanın Yevm-i Küşadı”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), p. 2.

Trabzon was scheduled to open in Ortahisar.⁵¹ Another report on the same page stated that a military band would give a concert at the Ottoman Club in honour of the opening of parliament. The people of Trabzon were invited to attend the concert which was to be held from 9 p.m. to midnight at a cost of 5 kuruş per person.⁵²

Newspaper articles indicate that there was much jubilation in Trabzon on Thursday 17 December 1908, the day of the opening of parliament, with over 60,000 people taking part in the celebrations regardless of ethnicity, language or religion. Considering that the city's population was about 55,000 at the time, this number seems rather high, even if people from neighbouring towns had attended. According to one newspaper, people gathered in front of the Committee building in Zeytinlik and listened to speeches delivered by customs director Mehmet Emin Bey, financial inspector Necati Bey, Armenian representative Emmanuel Efendi, Greek representative Grigor Mumcidi Efendi and the Committee's secretary (*katip*), Captain İhsan Bey. Celebratory rifle fire ensued, and in the evening, the members of the Ottoman Club visited the Committee building.⁵³ A telegram sent by the Trabzon branch of the Committee to Sultan Abdülhamid II regarding the opening of parliament as well as the Sultan's reply were published in the thirty-second issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.⁵⁴ A speech delivered by Mehmet Emin Bey (Yurdakul), the Trabzon customs director, on the day of the opening of parliament highlighted love for the motherland as well as the significance of the constitution and parliament. His speech, which was embellished with poems, was published in its entirety in the following issue of the same newspaper.⁵⁵

51 "İyd-i Milli Hazırlıklarından", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), p. 2.

52 "İyd-i Milli", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), p. 4.

53 "İyd-i Ekber-i Milli ve Meclis-i Mebusanın Küşadı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 32, 6 Kanûnievvel 1324 (19 December 1908), pp. 1-2.

54 "Meclis-i Mebusanın Küşadı Münasebetiyle Trabzon İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tarafından Keşide Olunan Telgrafnameler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 32, 6 Kanûnievvel 1324 (19 December 1908), p. 1.

55 "Esselâm ey vatanın mukaddes meclisi, esselâm ey milletin mübârek kürsüleri! Allahımıza yüzbinlerce şükürler olsun ki senin bugününü de gördük. Nice tali'siz vatandaşlarımız gibi biz de senin için ruhlarımızda gizlediğimiz hasletleri solgun dudaklarımızın üzerinde soğuk güftelerle örtmedik. ... Artık çocuklarımızın alçak veyahûd sefil olacaklarından korkmuyorum. Onların güleceklerini, iyi günler göreceklerini ümid ediyorum. Onların çok yaşamalarını ve yeni doğacak kardeşlerinin ellerinden tutmalarını arzu ediyorum. ... Açıl ey otuz iki seneden beri solgun ümidlerimizin eşiğinde ağladığı mukaddes kapı, açıl! Görün, ey otuz milyon ahâlinin hayat ve istikbâlinin sığındığı mukaddes Kâbe, görün! Toplan, ey terakki ve sa'adetimizin düşünüleceği mukaddes meclis, toplan! Parılda, ey hukûk ve da'valarımızın görüleceği mukaddes mahkeme, parılda! Gürle, ey hürriyet ve 'adâlet fikirlerinin yıldırımlar saçacağı mukaddes kal'a, gürle!

1.5. Reactions to New Press Regulations

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution, censorship was lifted, which led to a veritable boom in the press. In 1908, hundreds of newspapers and magazines obtained licenses to publish but the majority of them never actually got started. In the months following the proclamation of constitutionalism, the Committee of Union and Progress grasped the importance of the press and tried to manipulate public opinion in line with its own objectives through publications known to sympathize with their cause. The disorganized nature of the press led the Ottoman government to issue a new press regulation so that it could gain some control over it and reduce the influence of the Committee. However, the press responded vehemently, with some authors claiming that the regulations marked a return to an absolutist regime and protests were organized.

In Trabzon, the new press regulation provoked strong reactions. An article published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that the gains that had been made by constitutionalism were gradually being lost.⁵⁶ The article noted that the new press regulation was being examined by the Council of State. It also mentioned that one of the most notable aspects of the regulation was that newspaper owners in Istanbul had to pay 250 lira and in other provinces 100 lira as a security deposit. That amount covered the fines that could be levied against journalists for breaking the terms stipulated in the new regulation. Additionally, newspaper owners could face prison sentences in a number of situations. The

Ey Meb'ûsan Meclisimiz, senin çatın altında soğuk iklimlerden yeşil memleketlerden, mavi körfezlerden, kumlu çöllerden gelen meb'ûsların sana memleketlerinin hallerini anlatacaktır. Sana birçok yanık hikâyeler, kanlı vak'alar, acı sergüzeşter, zehirli mersiyeler söyleyeceklerdir. Evet, sen bunları can kulağıyla dinleyeceksin. Lâkin göz yaşlarını tutacaksın. Ağlamayacaksın. Kendini ne zayıf ne de hiddete kapdırmayacaksın. Vazifene soğukkanlı başlayacaksın. Senin ilk işin şu olacaktır: dostların ihânetleriyle harâb olmuş, düşmanlarının tama'larıyla taksimlere uğramış olan şu zavallı Türkiyemizin kırık yerlerini bağlamak ve yaralarını sarmak, istibdâdın hayvanlaştırmak istediği, öküz gibi boyunduruğa koştuğu, koyun gibi bıçağını boğazına dayadığı şu mazlûm ve sefil millete insanlıklarını tanıttırmak ve haklarını vermek. ... İleriye gidemeyenler geri kalırlar. Zayıfların, ileriye gidemeyenlerin tali'leri ise ölümdür. Onun için sen Türkiyeyi fûnûnuyla, edebiyatıyla, felsefesiyle, sana'isiyle, ticâretiyle, silahıyla kuvvetli ve meşûd bir Türkiye yap. O muhterem meb'ûslarınla, o birkaç yüz zakâ ile, o birkaç yüz hamiyetle bunu düşün, bunu iste, bunun için haykır, bunun için çalış. ... Yaşa Türkiyenin terakkisine, Osmanlılığın ittihâdına çalışacak ve hiçbir vakit kardeşliklerini unutmayacak olan muhterem meb'ûslarınla, 'âdil Kanûn-i Esâsinle binler yaşa!!!'

"Meclis-i Mebusanın Küşadı Günü Trabzon Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Kulübü Önünde Edib-i Pakize-eda Emin Beyefendi Hazretleri Tarafından İrad Buyurulan Nutk-u Âlinin Suretidir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 33, 10 Kanûnievvel 1324 (23 December 1908), pp. 1-2.

- 56 "Matbuat Nizamnamesi ve Vatanın İstikbali", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 45, 28 Kanûnisâni 1324 (10 February 1909), p. 3.

article claimed that those terms marked a return to the absolutist regime, the memory of which was quite fresh in the collective imagination. It was argued that silencing the press was tantamount to silencing the people, which by extension meant that a violation of press freedoms was also a violation of people's freedom.⁵⁷ The article stressed that restricting the press was unacceptable, as it sought to assist with the development of Ottomanism. The claim was also made that those who tried to limit the press seemed to think they were living in the pre-constitutional period and that the people would not allow such a move.⁵⁸

A report made by the British consulate stated that on Sunday 14 February 1909 a rally was held in Trabzon to protest the new press regulation. At the rally, Mehmet Emin Bey, Trabzon's customs director and the city's Unionist leader, delivered a speech in Turkish, while the Tashnak committee representative spoke in Armenian. The report noted that telegrams of protest were going to be sent to parliament in support of the Istanbul newspapers and that on 8 February 1909, a rally was organized in Samsun, where speeches were delivered in Turkish, Greek and Armenian.⁵⁹

Another report published in *Feyz* noted that the people of Trabzon gathered in the (recently renamed) Liberty Square to protest the restrictions that had been placed on the freedom of the press through the new press regulation.

57 "Eyvâh! Beş aylık numûne-i terakkimiz bu mudur? Bu hafta gelen İstanbul gazetelerinin kâffesi Şurâ-yı Devletde tedkik edilmekte bulunan yeni Matbu'at Nizamnâmesinden bahs ediyor. Tanzîm olunmakda bulunan işbu nizamnâmenin ihtivâ ettiği maddelerin en ehemmi Dersâ'adet gazeteleri sâhib-i imtiyâzlarının iki yüz elli lira ve vilayât cerâ'idi sâhiblerinin de yüz lira depozito akçesi i tâsına mecbûr edilib bu mebâliğin nizamnâme hilâfında neşriyâtta bulunan gazetecilerden alınacak cezâ-yı nakdilere karşılık gösterilmesi ve gazete sâhiblerinin de birçok husûslarda hapis cezasına mahkûm olunmasıdır. Bu ne demektir? Bundan biz bir şey anlamıyoruz! Her bir lisânı para ile hapis cezasıyla tahdîd etmek esâretidir ki bu kuvvetin ruh-u milletde açtığı derin yaralar, sine-i mukaddese-i vatanda ikâ' eylediği feci', feci' denâ'etler, cinâyetler el'an gözümüzün önünde bir timsâl-i hakikât gibi durmakta iken şimdi yeniden hâkimiyet-i milliyeyi mahkûm ve esîr eyleyecek kanûnlar, nizamlar, ey hür Osmanlılar!!! Düşününüz ki bu vatani, bu vatana istikbâlîni nasıl müdhîş mahûf bir vâde-i zulm ve harabına doğru sevk ediyoruz. Bizim beş aydan beri beklediğimiz asâr-ı terakkiyât bu mudur? Eyvâh! Eyvâh! Matbu'at bir milletin lisânı, vasîta-i neşr-i efkârı, müdâfi'i ve muhafız-ı hukûk-ı hürriyeti deñil midir? Çünkü matbu'at hâdim-i hürriyet olduđu kadar da hâdim-i istibdâddır. Matbu'atın ağız kapatılır ise ahâlinin ağız kapatılmışdır. Hürriyet ve serbestiyetine tecâvüz edilir ise milletin serbestî ve hürriyeti mahv ve iza'e edilmiş demektir. Hür adamlara hür lisân yakışır. Daha beş aylık hâkimiyet-i milliyemiz hükûmete kıran mı gelmeğe başladı? Oruz milyon Osmanlı unsuru kanlı safhalar içerisinde otuz seneden beri envâ'-ı mezâlîme hedef olmuş, mahkûmiyetin acısını bi'l-fi'il öğrenmiş ve tadmışdır. Bundan sonra hiçbir sebeble hürriyet-i hakikiyesine tecâvüze meydan bırakamaz."

Ibid., p. 3.

58 Ibid., p. 3.

59 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 15 February 1909, pp. 20-21.

After the speeches made by Mehmet Emin Bey, Hafız Mesud Efendi from Hemşin and Rum and Armenian dignitaries gave speeches in their respective languages. It was reported that telegrams were then sent to parliament via the post office.⁶⁰ The newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that people from all walks of life in Trabzon flocked to Liberty Square and expressed their support for freedom of the press, and that after the speeches, telegrams were sent to parliament.⁶¹ Again in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* an article discussed the problems arising due to a lack of organization among the Istanbul newspapers and the new press regulation, and how the hostile and divisive articles in the Istanbul newspapers adversely affected provincial readers as well.⁶²

1.6. The Impacts of the Incident of March 31st on Trabzon⁶³

The Committee of Union and Progress may have lost some influence in Istanbul due to the Incident of March 31st (13 April 1909), but it retained its status in the provinces. The Unionists organized rallies in towns and flooded parliament, Yıldız Palace and the Sublime Porte with telegrams. The Committee easily won the propaganda war by persuading people that the constitutional regime was in danger.⁶⁴

Before the incident, the head writer of the newspaper *Serbesti*, Hasan Fehmi Bey, had been assassinated in Istanbul and the public blamed the Unionists for the assassination.⁶⁵ This was also reported in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. The newspaper ran a rather dry and conditional message of condolence for Hasan Fehmi Bey: "If he was one of those working for our homeland, may he rest in peace!"⁶⁶ In the Greek news supplements sold on the streets of Trabzon it was reported that Mevlanzade Rıfat Bey had been assassinated by an officer in Istanbul, so *Trabzon'da Meşveret* retorted by stating that it was Hasan Fehmi Bey who had been killed, not Mevlanzade Rıfat Bey. They also accused the people who prepared the Greek supplements of misinforming and misleading the public for personal gain.⁶⁷

60 "Pazar Günkü Miting", *Feyz*, No: 55, 3 Şubat 1324 (16 February 1909), p. 4.

61 "Matbuat Nizamnamesi Aleyhine Miting", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 47, 4 Şubat 1324 (17 February 1909), p. 1.

62 "Bize Bizden Olur, Her Ne Olur İse", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 53, 25 Şubat 1324 (10 March 1909), pp. 1-2.

63 This section is an improved version of my article titled "31 Mart Vak'ası'nın Trabzon'daki Yankıları", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, vol.21/Fall, 2011, pp. 1-18.

64 Zürcher, p. 151.

65 This argument is mentioned in: Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı*, Sinan Yayınları, Ankara 1972, p. 49.

66 "Serbesti Muhabiri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 63, 1 Nisan 1325 (14 April 1909), p. 3.

67 "Rumca İlâveler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 63, 1 Nisan 1325 (14 April 1909), p. 3.

News about the revolt reached Trabzon through telegrams that Trabzon representatives in parliament sent from Istanbul back home to their families. In the telegrams, the members of parliament stated that they were safe and that their relatives need not worry. Reports about the serious unrest that occurred on 14 and 15 April in Istanbul were also sent.⁶⁸

Arifi Paşa, the governor of Trabzon, sent a telegram asking the government for more information about what had transpired. He wrote that the telegrams that had been sent from Istanbul did not explain exactly what had happened but merely reassured the recipients of the safety of the senders, which led to an outbreak of rumours. Arifi Paşa received a rather vague response stating that everything was under control in Istanbul and that there was nothing to be concerned about.⁶⁹

Despite this response, which was sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Trabzon remained on edge. It was rumoured that mass murders had taken place, which resulted in strong reactions. The British consulate in Trabzon announced that its consul, H.Z. Longworth, had received a telegram from the embassy in Istanbul clarifying the situation, and this prevented more unrest from breaking out in the city.⁷⁰ At the same time, as a result of the efforts and propaganda spread by the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, a massive crowd had rallied in front of the city hall, three political party buildings and some other state buildings, but they quietly went home after the staff of the British consulate reassured them that everything was under control.⁷¹ The efforts of the Unionists to mobilize people to protest the revolt in Istanbul were successful in many cities. However, in some cities unintentional provocations also occurred. In Adana, for instance, conflicts broke out between Muslim and non-Muslim groups, resulting in the deaths of a large number of Armenian Ottomans. In the end, 124 Muslims and seven Armenians were executed for their role in the riots after a parliamentary commission of enquiry was sent to Adana.⁷²

It is noteworthy that the people of Trabzon trusted the information provided by the British consulate and stopped the rallies. It is possible to infer that the British sided with those who revolted and kept their distance from the Unionists in an effort to undermine the demonstrations they organized.⁷³

68 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 17 April 1909, p. 39.

69 BOA., DH. MKT., 2794-69, 24. Ra. 1327 (15 April 1909).

70 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 17 April 1909, p. 39.

71 Ibid.

72 Zürcher, p. 151.

73 For more information, see G.R. Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865-1939): Chief Dragoman of the British Embassy in Turkey*, Leiden: Martin Nijhoff Publishers, 2003, pp. 133-157.

Despite the official news sent from Istanbul and the information provided by the British embassy, the Unionists continued to exert some influence through their propaganda work in Trabzon. Arifi Paşa sent another telegram to Istanbul to inquire about the latest developments; in the telegram, which he sent to the new Grand Vizier, Tefik Paşa, Arifi Paşa stated that various types of propaganda were being used in Trabzon that still influenced people. He demanded detailed information so that he could take the situation under control.⁷⁴

H.Z. Longworth, the British consul in Trabzon, sent a report to the embassy in Istanbul in which he stated that both the civilian and military authorities in Trabzon and the Greek *Metropolit* did their best to contain the situation and succeeded for the most part. Thanks to their efforts and the informative explanations provided in the telegram sent by the British embassy, reactions in Trabzon were contained.⁷⁵

It was reported in the foreign press that as a result of the Unionists' propaganda in Trabzon, four battalions had been assembled with the aim of marching on Istanbul to quell the revolt and protect the constitution.⁷⁶ In fact, the Committee of Union and Progress Headquarters had sent orders to its Izmir, Bursa and Trabzon branches to stop the battalions from going to Istanbul.⁷⁷ It can be inferred that the volunteer battalions had indeed been assembled to stop the revolt in Istanbul but the Unionists then feared that if they left their towns, the Committee would lose control there. It was Trabzon's customs director, Mehmet Emin Bey, who led efforts to protest the Incident of March 31st.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the press in Trabzon ran articles condemning the revolt. In an article published in the 65th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* which discussed the causes of the revolt, the author said it was surprising that people in Istanbul supported the revolt and that the chant "We want Sharia!" indicated a desire to return to an absolutist monarchy.⁷⁹ In another article in the same issue, it was reported that all the political party representatives in Trabzon had met at the city hall and decided that they needed to unite as Ottomans against the revolt

74 İ. Hami Danişmend, *Sadrızam Tefik Paşa'nın Dosyasındaki Resmi ve Hususi Vesikalara Göre 31 Mart Vakası*, İstanbul: İstanbul Kitabevi, 1974, p. 107.

75 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 17 April 1909, p. 41.

76 Francis McCullagh, "Results of Abdul's Overthrown As Seen In Turkish Capital", *The New York Times*, 9 May 1909, pp. 1-2.

77 "Troops Move On Capital", *The New York Times*, 17 April 1909, p. 2.

78 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Fetihten Kurtuluşa Kadar Trabzon Tarihi*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1975, p. 237.

79 M. Sadık, "Vatan Ateşler İçerisinde", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 65, 8 Nisan 1325 (21 April 1909), pp. 1-2.

in Istanbul regardless of religion, language or ethnicity.⁸⁰ The newspaper *Feyz* ran a piece which stated that Sultan Abdülhamid II had been dethroned and replaced by Sultan Mehmed V Reşad. The article included a joint telegram sent home by Trabzon parliamentary representatives Mazhar, İzzet, Osman, Emin, İmadettin and Ali Naki.⁸¹ In its 67th issue, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* published the contents of all the telegrams that had been sent between the government and governorship, the Salonika branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, and the Trabzon branch on the occasion of the imperial succession. Other telegrams included those that had been sent between the Trabzon branch of the committee and the new sultan, the members of parliament and the senate, and the Salonika branch of the committee and Mahmut Şevket Paşa.⁸² An article in the same issue reported that the Action Army's quelling of the revolt had been referred to as the "second conquest of Istanbul," which explained the name that the new sultan assumed: Mehmet V.⁸³

Newspaper articles related how the Action Army had set off from Salonika on 15 April 1909 and arrived in Istanbul to quell the revolt on 24 April 1909. They arrested a number of the rebels and dethroned Sultan Abdülhamid II on the pretext that he was guilty of inciting the revolt.

After these developments, the situation calmed down in Trabzon. In the 67th issue of *Feyz* newspaper dated 27 April 1909 (14 Nisan 1324) and in *Haber Anası* dated 2 May 1909 (19 Nisan 1325), articles were published about the Incident of March 31st and its consequences. In the 67th issue of *Feyz*, a message was published in honour of the new Sultan which read, *Sultan Reşad Han Hazretleri, Hür Osmanlıların Birinci Hür Padişahı!* ("Sultan Reşad is the first free Sultan of the free Ottomans").⁸⁴ The newspaper *Haber Anası* also ran a congratulatory message. The style of the message is noteworthy, as the former sultan was mentioned only by name while the new sultan was exalted with a

80 "Fırka-i Siyasiler Arasında İttihad", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 65, 8 Nisan 1325 (21 April 1909), p. 4.

81 "En Büyük Bayramımız, İkinci ve Hakiki İnkılap", *Feyz*, 14 Nisan 1325 (27 April 1909), inside cover.

82 "Makam-ı Mu'alla-yı Sadaretten Vilayet-i Celileye Mevrud Telgrafname Suretidir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 67, 15 Nisan 1325 (28 April 1909), p. 1; Selânik Merkez-i Umumisi, "Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Heyet-i Merkeziyesine", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 67, 15 Nisan 1325 (28 April 1909), p. 1; "Şehrimiz Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tarafından Çekilen Tebrik Telgrafları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 67, 15 Nisan 1325 (28 April 1909), p. 1.

83 M. Sadık, "On Günlük Tarih, İstanbulun İkinci Fethi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 67, 15 Nisan 1325 (28 April 1909), p. 2.

84 "Tebrik", *Feyz*, No: 67, 14 Nisan 1325 (27 April 1909), p. 1.

series of complimentary terms.⁸⁵ A telegram that was published in the same issue stated that Sultan Abdülhamid II had been sent to Salonika, the rebels had been tried and Sultan Mehmed V Reşad had held a ceremony in Hagia Sophia.⁸⁶ In the same issue, an article noted that after Sultan Abdülhamid II was dethroned, numerous insults were hurled at statesmen at Yıldız Palace.⁸⁷

Ottoman archival documents include a telegram sent from Trabzon to the Ministry of Internal Affairs stating that a prayer ceremony was being organized by the Trabzon Greek *Metropolit* in honour of the new sultan. The ministry replied that the Greek *Metropolit* would be presented with a commendation.⁸⁸

In the 68th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* it was reported that all of the buildings in Trabzon had been adorned with oil lamps for three days and nights in celebration of the end of the thirty-year absolutist regime and the ascension of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad. The buildings of the Unionists' Zeytinlik and Ortahisar clubs, the Youth Club, the Ottoman Merchants' Club, the Greek Representatives' Club and the Armenian Club were decorated with the Ottoman flag and freedom banners. Governor Arifi Paşa, customs director Mehmet Emin Bey and city dignitaries visited the clubs.⁸⁹

A report written by British consul H.Z. Longworth to the embassy in Istanbul is the most comprehensive source of information about the impact of the dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II on Trabzon. The consul noted that he was pleased to see so much rejoicing on 27 April 1909 among both Muslims and Christians in Trabzon upon the dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II. He said that the people of Trabzon had always harboured negative feelings for Sultan Abdülhamid II under his absolutist reign but they had had to keep them concealed. For two days and three nights the city came to life with firework shows, rejoicing in the streets and celebratory gun fire, and people decorated their houses as well.⁹⁰

85 "Tebrik", *Haber Anası*, No: 12, 19 Nisan 1325 (2 May 1909), p. 1.

86 "Gazetemize Mahsus Telgraflar", *Haber Anası*, No: 12, 19 Nisan 1325 (2 May 1909), p. 1.

87 "Yıldızdaki Alçaklardan Su'âl: Ey Yıldız Sarayı bi-hayâ makrûbları, ey bu mel'un fırka-yı irticâ'îyyün mürevec efkârı, ey menfa'ât-ı şahsiyesine bu mukaddes vatânı, bu mu'azzez milleti fedâ etmekden çekinmeyen yıldız zehirleri, ey haris-i ma'den, meftun-u mansıb vatan hâ'inleri, iki kapılı bir han olduğunı bildiğimiz bu din-i dünyada iki gün bir mevki-i mümtâz ihrâz etmek heves-i mecnûnânesine düşerek bütün vatânı al kana boyamak isteyen ve birçok ma'sûm kanı dökdüren merdûd hedâlar!"

"Yıldızdaki Alçaklardan Su'âl", *Haber Anası*, No: 12, 19 Nisan 1325 (2 May 1909), p. 3.

88 BOA., DH. MKT., 2833-34, 17. Ca. 1327 (6 June 1909).

89 "Üç Gün, Üç Gece", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 68, 18 Nisan 1325 (1 May 1909), p. 3.

90 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 30 April 1909, pp. 47-49.

The consul pointed out that no one questioned whether Sultan Abdülhamid II had really organized the revolt or whether Sultan Mehmed V Reşad was a desirable replacement because what really mattered for the people of Trabzon was “getting rid of a cruel despot.” Furthermore, he noted that the tension that had been brewing between Muslims and Christians for the previous two months calmed down as the result of the joint celebrations that were held.⁹¹ Also, the British consul pointed out that during the incidents, military personnel, government employees and municipal officials fully cooperated and managed to contain the protests. He listed their names as follows: Governor Arifi Paşa; Commander Ahmet Abuk Paşa; Armenian representative Emmanuel Balyan; the Greek Metropolit Constantin; Mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey; Unionist customs director Mehmet Emin Bey; İsmail Hakkı Efendi, the Liberal Club’s director and inspector of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration; İeroclis, an editor; and the Setrak Yesseyan, a secretary.⁹²

Some of the rebels fled from Istanbul to Trabzon and its environs, which concerned the public for a period of time. In a telegram sent from the Ministry of the Interior, the public was informed that some members of the Committee of Mohammedan Union (*İttihad-ı Muhammedi Cemiyeti*) involved in the Incident of March 31st had fled to provincial areas for propaganda purposes and that care needed to be taken to watch out for them.⁹³ The newspaper *Haber Anası* reported that a rebel had been caught in Rize and sent to Trabzon after his arrest.⁹⁴ Mehmet bin Salih from Bayburt, Salih bin Ali and Yomralı Akif bin Recep, the so called “Taşkışla rebels,” travelled to Trabzon on a ship called *Aleksandra* which was owned by the Korci Company; ultimately, they were caught and handed over to the authorities.⁹⁵ Captain Muharrem Efendi and Yomralı Akif bin Mehmet fled to their hometown Rize, where they were caught and handed over to the military authorities to be sent to Istanbul.⁹⁶ In another document, it was ordered that the guns that the fugitives had taken with them be collected and sent back to the Ministry of War.⁹⁷

91 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 30 April 1909, p. 50.

92 Ibid., p. 51.

93 “Dâhiliye Nezaret-i Celilesinden Makam-ı Vilayete Varid Olan Telgrafnameler”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 69, 22 Nisan 1325 (5 May 1909), p. 3.

94 “Telgraflarımız”, *Haber Anası*, No: 12, 19 Nisan 1325 (2 May 1909), p. 2.

95 BOA., DH. MKT., 2812-6, 24. R. 1327 (15 May 1909).

96 BOA., DH. MKT., 2806-5, 17. R. 1327 (8 May 1909).

97 BOA., DH. MUİ., 120-4, 29. B. 1328 (6 August 1910).

News about Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's coronation ceremony at Eyüp Sultan Mosque was published in the Trabzon newspapers.⁹⁸ A committee was formed in Trabzon to raise funds to help the families of the people who had been killed during the Incident March 31st. The members of the committee included Hacıdervişağazade Eşref Efendi, Nemlizade Cemal Bey, Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Efendi, Çulhanzade Hacı Kadri Efendi, Tarakçızade Hoca Zühdü Efendi, Fosturopulo Yorgi, Velisaridi Kosti, Manuhyan Onik, and Arslanyan Haçik Efendi, all of whom went to Istanbul to deliver the donations.⁹⁹ After a long while, an article published in the 278th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* dated 24 May 1911 stated that a telegram was sent from Istanbul to the *Neue Freie Presse*, the most famous newspaper in Austria at the time and perhaps one of the best in Europe. The telegram said that Mevlanzade Rıfat Bey, who had once owned the liberal *Serbisti* newspaper, was now a fugitive in Egypt and that he sent numerous booklets with the aim of having them distributed. In the booklets, he claimed that Prince Sebahattin, Kamil Paşa and Kamil Paşa's son Said Paşa, as well as two editors of Istanbul newspapers, were behind the Incident of March 31st.¹⁰⁰

The impacts of the Incident of March 31st on Trabzon can be discussed in various terms. Firstly, while in July of 1908 the Unionists were not very strong in Trabzon (prior to the declaration of constitutionalism), they managed to become fairly organized between that time and April of 1909. It is clear that the Unionists had become quite strong in the city as evidenced by the rallies that were held to protest the revolt, the four volunteer battalions that were assembled to be sent to Istanbul to quell the revolt, and public efforts to protect the constitution.

Secondly, the jubilant public celebrations that were held when Sultan Abdülhamid II was dethroned can be seen as another impact of the Incident of March 31st. The fact that Muslims and non-Muslims rejoiced together, the Greek Metropolit commemorated the new Sultan's reign with a mass, and local newspapers critiqued the former sultan while praising the new one, all indicated that Greeks and Muslims were still working together.

Thirdly, after the revolt was quelled by the Action Army, some fugitive rebels fled to the area around Trabzon and they were hunted down and arrested. Through Unionist propaganda, news about the fugitives spread to the city and

98 "Hür Padişahımızın Kılıncı Alayı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 72, 2 Mayıs 1325 (15 May 1909), p. 1.

99 "Şüheda-yı Hürriyete Hediye", *Feyz*, No: 72, 18 Mayıs 1325 (31 May 1909), inside cover.

100 "Geçen 31 Mart Vak'asının Müsebbibleri Kim İmiş?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 278, 11 Mayıs 1327 (24 May 1911), p. 2.

local newspapers reported on it extensively. So, another impact of the revolt on Trabzon was this extensive media coverage about the hunt for the fleeing rebels.

In conclusion, most of the population of Trabzon supported the constitutional regime and the Unionists during and after the Incident of March 31st. As stated before, the Unionists did not have a strong base in Trabzon before the Second Constitutional Period but afterwards they managed to obtain strong support. This is proof enough that their organizational work and propaganda efforts in Trabzon were successful. After the power shift that came with the constitutional period, most of the dignitaries of Trabzon joined the Unionists, which helped the Committee build a powerful following in the city. In addition, the fact that the rallies in the city quieted down after the British consulate made a statement but not after official state explanations were made indicate the level of influence Britain had over the city, as well as the complete lack of trust in official media after thirty-three years of censorship. To sum up, the people of Trabzon showed their allegiance to the constitutional regime by reacting strongly to the Incident of March 31st.

1.7. The Committee of Union and Progress in Trabzon

Just before the Second Constitutional Period, the Unionists had started to become active in Trabzon. When Mehmet Emin Bey was transferred from Erzurum to Trabzon as the general director of customs, they became even more powerful. With the declaration of constitutionalism, they put pressure on the government and the public to remove the governor from office and banish some state officials. However, the followers of Prince Sebahattin, who had been stronger than the Committee of Union and Progress in Trabzon, believed in self-administration and blocked Unionist efforts to organize in Trabzon in the short run. Even though local notables showed support for the Young Turks, with the declaration of constitutionalism they resisted a total surrender of power to the Unionists.

Faik Hürşit Bey stated in his memoirs that after the declaration of the second constitution, young officers represented the Committee in Trabzon and that this group was led by Major İrfan Bey.¹⁰¹ The British reports, however, mention Major Safvet Bey as the leader of the Unionists in Trabzon.¹⁰² *Trabzon'da Meşveret* started publication in August in 1908; the owner and manager was Naci Bey and the editor was a customs officer named Sadık Bey. Soon the newspaper became the mouthpiece of the Unionists in Trabzon and undertook the mission of shielding the Committee against attacks as well as carrying out

101 Günday, *ibid.*, p. 18.

102 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 4 August 1908, pp. 147-150.

propaganda. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* thus played an important role in shaping public opinion in line with Unionist policies.

A statement sent from the Committee's headquarters in Salonika to its members in Trabzon made a number of proclamations, including: Muslims and non-Muslims must be equal before the law; the nepotism, corruption and bribery of the previous period will come to an end; the state will see glorious days thanks to the efforts of its citizens; and honest, upright and hard-working people will be elected in the upcoming elections as members of parliament to achieve those ends. Also, all citizens were invited to work for their country through the Committee of Union and Progress.¹⁰³

An article in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that in modern European societies, clubs played a significant role and that the people of Trabzon needed to get organized so that they could benefit from the gains of constitutionalism. A Unionist Club was to be established for that purpose and work to advance union and progress in the country.¹⁰⁴

The Unionist organization in Trabzon was not yet official but it worked efficiently. In a statement prepared by the Unionists in Trabzon, it was written that the Committee acted in unison with the government against the declaration of independence in Bulgaria and sent a committee to Europe. Also, the Ottoman people were asked to support the government in that difficult process.¹⁰⁵ In another article in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the Committee of Union and Progress and its members were praised, and their cause of freedom was sanctified.¹⁰⁶ The Unionists' propaganda in Trabzon soon paid off and a boycott against Bulgaria and Austria was widely supported by the people and merchants of Trabzon.¹⁰⁷ The Unionists in Tirebolu followed suit and started a similar boycott in their

103 "Selânik Merkez-i Umumisinden Trabzon Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyet-i Hey'et-i Merkeziyesine Tebliğ Edilen Beyanname", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 3, 27 Ağustos 1324 (9 September 1908), pp. 1-2.

104 Tıbbiye-i Askeriyeden Sürmeneli Behram Nail, "İttihad Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 6, 6 Eylül 1324 (19 September 1908), pp. 2-3.

105 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesinin Beyanâtı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 12, 27 Eylül 1324 (10 October 1908), p. 1.

106 Rıza, "Cemiyet ve Hürriyet Kahramanlarına", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 12, 27 Eylül 1324 (10 October 1908), p. 3.

107 For more information, see Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, 1908 *Boykotu: Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004; Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *Osmanlıyı Müslümanlaştırmak: Kitle Siyaseti, Toplumsal Sınıflar, Boykotlar ve Milli İktisat (1909-1914)*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015.

town, news of which was published in newspapers.¹⁰⁸ In a statement published by the Unionists in Trabzon, it was said that the Committee worked for the good of all Ottomans and that everything needed to be done by the book; for that reason, it critiqued the unsigned posters that could be found on Trabzon's streets about the elections.¹⁰⁹ The newspaper *Feyz* stated that the annual congress of the Committee was held between 18 October and 2 November 1908 (5-20 Teşrînievvel 1324) and published the proceedings.¹¹⁰

The formal opening of the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress in Zeytinlik was held on Friday 27 November 1908 (14 Teşrînsâni 1324) with the participation of the governor, the garrison commander, high-ranking officials and dignitaries. Some people, such as Mehmet Emin Bey, gave speeches. More than three thousand people joined the opening ceremony and a military band gave a concert.¹¹¹

Upon the opening of the Congress in Salonika, the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress sent a celebratory telegram to the presidency of the Congress.¹¹² In a statement in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was noted that the Committee reported that some people had pulled the fez from some citizens' heads, an act which it condemned as a civil liberty violation that had to be stopped.¹¹³ This incident was an example of how the Committee wanted to take control of the social order.

The Trabzon Committee of Union and Progress issued a statement advising citizens to make official complaints to the Congress now that it was fully functional and that such complaints would no longer be accepted by Committee branches.¹¹⁴

Another statement was published in *Feyz* which addressed Greeks and stated that all Ottomans were equal, so the Committee would work for the good

108 İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tirebolu Merkezi, "Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyet-i Muhteremesi Hey'et-i Merkeziyesine", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 14, 4 Teşrînievvel 1324 (17 October 1908), pp. 1-2.

109 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesinin Beyannamesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 23, 5 Teşrînisâni 1324 (18 November 1908), p. 1.

110 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Kongresi", *Feyz*, No: 32, 14 Teşrînisâni 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 2.

111 "Şanlı ve Azimetli Bir Resm-i Küşad", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 26, 15 Teşrînisâni 1324 (28 November 1908), p. 1.

112 Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti, "Meclis-i Mebusan Riyaset-i Aliyyesine", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 32, 6 Kanûnievvel 1324 (19 December 1908), p. 1.

113 "Trabzon Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Hey'et-i Merkeziyesinin Beyannamesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 32, 6 Kanûnievvel 1324 (19 December 1908), p. 1.

114 "Trabzon Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinden", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 39, 3 Kanûnisâni 1324 (16 January 1910), p. 1.

of both Muslims and non-Muslims. It also asked Greeks not to be fooled by the propaganda of a separatist organization established in Salonika by Greek officers and urged them to refuse to take money or ammunition from them. It added that the Committee would fully support the Ottoman government on that issue.¹¹⁵

The 152nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Committee had acquired official status after it applied for recognition as a “Socially Beneficial Organization.”¹¹⁶ In the 159th issue of the same newspaper, members were summoned to the club to hold elections for the board of directors for the Committee’s first branch in Trabzon.¹¹⁷ In the 161st issue of the same newspaper, an article defending the Committee was published which was similar to many previous such articles. It said that the Committee had saved the country from cruelty and now was trying to spread education in the name of progress. However, it claimed that “envious people” published opposition pieces with the aim of deceiving the people.¹¹⁸ In the 178th and 179th issues, it was announced

115 “*Rum vatandaşlarımıza,*

Bu memleketde yaşayan bütün insanların hangi cinsden, hangi mezhebdendir olur ise olsun yekdiğeriyle kardeş gibi yaşaması ve herkesin yaşadığı yerleri Osmanlı toprağı olarak tanıyıp ona göre fikir ve emel beslemesi İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinin en büyük, en ciddi maksadından birini teşkil eyler. Bu toprakda yaşayan insanlar biri birine vatan kardeşi mu’amelesi ederlerse şübhesiz aralarında bir emniyet-i mütekâbele hâsıl olur. Ve bu emniyet kendi istirahatlarıyla beraber istirahat-ı ‘umûmiyyeyi temin eylemiş bulunur. Hâlbuki bir zamandan beri merkezi Selânikde olmak üzere Yunanlı zâbitlerden mürekkebe olarak teşekkül eden bir ihtilâlcî fırkası kasabalara köylere kendi adamlarını göndererek işiyle gücüyle meşgûl olan saf ahâlîye para ve silâh tevzi’ ederek onları diğer vatan kardeşlerine karşı hareket etmek için teşvik ediyor. Ey vatandaşlar, bu istirahat ve asayiş düşmanlarının telkinâtına inanmayınız, bunların verdikleri silâh ve paralara kapılmayınız. Bunlar kan görmeğe alışmış, kan kokusundan lezzet almış insaniyet düşmanlarıdır. Kendi menfâ’atlerini, kendi boş fikirlerini getirmek için sizin hayatınızı ma’sûm ve bi-günah ‘ailelerinizi ateş içine atmakdan çekinmezler. Böyle ha’ınlerin sözlerine uymak mu’azzez vatanımızda ha’ınlerin çoğalmasına yardım etmek demek olur. Bütün Osmanlıların ittihad ve terakkisine çalışmakta olan Cem’iyetimiz bu ihtilâlcilerin harekâtına göz kapamayı maksadına menafî bulduğundan sizleri ikâz etmeğ kendisine vazife ‘add etmiştir.”

“İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumi’si’nden Neşr Olunan Beyannamedir”, Feyz, No: 77, 22 Haziran 1325 (5 July 1909), inside cover.

116 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin Tasdik-i Kanunîyesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:152, 13 Şubat 1325 (26 February 1910), p. 3.

117 “Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Kulübü’nün Birinci Şubesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 159, 10 Mart 1326 (23 March 1910), p. 2.

118 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 161, 17 Mart 1326 (30 March 1910), p. 1.

that members needed to apply to their branches to vote for the delegates to be sent to the annual congress of the Committee.¹¹⁹

The program for the second commemoration of the Constitutional revolution was published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. The members of the board of directors of the Committee headquarters and clubs were to convene in Zeytinlik and then visit the governor's office, military headquarters and municipality. After that, club members would visit each other and citizens would visit the clubs. In the afternoon, Zeytinlik club members would go to the Ortahisar club with School of Freedom students as the military band played marches. When Ortahisar club members joined them, they would reach Freedom Square by way of Tabakhane Street, Sipahipazarı and Semerciler Street. After a ceremony and speeches, they would go back to the Zeytinlik club.¹²⁰ In the end, the Committee issued a statement in commemoration of the event and said that the principles of constitutionalism had taken root, to which the Committee had contributed.¹²¹

Trabzon'da Meşveret ran a report saying that the members of the Committee needed to convene at the club building on Uzun Sokak in order to elect the board of directors.¹²² At the general congress of the Committee in 1910, it had been decided that evening classes would be offered at the clubs as a means of fighting ignorance and spreading education as well as increasing the number of Committee schools. For that purpose, the Salonika and Izmir Committee Schools were converted to Teachers' Colleges to train the much-needed teachers.¹²³

An article published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that, after a long period of oppression, some officials managed to retain their positions as well as their attitude. It talked about how anti-constitutionalist activities would hold back Ottomanism and Islam and how the Unionists were the only saviours of both.¹²⁴ Thus, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to debunk claims of "masonry" and "atheism" on the one hand and get the support of ordinary

119 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 178, 15 Mayıs 1326 (28 May 1910), p. 1; "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 179, 19 Mayıs 1326 (1 June 1910), p. 1.

120 "10 Temmuz Sene 326da İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tarafından İcra Olunacak Seremoniyeye Dair Program", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 193, 7 Temmuz 1326 (20 July 1910), p. 2.

121 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Millete Beyannamesidir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 197, 21 Temmuz 1326 (3 August 1910), pp. 1-2.

122 "İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 228, 10 Teşrinisâni 1326 (23 November 1910), p. 1.

123 "Beyanname", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 229, 13 Teşrinisâni 1326 (26 November 1910), p. 2.

124 Bosnalı Hakkı Kemal, "Hayat-ı Haliyemiz Sevimsiz Fakat İstikbalimiz Tatlıdır", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 254, 16 Şubat 1326 (1 March 1911), p. 1.

conservative Muslims on the other. The newspapers were full of news about invitations to members to vote for the administrators of Unionist clubs.¹²⁵ In the 270th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* it was announced that Trabzon Committee representative Ali Rıza Bey had arrived from Samsun two days earlier.¹²⁶ A week later, members of the so-called Third Club were invited to the club to discuss important matters, as was reported in the newspapers.¹²⁷

A movement called the Hizb-i Cedit (New Party) arose in the parliamentary faction of the Committee and made ripples in political life.¹²⁸ When those ripples reached the shores of Trabzon, the owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, Naci Bey, wrote an article criticizing the way that the Hizb-i Cedit movement was overrated by the dissident press and he said that he could not fathom why they were being given such praise.¹²⁹ When the Hizb-i Cedit group emerged, some thought that the Committee would be divided. As rumours abounded, the Committee was forced to make several statements. In one of those statements, it was repeated once more that the Committee headquarters had no conflict with its branches. In particular, it was noted that the news presented in *Progress de Selanique* was completely untrue, and that those trying to sow dissent between the Manastır branch and the headquarters in Salonika would never reach their goal.¹³⁰ The article seemed to be referring to Hizb-i Cedit, as Colonel Sadık was based in Manastır.

125 “İttihad ve Terakki İhvanına”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 262, 16 Mart 1327 (29 March 1911), p. 1; “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinden”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 264, 23 Mart 1327 (5 April 1911), p. 1; “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinden”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 265, 26 Mart 1327 (8 April 1911), p. 1; “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinden”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 266, 30 Mart 1327 (12 April 1911), p. 1.

126 “Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 270, 14 Nisan 1327 (27 April 1911), p. 3.

127 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinden”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 272, 20 Nisan 1327 (3 May 1911), p. 1.

128 The opposition group *Hizb-i Cedit* (New Party) appeared in the congressional group of the Committee of Union and Progress. This group, which was led by Colonel Sadık Bey and Abdulaziz Mecdi Efendi, criticized the political and social policies of the party. They stated their demands in a declaration titled *Mevadd-ı Aşere* (Ten Articles). This movement established the conservative right wing of the Committee and caused a major break in the parliamentary group of the Committee, which reacted strongly to this turn of events. For further reading, see Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler-III, İttihat ve Terakki, Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011, pp. 270-276.

129 Naci, “Salaha Doğru Mu?”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 274, 28 Nisan 1327 (11 May 1911), p. 1.

130 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisinin Tekzib Kıt'asıdır”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 279, 14 Mayıs 1327 (27 May 1911), p. 3.

The Committee of Union and Progress decided to launch a counter-propaganda campaign around the most powerful symbol of national unity, the Sultan, when the jubilation following the declaration of the second constitution gave way to revolts and uprisings in Rumeli. Sultan Mehmed V Reşad went on a tour of the region with his entourage in June of 1911 to ensure peace and stability.¹³¹ The Trabzon Committee sent a party to join Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's entourage during his tour of Rumeli. The party included Sadık Bey, who was the former head writer of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, Hacıalihafızzade Süleyman, and Arab Hafız Mehmet Efendi. The Sultan received the party in Salonika by saying, "*Pek mahzûz oldum, Trabzonlular!*" (I am very pleased, people of Trabzon!)¹³²

In its 287th issue, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the Committee's Trabzon branch had held its 1911 congress and that the new board of directors had been elected and appointed to their new positions.¹³³

Gradually, opposition arose to the Committee but it was dealt with harshly. Naci Bey, owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, wrote in an editorial that opponents to the Committee, which he argued was engaged in the Ottomanist struggle, were on the wrong path and did not benefit the nation. He also praised the Committee's actions.¹³⁴ At a time when opposition to the Committee was almost equivalent to treason, *Tarık*, the mouthpiece of the opposition Party of Freedom and Understanding in Trabzon, wrote that the congress of the Committee of Union and Progress was crucial as the Hizb-i Cedit movement was to be discussed there. The article stated that a Committee with a majority vote in parliament could not be left in the hands of certain ambitious people and that the organization needed to undergo political changes.¹³⁵

Dr. Bahattin Şakir Bey, an eminent Unionist, gave a talk in Trabzon at the Zeytinlik Unionist Club and made statements against Şehzade Vahdettin, the brother of the sultan and crown prince, which caused a stir. The Freedom and Understanding group notified Şehzade Vahdettin and an inquiry was carried out. Following the inquiry, Trabzon governor Bekir Sami Bey prepared a report in which he said that certain things were said about Şehzade Vahdettin but they were not in violation of civil rights and liberties. He added that the people of

131 For more information, see Erik Jan Zürcher, "Sultan Reşad'ın Haziran 1911'deki Makedonya Seyahatı", *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma: Türkiye Tarihinde Geçiş Dönemi (1908-1928)*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009, pp. 121-137.

132 "Huzura Kabul", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 283, 28 Mayıs 1327 (10 June 1911), p. 1.

133 "Vilayet Kongresi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 287, 11 Haziran 1327 (24 June 1911), p. 2.

134 Naci, "Muhalefet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 293, 2 Temmuz 1327 (15 July 1911), p. 1.

135 "İttihad ve Terakki Kongresi ve Hizb-i Cedit", *Tarık*, No: 77, 8 Eylül 1327 (21 September 1911), p. 1.

Trabzon would not allow the royal family to be insulted and that the tip was just an attempt by dissidents to create strife.¹³⁶

The general elections of 1912 were crucial for the Unionists and they tried to remain united against the Freedom and Understanding Party. They expelled some members who did not adhere to Committee decisions, and during the election, there were some expulsions in Trabzon as well. Arif Efendi, former chief clerk of the local administrative council, and Hüseyin Efendi, the former sub-district governor (*kaymakam*) of Of, were expelled from the Committee because they announced their candidacy as members of parliament in a way that ran contrary to the instructions provided by the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters and the Trabzon branch and, according to the Committee of Union and Progress, they were running as a means of self-promotion. The expulsions were announced in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.¹³⁷ In the following issue, it was announced that Arnavut Ahmet Efendi had been expelled for the same reason.¹³⁸ After these developments, the Committee's Trabzon congress was held with the participation of members from the periphery and the new board of directors was elected, as will be discussed in the following pages.¹³⁹

News about the Halaskar Zâbitan Cemiyeti (Saviour Officers' Society) was published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.¹⁴⁰ The paper wrote that a secret society called the Halaskar Zâbitan Cemiyeti had emerged after martial law was repealed by the new government, which claimed that it was a necessity step for the constitutional regime. The article said that the society planned to abolish the current constitutional regime and replace it with an absolutist one, and that "a hurricane from Anatolia" would destroy such an attempt.¹⁴¹ In the following issue, arguing against the allegations made in some Istanbul newspapers

136 BOA., DH. SYS., 53-38, 8. R. 1330 (27 March 1912).

137 Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, "İlan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 368, 28 Mart 1328 (10 April 1912), p. 1.

138 Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, "İlan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 369, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 1.

139 "İttihad ve Terakki Vilayet Kongresi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 388, 6 Haziran 1328 (19 June 1912), p. 3.

140 The Halaskar Zabitan Cemiyeti (Saviour Officers' Society) was established by a group of anti-Unionist officers in May-June 1912. They demanded the resignation of the government and threatened the government with a military intervention. They ultimately succeeded in their efforts with the resignation of the Unionist government. For further reading, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 29th Edition, 2014, p. 158; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler-I: II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011.

141 "İdare-i Örfiyyenin İlga ve Halaskar Cemiyet-i Hafıyyesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 399, 14 Temmuz 1328 (27 July 1912), p. 2.

concerning the supposed ties of the Halaskar Zâbitan Cemiyeti to the military, the newspaper reported that the Ottoman army would not harbour dishonest men who acted in their own self-interest.¹⁴²

In response to *Tarık*, which claimed that some leading Unionists figures such as Cavit Bey had fled to Europe when the Halaskar Zâbitan Cemiyeti appeared, an article stated that the Unionists would continue to work for Ottomanism no matter what the cost. However, the critic was at least partially right, as evidenced by the fact that some leading Unionists, including Cavit Bey and Huseyin Cahit Bey, had actually fled the country.¹⁴³ However, the article also stressed that they would continue to work in Anatolia if operating in Istanbul was no longer an option.¹⁴⁴

Trabzon'da Meşveret reported that a secret propagandist from Istanbul was going around shops in Trabzon saying that “if the Committee were to win the elections, the country would face great a disaster” but the claim was refuted.¹⁴⁵

With the onset of the Balkan War, the Committee of Union and Progress sent a statement to its branches saying that all disputes were to be set aside until the end of the war so that they could support the government. The Trabzon branch made its announcement through *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.¹⁴⁶

When the Ottoman army was defeated in the First Balkan War and retreated all the way to Çatalca, losing Rumeli in the process, Ottoman society was in shock. As it prepared for peace talks, the Kamil Paşa cabinet was overthrown by the Unionists in what came to be known as the Babiâli Coup. During the coup, Minister of War Nazım Paşa was shot by Yakup Cemil, a Unionist assassin. Later, Mahmut Şevket Paşa assembled the government and became Prime Minister and Minister of War, meaning that the Unionists had taken

142 “Halaskar Cemiyetinin Beyannamesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 400, 18 Temmuz 1328 (31 July 1912), p. 3.

143 Zürcher, *ibid*, p. 159.

144 “İttihad ve Terakki Avrupada Değil İlelebed Vatanda Çalışacaktır”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 401, 21 Temmuz 1328 (3 August 1912), p. 2.

145 “Geçenlerde İstanbuldan gelen, bizce şahsı, hüviyeti, hayât-ı mâzisi ma'lûm olan zâtın biri berâ-yı ziyâret dolaştığı ticârethânelerde intihâbâtta İttihâd ve Terakki Cem'iyetine rey' verilir ve cem'iyet ekseriyeti ihrâz eder ise vatanın menkûz ve müzmahil olacağını, Avrupa devletlerinin bizi taksim eyleyeceğini gayet şeytânkârâne bir lisân ile muhatablarına söyleyerek Hürriyet ve İ'tilâfın lehinde gizli gizli propaganda yapıyor. ...”
“Gizli Propagandacı”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 417, 19 Eylül 1328 (2 October 1912), pp. 2-3.

146 Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, “Trabzon Ahali-yi Muhteremesiyle İhvan-ı Cemiyete, Niyaz-ı Vatanperverane”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 418, 22 Eylül 1328 (5 October 1912), p. 1; “İttihad ve Terakki Merkez-i Umumisinin Beyannamesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 419, 26 Eylül 1328 (9 October 1912), p. 1.

full control.¹⁴⁷ Following the Babiâli Coup, the Committee sent word of the developments to its branches via telegrams. In the statement sent to the Trabzon branch and published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was said that people had gathered at Babiâli to protest the government, which was seen as being responsible for the defeat, so it resigned and subsequently a new “patriotic” government led by Mahmut Şevket Paşa was put together. The statement also noted that all Ottomans needed to fight together against the enemy, making great sacrifices so that the territories that had been lost could be regained.¹⁴⁸

1.8. Opposition in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period

Prince Sebahattin's views about the decentralization of the government had been influential in Trabzon since the early 1900s, making it difficult for the Unionists to gain traction there, so a city branch wasn't officially opened until November 1908. When the Second Constitutional Period was declared on 23 July 1908, the first political opposition to the Committee of Union and Progress was the Party of Ottoman Liberals (*Ahrar Fırkası*), which was established on 14 September 1908 in Istanbul.¹⁴⁹ The party was founded by the supporters of Prince Sebahattin and it quickly started to do propaganda work in regions where former followers of his lived. One of those, Kıbrıslı Şevket, is known to have travelled to Trabzon on 20 September 1908.¹⁵⁰ He made a speech in Freedom Square about decentralisation but on completion of his speech, an officer from Trabzon named Murat Efendi objected to what he had said, claiming that a decentralised government would divide the country, and an argument ensued.¹⁵¹

Ahmet Faik Hurşit Günday wrote in his memoirs about the time when he was an entourage officer in Trabzon. One night, he and a friend went to an evening club near Freedom Square, where he saw some young officers discussing centralization and decentralization. When asked his opinion, he said that administrative decentralization would benefit the country but political decentralization would not. Displeased with his answer, the young officers accused him of treason. Upon further inquiry, he found out that Kıbrıslı Şevket, one

147 Feroz Ahmad, *İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2004, pp. 146-150.

148 “Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisinin Fi 10 Kanûnisâni Sene 328 Tarihiyle Bütün Şu‘abata Keşide Etdiği Telgrafnamenin Sureti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 449, 12 Kanûnisâni 1328 (25 January 1913), p. 1.

149 Tunaya, *ibid*, p. 175

150 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 22 September 1908, p. 211.

151 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 22 September 1908, p. 212.

of the followers of Prince Sebahattin, had travelled to Trabzon on that day and was met by Otelci Emrullah and his associates. He also found out that Kıbrıslı Şevket had made a long speech in Freedom Square about decentralization, a speech which Günday said angered Unionists, especially the officers, and he added that Captain Murat Efendi objected to what Kıbrıslı Şevket had said.¹⁵²

Prince Sebahattin had a group of followers in Trabzon, but it is unclear whether the Party of Ottoman Liberals got organized in Trabzon. Only British consul H.Z. Longworth listed the president of the Liberal Club, Ottoman Public Debt Administration inspector İsmail Hakkı Efendi, as being among those who tried to calm the situation after the 31 March Incident and the rallies against it in Trabzon.¹⁵³ Even though Tarık Zafer Tunaya wrote that the Party of Ottoman Liberals did not have any branches outside Istanbul, the Liberal Club seems to have served as the party's Trabzon branch (*Ahrar Fırkası*).¹⁵⁴

Prince Sebahattin's followers were also intimidated in the wake of the 31 March Incident when the first serious opposition that the Unionists faced in Trabzon appeared with the establishment of the Freedom and Understanding Party (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*). The party, which was founded on 21 July 1911 in Istanbul, included numerous dissenting groups.¹⁵⁵ After the establishment of the party, Eyüpzade Nuri, Şatırzade Hasan, Muratzade Ali, Zehirzade Zühtü, Yakupzade Tevfik, Hamamizade İhsan, Zehirzade Necati, Kadızade Mustafa and Emiralizade Hami from Trabzon sent a congratulatory telegram to the party's leader, İsmail Hakkı Paşa.¹⁵⁶ The establishment of the party was also announced in the magazine *Envar-ı Vicdan*. An article in the magazine said that some Istanbul newspapers had reported that the new party, which had been in the making for eight months, had finally been established.¹⁵⁷ Just eleven days after its establishment, an editorial in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which was the mouthpiece of the Unionists in Trabzon, critiqued the Freedom and Understanding Party, complaining that the party used illicit and illegitimate forms of opposition that would not benefit the country.¹⁵⁸ The fact that the party was so sharply criticized just eleven days after its founding illustrates that its emergence was seen as a threat by the Unionists.

152 Günday, *ibid.*, p. 18.

153 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 30 April 1909, pp. 50-51.

154 Tunaya, *ibid.*, p. 185.

155 *Ibid.*, p. 294.

156 *Ibid.*, p. 328.

157 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 106, 13 Teşrînisâni 1327 (26 October 1911), inside cover.

158 Naci, "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Değil, Hücum ve İğfal Fırkası", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 332, 19 Teşrînisâni 1327 (2 December 1911), p. 1.

An article in *Envar-ı Vicdan* made the claim that the Committee of Union and Progress, which had proclaimed the constitution, was the first political organization in the country. Even though some organizations were later founded, they were rather short-lived. The article also stated that some members of the Committee were acting in their own interests against those of the nation and that the public had been quite critical of those members. Consequently, the Freedom and Understanding Party was founded as a means to benefit the nation as well as force the Committee to follow the path of justice and fairness.¹⁵⁹ In this way the implication was made that the Committee could not do whatever it pleased. In the next issue, Tahir Hayrettin Bey, the candidate of the Freedom and Understanding Party, was reported as having won the primary election in Istanbul, which was important on two accounts. Firstly, a multi-party period had gotten underway and it was now possible to oppose the Committee. In this respect, the election was a great achievement¹⁶⁰ and Tahir Hayrettin Bey's victory raised the hopes of Freedom and Understanding followers while stunning the Unionists, who decided not to leave anything to chance in the following elections.

News regarding the establishment of the Trabzon branch of the Freedom and Understanding Party was published in *Envar-ı Vicdan*, according to which, as of 1 January 1912 (19 Kanûnievvel 1327) the Trabzon branch would operate on the upper floor of Kalifanidi's house on Uzun Sokak. Also, it was announced that people who desired to become members could apply to the newspapers *Tarık* and *Feyz* and the *Serasi* press every day.¹⁶¹ Later, Necati Bey, who was responsible for establishing the Black Sea regional organization of the Freedom and Understanding Party, and Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi Bey, the director of *Tarık*, went to Ordu, Samsun, and Giresun to set up branches there and then they returned to Trabzon.¹⁶² In the next issue of *Envar-ı Vicdan*, another announcement was made by the Trabzon branch of the Freedom and Understanding Party. In the article, perhaps because of the potential for provocations, citizens were warned to exercise caution when dealing with those

159 Nalan, "Meşrutiyet Yolunda Fırkalar ve Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 107, 27 Teşrinisâni 1327 (10 December 1911), pp. 1-2.

160 Nalan, "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkasının İlk Muvaffakiyeti ve Tahir Hayreddin Bey", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 108, 6 Kanûnievvel 1327 (19 December 1911), pp. 1-2.

161 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Trabzon Şubesi Riyasetinden", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 111, 27 Kanûnievvel 1327 (9 January 1912), inside cover.

162 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 115, 24 Kanûnisâni 1327 (6 February 1912), inside cover.

who could not produce a document of authorization issued by the Freedom and Understanding Party.¹⁶³

Naci Bey, the owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, evaluated the declaration made by Şükrü Bey, the head of the Freedom and Understanding Party's Trabzon branch. In his statement, he explained their objectives and early activities, saying such effort was pointless and that the party was doomed to fail.¹⁶⁴ *Trabzon'da Meşveret* published articles about the failures and lack of organization in the Freedom and Understanding Party, as well as rumours of public reactions.¹⁶⁵ Naci Bey criticized the declaration of the Freedom and Understanding Party's Trabzon branch in an editorial. As a Unionist, he made comparisons with the declaration of the Committee of Union and Progress and denounced the one published by the Freedom and Understanding Party.¹⁶⁶ *Envar-ı Vicdan* announced that the official opening of the Trabzon branch of the Freedom and Understanding Party would be held on 1 March 1912 (17 February 1327), a Friday.¹⁶⁷

The newspaper *Tarık*, which was the mouthpiece of the Freedom and Understanding Party in Trabzon, published an essay about education as mentioned in articles 19 and 28 of the party program. According to the essay, the party had assembled a program to promote primary education throughout the country and advocated that city councils should oversee primary education instead of the central government. In their argument, the goal of education was to bring up a new, modern generation of youth, not just government employees, and that higher education should be raised to European levels.¹⁶⁸

In some other reports in *Tarık*, we can see traces of the inter-party strife that was pervasive in the capital. The Unionists were accused of slandering the Freedom and Understanding Party in two articles published in *Tanin* in which

163 "Gerek umûr-u intihâbiyede ve gerek fırkaya â'id bi'l-cümle mesâ'ilde yedlerinde bir vesîka bulunmadıkça fırkamız namına mürâca'at edeceklerin redd edilmesini abâli-yi muhteremeden ricâ eyleriz."

"Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Trabzon Şubesi Riyasetinden", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 116, 31 Kanûnisâni 1327 (13 February 1912), inside cover.

164 Naci, "Hürriyet ve İtilafın İlk Adımları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 352, 1 Şubat 1327 (14 February 1912), p. 1.

165 "İzmir'de Propagandacılar", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 355, 11 Şubat 1327 (14 February 1912), p. 1.

166 Naci, "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Beyannamesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 360, 29 Şubat 1327 (13 March 1912), p. 1.

167 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 119, 21 Şubat 1327 (5 March 1912), inside cover.

168 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası ve Ma'arif-i Umumiye", *Tarık*, No: 98, 2 Şubat 1328 (15 February 1912), p. 3.

it was claimed that preachers and propagandists tried to fool the public and incite them to revolt, and that people ultimately complained to the government about the issue.¹⁶⁹

The widespread inter-party strife in Istanbul spilled over into Trabzon as well. The Unionists declared martial law after the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa, who had become the Grand Vizier after the Babıâli Coup (13 January 1913), on 11 July 1913 in Istanbul. The Freedom and Understanding Party and members of the Prince Sebahattin group were blamed for the assassination and some of them were executed or exiled after being tried. They also closed down the newspaper *Tarık* in Trabzon and sent its owner and manager Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi Bey into exile after a court martial in Istanbul. After the exile of Hasan Hicabi Bey, some members of the Şatırzade family tried to gather a posse on the plains of Trabzon, Sürmene and Bayburt in order to raid the office of the governor of Trabzon, but their efforts failed.¹⁷⁰ The most critical struggle between the Freedom and Understanding Party and the Committee of Union and Progress occurred during the elections in Trabzon, a struggle that is full of notable examples in terms of the history of Turkish elections, as will be discussed later in a separate section.

1.9. Finance Minister Cavit Bey's Trabzon Trip

1911 was a difficult year for the Committee, and after Mahmut Şevket Paşa's resignation, *Hizb-i Cedit* (The New Party) emerged. New attempts to secure foreign funding prompted strong reactions from the opposition and the populace at large, and Finance Minister Cavit Bey and then party leader Talat Bey had to resign from their posts.¹⁷¹ Cavit Bey and Ömer Naci Bey, who was one of the representatives of the Committee in parliament, planned to tour the provinces of Trabzon, Samsun, Erzurum, Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Van after the end of the parliamentary year in June 1911. It was announced in newspapers that numerous conferences about the benefits of constitutionalism would be held and inquiries would be made about the construction of new railways as well as the Armenian question.¹⁷² In this context, they also sought to be in Trabzon for the third commemoration of Constitutionalism and carry out propaganda because rumours were spreading that the opposition was gaining

169 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Merkez-i Umumi'si'nden Makam-ı Sadarete Takdim Kılınan Protesto Suretidir", *Tarık*, No: 110, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 1.

170 BOA., DH. SYS., 119- 1. 8, 28. L. 1331 (30 September 1913).

171 Naci, "Yeniler, Eskiler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 276, 4 Mayıs 1327 (17 May 1911), p. 1.

172 "Cavid Bey'in Anadolu Seyahati", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 276, 4 Mayıs 1327 (17 May 1911), p. 1.

traction.¹⁷³ The newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was thus aiming to notify the public about the upcoming trip.¹⁷⁴

Cavit Bey and his associates set off from Istanbul on 8 July 1911 (25 June 1327) on the ship *Galicia*, which was registered to Lloyd Ltd. A group of ministers, members of parliament, bureaucrats and other dignitaries of the Unionists saw them off.¹⁷⁵ Two days after the start of the journey in the evening of 10 July 1911 (27 June 1327), Zeki Bey, a journalist from the opposition, was assassinated. After the unsolved murders of Ahmet Samim and Hasan Fehmi Beys, the murder of another journalist and the indictment of Serez Committee representative Derviş Bey's brother Mustafa Nazım and his butler for the murder put the Unionists in an exceedingly difficult position.¹⁷⁶ In short, Cavit Bey and his entourage had set off in a politically precarious period of time. After spending a few days in Samsun, they visited Terme and Ünye, and then set off for Trabzon.¹⁷⁷ *Trabzon'da Meşveret* covered the journey in great detail and praised Cavit Bey and his companions.¹⁷⁸

In the afternoon of 18 July 1911 (5 Temmuz 1327), which was a Tuesday, they arrived in Trabzon, and Ahmet Şerif, then writing for *Tanin*, reported on their reception in the ninth section of a series of reports dated 1 September 1911 (19 Ağustos 1327). Locals wearing their traditional attire surrounded the ship with their rowboats, forcing it to slow down and tie off the boats to its own railings. They disembarked accompanied by fireworks, applause, and cheers. Cavit Bey stepped ashore from a boat that had been decorated by patriotic boatmen and mingled with the huge crowd awaiting him. He refused to use the car that had been sent to pick him up and instead walked all the way to the Unionist Club, cheered along as he passed under a victory arch adorned with green leaves.¹⁷⁹

The arrival of Cavit Bey and his entourage irritated the writers working for the dissident newspaper *Tarık*, which ran articles discrediting the trip. They wrote that Cavit Bey was welcomed by the governor and some dignitaries only

173 Kudret Emiroğlu, "Maliye Nazırı Cavit Bey'in Trabzon Gezisi (1911)", *Trabzon*, No: 4, 1990, p. 53.

174 "Cavid ve Naci Beyler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 290, 22 Haziran 1327 (5 July 1911), p. 2.

175 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 53.

176 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

177 "Cavid ve Naci Beyler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 292, 29 Haziran 1327 (12 July 1911), p. 1; "Cavid ve Naci Beyler", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 95, 30 Haziran 1327 (13 July 1911), inside cover.

178 Nazım Nazmi, "Misafirlerimiz", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 294, 6 Temmuz 1327 (19 July 1911), p. 1.

179 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

to be escorted to the Union Club as if he was a common criminal.¹⁸⁰ Ahmet Şerif wrote that despite all the efforts of the dissidents to cause mayhem during the reception and the negative stories run by *Tarık*, the people of Trabzon gave its guests a warm welcome.¹⁸¹

Tarık based its opposition on the fact that instead of mourning the death of Zeki Bey, the Unionists held lavish ceremonies, and the claim was made that Cavit Bey was actually pleased with what had happened to the journalist. A few telegrams sent to Cavit Bey from Rize which were published in *Tarık* stressed the same point.¹⁸² The Unionists were infuriated and replied with a telegram sent to the newspaper *Renin* (in fact, *Tanin* published under a new name because the original newspaper had been subjected to strict censorship laws). Signed by Trabzon representatives, the *mufti*, Greek and Armenian clergymen and the mayor, the telegram was ultimately published in *Renin*.¹⁸³

Cavit Bey made a speech on 20 July 1911 (7 Temmuz 1327) Thursday in Liberty Square which lasted over an hour. First he thanked the crowd for the warm welcome he had received and then discussed the foreign and domestic policies of the government. His speech was well received and roundly applauded.¹⁸⁴ In an article that evaluated Cavit Bey's Trabzon trip, it was noted that in constitutional monarchies, representatives must often talk to citizens in order to protect their rights and find out more about their needs.¹⁸⁵ The article also said that representatives must go to their constituencies during congressional recess to talk about the services already offered and find out about new demands. Also, it was argued that since representatives not only represent their constituencies but all Ottomans, they should travel around the whole country. In that regard, Cavit Bey's trip was warmly received.¹⁸⁶ The article also reminded readers that when Cavit Bey was the Minister of Finance, he did nothing more than send

180 Ibid., p. 54.

181 "Cavid ve Naci Beylerin vürûdundan mukaddem muhâlif gazetelerden Târık ahâlinin helecânını ve teheyyücünü soğutmak için insanı uyutacak derecede mânasız neşriyâtda bulunmuş ve pâyitaht cerâ'id-i muhâlefesinde görüle görüle bıkılan şeyleri tekrar eylemiş ise de bütün gayretleri boşa çıkmış, Trabzon Târık'a rağmen bile biraz da neşriyâtı sebebiyle muhterem misâfirlerini lâyük oldukları hürmetle karşılamıştır."

Ibid., p. 54.

182 Ibid., p. 55.

183 Ibid., p. 55.

184 "Umumi Bir Nutuk", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 96, 8 Temmuz 1327 (21 July 1911), inside cover.

185 "Mebuslar Gezmeli, Milletin İhtiyaçlarını Gözleriyle Görmeli, Ona Göre Millet Meclisi Kürsüsünde Söz Söylemelidirler", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 96, 8 Temmuz 1327 (2 July 1911), pp. 1-2.

186 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

a telegram to the municipality concerning inquiries on the construction of the Trabzon-Erzurum railway, saying that the government would consider it. In response, it was suggested that Cavit Bey go inland from Değirmendere to see how urgent the railway was as a means of alleviating the poverty in the region. Cavit Bey and his associates were urged to give support to construction of a railway between Trabzon and Erzurum as well as the Trabzon port in order to revive commerce so that instead of wasting public funds, truly beneficial projects spanning four or five provinces could be realized.¹⁸⁷

Two banquets were held in honour of Cavit Bey and his companions, one at the city hall and one on the evening of 22 July 1911 (9 Temmuz 1327) at the Nemlizade Brothers' mansion in Boztepe. The governor, *mufti*, Greek and Armenian clergy, and some dignitaries were also present at the latter dinner.¹⁸⁸ *Tarık* reported that the consuls did not attend the dinner at the City Hall since Cavit Bey was not in office while there,¹⁸⁹ and even though they did not attend the dinner party, the consuls diligently reported on Cavit Bey's trip to their embassies.

Longworth, the British consul in Trabzon, wrote a detailed report at his home in the mountain village of Zefanos, two hours from the city centre, where he spent the summers. The report mentions that Committee representative Ömer Naci Bey accompanied the former Minister of Finance. After spending four days in Samsun and travelling through Ünye, they arrived in Trabzon on the ship *Gülcemal* on 19 July 1911. Longworth added that there was a lavish reception organized by the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress resplendent with flags and arches decorating the city. The consul also wrote that the governor, commander, mayor, treasurer (*defterdar*), bank managers, merchants, and a military band attended the welcoming ceremony along with numerous citizens. He stressed that even though he received conflicting information about the speeches, Cavit Bey did not make remarks targeting the opposition or foreign countries. Rather, Cavit Bey mentioned his own party, the government, the progress that had been made since the declaration of the second constitution, and the particular characteristics that representatives should have. According to the report, when Cavit Bey and his companions set off for Erzurum, the governor, mayor, and club members along with a group of about twenty people escorted them some of the way. Longworth noted that Governor Bekir Sami Bey and the police took precautionary measures to

187 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

188 "Cavid ve Naci Beyler Şerefine Ziyafet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 295, 10 Temmuz 1327 (23 July 1911), p. 5.

189 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 56.

ensure that the visit was not marred by any provocations. The report included the telegram in which the celebrations were criticized for not being respectful of the death of Zeki Bey.¹⁹⁰

Another article published in *Tarık* about the trip was penned by Kazancızade Hamit Efendi, a dignitary from Rize and the head of the Rize branch of the Committee of Union and Progress. He also served on the board of directors of the Commission for Supporting the Ottoman Navy (*Donanma-i Osmanî Muavenet-i Milliye Komisyonu*). He went to Trabzon to invite Cavit Bey and his entourage to Rize and then returned on the ship *Midhat Paşa*.¹⁹¹ Even though he and his son had deck tickets, he apparently thought he could travel first class as “he was a citizen and could sit wherever he pleased on a boat paid for with citizens’ money.” Kazancızade Hamit Efendi and his son swore at the crew who told them to mind their place and they beat the captain. Upon arriving in Rize, they were handed over to the police and Hamit Efendi was released a couple of hours later.¹⁹² *Tarık* tried to take advantage of this situation to disparage the Unionists and Cavit Bey’s trip by continuing to publish news about the event.

1.10. Elections in Trabzon

During the Second Constitutional Period between 1908 and 1918, three general elections were held as well as one primary election in 1911 in Istanbul. The Committee of Union and Progress participated in the general elections held right after the declaration of constitutionalism in 1908 under the banner of “*Cemiyet-i Mukaddese*” (The Sacred Society) bringing freedom to all and they won against the Party of Ottoman Liberals by a landslide.¹⁹³ Tahir Hayreddin Bey, the candidate of the Freedom and Understanding Party who had been selected about twenty days earlier, won the Istanbul primary for a seat on 11 December 1911 (28 Teşrînsânî 1327) by one vote.¹⁹⁴ In response, the Unionists succeeded in closing parliament on 18 January 1912 with the aim of holding elections three months later. The Committee of Union and Progress won a resounding victory in the 1912 elections, the so-called “big stick

190 PRO., F.O., 195/2386, 29 July 1911, pp. 50-52.

191 “Şayan-ı Nefret ve Te’essüf Bir Vakı’a”, *Tarık*, No: 70, 21 Temmuz 1327 (3 August 1911), p. 3.

192 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 56.

193 Tunaya, *ibid.*, p. 59.

194 Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*, İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1990, p. 103.

elections".¹⁹⁵ The 1914 elections proved to be a "rose garden" for the Unionists and parliament stayed in power until the end of World War I.¹⁹⁶

The 1908 and 1912 elections were closely followed in Trabzon, and they witnessed tense struggles between the Unionists and the opposition. Work was carried out to send seven representatives to parliament after the proclamation of Constitutionalism. Newspapers announced that potential candidates had to either personally petition the governorship or get three hundred signatures in order to become official candidates,¹⁹⁷ and long debates were held about the ideal characteristics of members of parliament. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reacted strongly to those who were in the administration before the constitutional period and who spread rumours that the people of Trabzon nominated them.¹⁹⁸ It was to be a two-phase election, and the real representatives were to be determined by delegates, but who those people would be occupied Trabzon public opinion for a long while. Newspapers ran countless articles about how selfless, patriotic, and hard-working future representatives required delegates who had similar characteristics.¹⁹⁹ Feyz called for people who thought they had the necessary qualifications to nominate and introduce themselves in the paper.²⁰⁰

The election system was a unique one, based on first electors (*müntehib-i evvel*) who were male, tax-paying Ottomans. Those first electors elected the second electors (*müntehib-i sâni*), who in turn elected the deputy for the province from among their ranks. This two-stage election system put into place by the Constitution ensured the election of local notables as parliamentary deputies.

Kalcızade Mahmut Bey was nominated by the people of Trabzon. He sent a telegram to the deputy mayor, Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Bey, and a Trabzon dignitary named Kalcızade Mehmet Bey (apparently from the same family as Kalcızade Mahmut Bey) as well as Captain Murat Efendi in which he said he was pleased that the people of Trabzon had nominated him and he thanked them for their support.²⁰¹ In an article signed by Ahmet Namık that was published in

195 Abdullah İslamoğlu, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Siyasal Muhalefet: 1908-1913*, İstanbul: Gökkuşbu Yayınları, 2004, p. 150.

196 Tunaya, *ibid.*, p. 59.

197 "Havadis-i Dâhiliye: Meclis-i Mebusan Namzedliği", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 4, 30 Ağustos 1324 (12 September 1908), pp. 3-4.

198 M. Sadık, "Mebus Olmak İçin Ne Fırladıklar Dönüyor!", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 5, 3 Eylül 1324 (16 September 1908), p. 3.

199 M. Sadık, "Vazifemiz ve Müntehib-i Saniler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 6, 6 Eylül 1324 (19 September 1908), p. 2.

200 "Ne Yaptık, Ne Yapmalıyız?", *Feyz*, No: 8, 29 Ağustos 1324 (11 September 1908), pp. 1-2.

201 "Mebusluğa Namzed Mahmud Bey", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 7, 10 Eylül 1324 (23 September 1908), pp. 1-2.

Feyz, the ideal characteristics of members of parliament were discussed in detail as well as what should be done to ensure peace and happiness in the country.²⁰²

Candidates from Trabzon began to grasp the power of the media and they would send propaganda letters to newspapers to express their ideas about the policies they would pursue if they became members of parliament. The first of these appear in the 11th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. Candidate Hafız Zühdü Efendi sent a letter to the paper in which he thanked the three hundred and five people who nominated him and he promised to work for the good of the country and happiness of the nation. He went on to say that state institutions needed serious reforms but financial difficulties made them difficult to realize, and he added that educational reforms were of utmost importance, in particular building primary schools all around the country, even in the remotest villages. He said that junior high and high schools had to be enhanced in number as well as in quality, and he advocated for modernizing the madrasa. In terms of military might, he stressed that the country needed a strong army and navy like the Germans. As regards foreign policy, he stated that international relations had to be handled with dignity, and domestically development of the land was a crucial issue. If elected, he stated he would work on such matters with the other representatives.²⁰³

Nikolaki Urfanidi, a Greek lawyer in Trabzon, criticized the fact that Turks, Armenians and Greeks worked separately while waiting for the delegates to be selected. He stressed that even under the absolutist regime, the patriotic intelligent people of Trabzon had come together for the good of the country

202 Ahmet Namık, "Maksadımız", Feyz, No: 16, 16 Eylül 1324 (29 September 1908), pp. 2-3.

203 "Ma'kel-zelek, şu'abât-ı idârenin 'umûmunda esalî ve ciddi ıslahat ister, bunların bir kısmı az zamanda vücûda gelebilirse de ba'zısının zamân-ı vücûda gelmek için esasları konulur. Hepsinin mevkûf-ı 'aleyhi de paradır. Yapılacak şeyler çokdur. Meselâ mâliyyede vâridât-ı mükenere-i devlet mesârifât-ı müberreme ile karşılaşarak muvâzene-i sahihede müstenid bir bûdce tanzim etmek. Ma'ârif de ibtidâ'i mekteplerini en ücrâ köylere kadar ta'mim eylesin. İbtidâ'iyede bulunanları kanûnen devama mecbûr tutmak ve rûsdiye ve idâdiye ve 'ilmiyemizi ve bilhassa medâris-i 'ilmiyemizi ihtiyacât-ı zamaneye göre ıslâh olunmak. Kuvve-i berriyede Almanya orduları gibi bölükler, taburlar, alaylar, livalar, fırkalar her esbâb-ı amâde olduj- zaman sonra her taburunu birer kal'a-i ahenin haline getirmek. Kuvve-i bahriyede Barbaros zamanında denizlerde —o zamanın kuvvetiyle— sûtûn-ı liva-yı Osmanî nasıl temevvücünmâ-yı sûtûn olmuşa şimdi de "şimdiki kuvvetle" sûtûn-ı 'aliyyeyi ihya eylemek. Hariciyede devletin şanına milletin haysiyetine dokunmadıkça ufak büyük bilcümle hükûmet ile münâsebat-ı hasenemizi idâme etmek. Nafi'a da, askeri, ticârî, birçok şimendüferler, şoseler hazırlayarak münâkalat-ı emti'âtı tevhin ile servet-i mâliyyeyi tezyid eylemek gibi mesâ'il-i hayatiye ile meclis uğraşacaktır. Azalarda dinine, namusuna hâ'iz olduğu vekâletin ehemmiyetine yakışacak sûrette vazifelerini ifâyâ müte'abhidirler. Bunların hepsinin mevkûf-u 'aleyhi de paradır."

Hafız Zühdü, "Mektup", Trabzon'da Meşveret, No: 11, 24 Eylül 1324 (7 October 1908), p. 1.

but after the declaration of constitutionalism, when everything was supposed to have improved, a sense of unity and cohesion was still out of reach. He argued that if they could all work in unison to determine the delegates who would elect their representatives, they could solve the country's problems.²⁰⁴

Another candidate was public attorney Midhat Efendi, who primarily advocated for educational reform, building infrastructure, and developing the land through river reclamation projects, drainage of swamps, and construction of railways and ports. He added that judiciary reforms were needed as well because the right to a proper defence had to be protected. In foreign affairs, Midhat Efendi supported continued good relations with the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, and he was especially intent on improving relations with Germany.²⁰⁵

204 “Trabzon’da icrâ olunmakda olan müntehib-i sâni intihâbatında Türkler, Rumlar, Ermeniler arasında birlikde çalışmak fikri görülmemesi sükût ile geçirilemeyecek ahvâldendir. Zirâ devr-i istibdâdda menfa’ât-i ‘umûmiyeye müte’allik husûsatda Trabzon’un zeki ve hamiyet-perver ahâlisi her-bâr bi’l-istifâde müttefikten hareket edegelmekte olduğu halde emr-i istişâre ile ittifâkın hem kolay ve hem de vâcib bulunduğu şu meşrûtiyet zamanında şu mesleği terk ve ihmâl etmesi hakikaten ta’accübü mücibdir. Meb’ûsları intihâb edecek olan vekillerin yani müntehib-i sânilerin ahâli tarafından intihâbı gibi mühim ve ciddi bir meselede evvel emrde milel-i muhtelif arasında samîmi ve ciddi bir ittifâk ve istişârenin vukû’u elbette lâ-yed ve vâcib idi. Zirâ bil-istisnâ ‘umûm ahâlinin efkârı ve hissiyâtına muvaffak ve en münâsib vekillerin intihâbına muvaffakiyet yalnız bu sûretle hâsıl olabilir. ... Yalnız Türkler ya Rumlar veyahûd Ermenilerin iştirâki olmaksızın Türkler ve Rumlar ve Ermeniler tarafından münferiden intihâb olunan vekiller gerçi şeklen vekil iseler de hadd-i zâtında efkâr-ı ‘umûmiyenin ve Kanûn-i Esâsi mucibince uhuvvetleri tēmin olunan akvâmın samîmi ittifâk ve istişâreleri ile intihâb edilmiş vekil olamayacakları bedihidir.”

Nikolaki Urfanidi, “İttihatla Çalışmak İcab Eder”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 11, 24 Eylül 1324 (7 October 1908), p. 3.

205 “Dünyanın en mu’tenâ ve en ziyâde me’mûriyete, servete, sekine-i ‘umûmiyesinin m’sûdiyetine müsâ’id olan Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-i Şahâne’de yapılacak, vücûda getirilecek asâr-ı ümerânın ehemmini mühimmine tercihan işe başlanması ma’ârifin adâb-ı ahlâk-ı haşere ile birlikde ibtida edere derece derece te’âlisi sefâ’in-i seyr-u seferine sâlih nehirlerin tathiri ve imlâsı mesela Çarşamba ve Terme nehirlerinin muhtâc olduğu amelîyât ile sıhhat-i ‘umûmiyeyi ihlâl eden bataklıkların ref’i, ihtiyacât-ı zaman vapurların rıhtım kenârında şimendüfer istasyonlarıyla nakliyat ve sevkîyatın teshîli ticâret-i bahriyenin islâhı zirâ’in, amelenin İslâmîyenin islâhı, usûl-u tedrîsin bir kanûna rabtı. ... Biraz da mesâ’il-i hâricîye hakkındaki hissiyâtımdan bahsetmek isterim. Bütün devletlerle hüsn-ü münâsebet muhafaza etmek tarîkîni ihtiyâr etmeliyiz. Düvel-i müşârunileyh meyânında bizim için asker ve donanmalar sevk etmiş, mütehidten hareket etmiş, kanlarını dökmüş olan İngiltere, Fransa, İtalya devletlerine bir hürmet-i mahsûsa muhafaza etmeliyiz.”

“Meclis-i Mebusan Azalığına Namzedliğini Vazi’ Eden Midhat Efendi Tarafından Mersul Programdır”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 13, 1 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (14 October 1908), pp. 3-4.

Hazinedarzade Mehmet Bahaeddin Efendi also sent an introductory letter to *Trabzon'da Meşveret* and announced his candidacy, saying he was going to follow the Committee of Union and Progress's policies if he got elected.²⁰⁶

Feyz published an article which noted that the male population in Trabzon was 59,839, meaning that seven representatives could be elected.²⁰⁷ After the delegates were determined, they then elected the members of parliament. According to the poll results in the city centre, Ali Naki Efendi got 53 votes, Hacıhamdizade Tevfik Efendi got 43 votes, former *Mufti* İmameddin Efendi got 37 votes, Eyyüpzade İzzet Efendi got 36 votes, Matiev Kofidi Efendi got 34 votes, Giresunlu Apik Efendi got 20 votes, Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi got 19 votes, Hafız Mahir Efendi got 17 votes, Hazinedarzade Mehmet Bey got 16 votes, lawyer Yorgi Polidi got 15 votes, chief clerk of the local Council Arif Efendi got 14 votes, Tayyibefendizade Hafız Zühdü Efendi got 123 votes, Giresunlu Aristodeli Efendi got 12 votes, Karagözyan Ohannes Efendi got 11 votes, Hemşinli Hafız Mesud Efendi got 10 votes, Beşirzade Midhat Efendi got 10 votes, Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey got 8 votes, Hartamaszade Baki Efendi got 8 votes, Andriya Miridis Efendi got 8 votes, Hacıhamdizade Hacı Hami Efendi got 5 votes, Muradyan Karabet Efendi got 5 votes, Hacı İbrahim Cudi Efendi got 3 votes, Kalcızade Hasan Efendi got 2 votes, Alemdarzade Emin Efendi got 2 votes, Alaybeyizade Naci Efendi got 1 vote, Kalcızade Mahmut Bey got 1 vote, Şehrikyan Artin Efendi got 1 vote, Andreasyan Nişan Efendi got 1 vote and Velisaridi Dimistakli Efendi got 1 vote.²⁰⁸

Together with the votes from the other districts of Trabzon, the seven representatives were thus determined. *Mufti* Emin Efendi got 138 votes, Ali Naki Efendi got 132 votes, Eyyüpzade İzzet Efendi got 122 votes, Hazinedarzade Mahmud Bey got 114 votes, former *Mufti* İmameddin Efendi got 106 votes, Matiev Kofidi Efendi got 105 votes and Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi got 88 votes.²⁰⁹ As a result, Trabzon now had 6 Muslim representatives and 1 Greek representative. In the end, none of the Armenian candidates were elected. Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey, a leading Unionist in Trabzon, only got

206 "Meb'ûsluğa intihâb olunduğum takdirde ta'kib edeceğim meslek İttihad ve Terakki Cem'iyet-i mukaddesinin neşr etmiş olduğu programa tevfik-i hareketle berâber "Tanin" gazetesinde Hüseyin Cahid Bey birâderimiz tarafından neşr olunan mütâla'âta iştirâk etmek olacaktır." "Şura-yı Devlet, Nafi'a ve Ma'arif Dairesi Birinci Sınıf Mu'avinlerinden Daru'l-mu'allimin Ulum-u Hikemiye ve Vefa Mekteb-i İdadi-yi Mülkiyesi Hikmet-i Tabi'iyeye Mu'allimi Hazinedarzade Mehmed Bahaeddin Beyden Alınan Mektubdur", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 14, 4 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (18 October 1908), pp. 2-3.

207 "Şu'un", *Feyz*, No: 23, 9 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (22 October 1908), p. 34.

208 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 25, 19 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (1 November 1908), p. 4.

209 "Trabzon Sancağının Mebusları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 23, 5 Teşrînisânî 1324 (18 November 1908), p. 4.

8 votes, which shows how strong local clout still was at the time. As mentioned earlier, the two-tiered election system only allowed local notables to be elected. As seen in the case of Mehmet Emin Bey, even a person directly supported by the Committee of Union and Progress were unable to win a seat. Over time, the Unionists managed to secure those local ties and local sovereigns and their followers emerged especially when state authority became weakened, but they survived constitutionalism as well. The local elite tried to maintain their status until the power shift was over and they sided with the Committee of Union and Progress when they got the upper hand.²¹⁰

Mufti Emin Efendi, one of the elected representatives, former Mufti İmameddin Efendi, Eyyübzade İzzet Efendi and Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi were sent off to Istanbul with a grand ceremony as the first group of Trabzon deputies to go there. In Trabzon they visited the governorship, the Union Club, the military headquarters, and the city hall, and then they went to the pier accompanied by a massive crowd, including Unionists and a military band. Governor Arifi Paşa, Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey, Member of Parliament İmameddin Efendi and Mufti Emin Efendi all made speeches at the quay and then boarded the ship *Braila*. Gümüşhane representatives İbrahim Lütü Paşa and Hayri Efendi, and Hakkâri representative Taha Efendi also boarded the same ship to go to Istanbul.²¹¹ Trabzon representative Ali Naki Efendi sent a letter of thanks from Istanbul to the public via *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.²¹²

The British consul in Trabzon evaluated the elected members of parliament in a report in which he said that former Mufti İmadeddin Efendi, Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi, and Eyyüpzade İzzet Efendi had been elected with the support of local connections as a reaction to the Unionists. However, it is unclear if the political arguments of the British consul are reliable. For example, Mufti Emin Efendi also favoured Unionist ideas and Ali Naki Efendi was known for his liberal way of thinking. He had been away from Trabzon for 25 years and only returned from Egypt to Istanbul after the declaration of constitutionalism. Hazinezarzade Mehmet Bey was reported to have moderate ideas whereas Matiev Kofidi Efendi was depicted as an advocate of the Greek community in Trabzon.²¹³

210 Michael E. Meeker, *İmparatorluktan Gelen Bir Ulus: Türk Modernitesi ve Doğu Karadenizde Osmanlı Mirası*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005, pp. 203-245.

211 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 2 December 1908, pp. 280-282; "Mebuslarımızın Hareketi", *Feyz*, No: 33, 18 Teşrînisâni 1324 (1 December 1908), p. 4; "Mebuslarımızın Azimet'i", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 27, 19 Teşrînisâni 1324 (2 December 1908), p. 1.

212 "Ali Naki Efendinin Vilayetimiz Ahalisine Teşekküratı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 37, 27 Kanûnievvel 1324 (9 January 1909), p. 3.

213 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 2 December 1908, pp. 281-282.

In 1910, İmadeddin Efendi, one of the Trabzon representatives, passed away and a mid-term election was held following orders from parliament and the Ministry of the Interior.²¹⁴ Unionist candidate Kalcızaade Mahmut Bey received 139 votes, winning with 115 votes more than his closest rival.²¹⁵ Ali Naki Bey from Trabzon presided over parliament as the oldest representative and Hazinedarzaade Mahmut Mazhar Bey served on the administrative board of the Freedom and Understanding Party. Besides those figures, the Trabzon representatives did not stand out in parliamentary proceedings.²¹⁶ It could also be argued that while Ali Naki Bey of Trabzon chaired parliament in its opening days because of his age, his seniority did not make him a prominent figure or a leader in parliamentary discussions.

Naci Bey, the owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, called for preparation for the elections in an article, writing that the opposition had become a mere trend and was nothing more than riff raff degenerating Ottoman society. He said that vigilance was needed in the new elections so that they could defeat those people looking out for their personal interests rather than those of the nation and added that such figures must not be re-elected because they tended to waste the country's precious time.²¹⁷ In saying that, he was implying that the opposition to the Committee of Union and Progress would bring about anarchism, immorality, and selfishness.

Disputes in parliament, which were presented as having the potential to jeopardize national unity, were followed in Trabzon. Some of the second delegates in Trabzon, including Hayrettin, Besim, Ahmet, Hafız Salih, Hacı Hafız Salih, Mahmut, Osman, İbrahim Hakkı, Abdülbaki, Hakkı, Mustafa, Osman, Şükrü, Hacı Salih, Ahmet and Osman, sent a telegram to parliament demanding that they work in unison for the good of the country.²¹⁸

214 BOA., DH. SYS., 49-7, 11. Za. 1328 (20 November 1910).

215 "Mebus İntibahının Neticesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 236, 15 Kanûnievvel 1326 (27 December 1910), p. 4; BOA., DH. SYS., 49-19 1329.M.14 (15 January 1911).

216 Kudret Emiroğlu, "II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde I. Dönem Meclis-i Mebusan'daki Trabzon Milletvekilleri", *Trabzon*, No: 5, 1991, pp. 14-22.

217 Naci, "İntihaba Hazırlanalım", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 257, 26 Şubat 1326 (11 March 1911), p. 1.

218 "Bütün istikbâlimizi nâmus ve vicdanlarına tevdi' ettiğimiz meb'ûslarımızın teşkil etdikleri Meclis-i Meşveret'de sâ'ika-yi menfa'ât ve hiss-i 'azâm ile Osmanlı vahdet-i ictimâ'îye ve uhuvvet-i diniyyesini ihlâlâle sebep olacak münâkaşat ve ta'rizatın hadveti muhtâc-ı selâm ve sükûn olan bütün efrâd-ı Osmaniye'yi dilhûn ediyor. Millet o kürsü-yü mu'allaya as'ad ettiği vekillerinin bi-sûd mücâdelat ve münâkaşatı bertaraf ederek selâmet-i mülk ve milleti tîmîn, kavânin ve nizâmâtın kabûl ve tasdîki husûsundaki çalışmalarını, ihtilaf ve münâferatı mûcib her türlü amâl-i hasiseden meccaniyet etmelerini bekliyor. Bina'en'aleyh vahdet-i Osmâniye'yi münhâl hareket ve beyânatda bulunan meb'ûsları bütün mevcûdiyetimizle vazîfe-i vataniyenin ifâsına

Hatibzade Emin Efendi, one of the Trabzon representatives in parliament, ended up joining the People's Party (*Ahali Fırkası*), which was reported about in newspapers.²¹⁹ The party was founded on 21 February 1910 by the representatives of Gümülcine, Karesi, Trablusgarp, Bayezit, Burdur and Erzurum who left the Committee, and as such it was the second opposition party founded in parliament during the constitutionalist period. They put pressure on the Committee through debates and parliamentary questions but had a rather conservative political approach.²²⁰

The proceedings that started on 15 December 1911 in parliament to change Article 35 of the constitution were in fact an attempt by the Committee to pave the way to the annulment of parliament.²²¹ Despite the objections of the opposition, the change was adopted by 125 votes on 13 January 1912. However, as a two-thirds majority could not be reached, Sultan Mehmet Reşad V dissolved parliament on 18 January 1912, ruling that elections would be held again in three months.²²² The Trabzon Municipality then issued a decree to elders' councils requiring that they draw up ledgers with the names of all the voters in the districts.²²³ In an article published in *Envar-ı Vicdan*, it was stressed that the new elections were to be held in two phases and the first phase in which delegates were to be elected was crucial. This was because they were the ones who would elect the real representatives, so eligible citizens were urged to vote in the first phase.²²⁴

dâvet eyleriz. Trabzon'da mevcûd müntehib-i sâniler: Hayreddin, Besim, Ahmed, Hafız Salih, Hacı Hafız Salih, Mahmud, Osman, İbrahim Hakkı, Abdülbâki, Hakkı, Osman, Mustafa, Şükrü, Hacı Salih, Ahmed, Osman.”

“Meclis-i Mebusan Riyasetine”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 267, 2 Nisan 1327 (15 April 1911), p. 1.

219 “Emin Efendi Hazretleri”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 104, 9 Eylül 1327 (22 September 1911), inside cover.

220 For more detailed information on the issue, see Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler-I: II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011, pp. 266-277.

221 “Madde 35 — Vükela ile hey’et-i meb’ûsân arasında ihtilâf olunan maddelerden birinin kabûlünde vükela tarafından ısrâr olunub da meb’ûsân cânibinden ekseriyet-i ârâ ile tafsilen esbâb-ı mucibe beyânıyla kat’iyyen ve mükerreren redd edildiği halde vükelanın tebdili veyahud müddet-i kânûniyesinde intihab olunmak üzere hey’et-i meb’ûsânın feshi münhasıran yedd-i iktidâr-ı hazret-i pâdişâhidedir.”

Hatt-ı Hümayûn ve Kânûn-i Esâsi, Matbaa-i Âmire, İstanbul 1876, p. 6.

222 Kudret Emiroğlu, “Trabzon’da Sopalı Seçimler – 1912”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol. 17, no: 97, January 1992, p. 41.

223 “İntihaba Başlanıyor”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 347, 14 Kanûnisâni 1327 (27 January 1912), p. 2.

224 Nalan, “Ey Muhterem İntihabçı: Ayık Ol!”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 115, 24 Kanûnisâni 1327 (6 February 1912), pp. 1-2.

The Unionists' real goal was to create a parliament free of opposition because they were disturbed by all the developments occurring in domestic and foreign politics as well as assassinations of journalists, internal strife, and the opposition Freedom and Understanding Party.²²⁵ In the meantime, certain developments drew the attention of the Unionists to Trabzon. Trabzon representative Mahmut Mazhar Bey was elected as a member of the administrative board of the Freedom and Understanding Party and a telegram of congratulations was sent to the party from Trabzon, which irked the Unionists.²²⁶ In addition, the leader of the Freedom and Understanding Party, Colonel Sadık, said in an interview that it would be difficult for the Unionists to win an election in Trabzon²²⁷ so the Committee decided to focus more on the city, and, as mentioned earlier, they sent the former Minister of Finance Cavit Bey and his entourage in July 1911 to the city; the third anniversary of the constitutional period was thus lavishly celebrated in Trabzon.²²⁸ Later the elections were announced and heated competition broke out in Trabzon, indications of which were published in the Unionist paper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* and the dissident paper *Tarık*.

An article in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that one of the most important duties of citizens was voting and that candidates who would work for the good of the country and nation had to be elected, so citizens were called upon to fulfil their duty.²²⁹ Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi Bey's newspaper *Tarık* published an article which claimed that one month after the decision to hold new elections and annul parliament, no preparations had been made for the elections. The article asserted that it was rather telling that no legal action had been taken against those who had not performed their duties, and the author called on the government to hold the elections immediately.²³⁰ In the same issue, another article in *Tarık* makes it apparent that this tactic was intended to disparage the Committee of Union and Progress. Titled "İstifanâme" (Declaration of Resignation), it contained the resignation letters of Abacıoğlu Konstantin and Hardoloşzade Osman that had been submitted to the Committee of Union and Progress.²³¹ Other similar articles appeared in *Tarık* which tried to blacken

225 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 41.

226 Tunaya, *ibid.*, p. 295; Tunaya, *ibid.*, p. 328.

227 Birinci, *ibid.*, p. 51.

228 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 42.

229 Muvaffak Galib, "İntihabat-İntihabat-ı Cedide", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 351, 28 Kanû-nisânî 1327 (10 February 1911), p. 1.

230 "Acaba Esbab-ı Te'hir ve Tekâsül Ne?", *Tarık*, No: 98, 2 Şubat 1327 (15 February 1912), pp. 1-2.

231 "Trabzon'da Târık gazetesi müdürîyet-i 'aliyyesine: Dâhil bulunduğum İttihad ve Terakkî Cem'iyeti'nden istifâ eylediğimin mu'teber gazetenizle i'lânı mercûdur. Bolaman Közmağarasu Karyesi'nden Abacıoğlu Konstantin; Trabzonda münteşir Târık gazetesi müdürîyetine:

the name of the Committee of Union and Progress by creating the impression that the party was regularly losing members.

Parliament was scheduled to convene in mid-April, so following a directive from the Ministry of the Interior, newspapers announced that in mid-March the elections would be held.²³² When the election committee got to work in Trabzon, the city was divided into seven electoral districts.²³³ Again, as stipulated by a directive from the Ministry, mayors and city council members were forbidden from running in the election.²³⁴ *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced the list of Unionist delegates for Trabzon; for the first region, the list included Nemlizade Hakkı Efendi, Ayafilibo İmamı Hafız Mustafa Efendi, chief boatman (*Kayıkçılar Kethüdası*) Yahya Reis, and Setrak Efendi, a clerk in Ottoman Public Debt Administration. For the second region, the list included Nemlizade Cemal Bey, Hafız Salih Efendi (chief clerk of Public Works), Hacıalihafızade Hakkı Efendi, and Aryan Kabzak Ağa. For the third region were Nemlizade Tahsin Efendi and Yunusağazade Şefik Efendi. For the fourth region were Kefelizade Hacı Hafız Mahmut Efendi, Eyüpzade İzzet Efendi, Mollabekirzade Mehmet Avni Efendi, and Hacıömerzade Arif Efendi. For the fifth region were Tekfurçayırı İmamı Hasan Efendi, Pazızade Remzi Efendi (a geography teacher in the Mekteb-i Sultani), and Bölükbaşızade Refet Efendi (a clerk in Ottoman Public Debt Administration). For the sixth region were Ahmet Efendi (chief clerk of the Appeals Court), Derviş Efendi (vice director of archives), Yüzbaşızade Remzi Efendi, and Hacı Kadızade Ahmet Efendi. For the seventh region were Murathanzade Hayrettin Bey, Yalmanzade İbrahim Efendi, Subaşızade Ateş, and Kaptanzade Emin Efendi.²³⁵

The Unionists' list is revealing in that there are not any Greek candidates although there are some Armenian ones. The candidacy of minorities led to disputes among both the opposition and Unionists. Both parties tried to attract

Dâhil bulunduğum İttihad ve Terakkî Cem'iyeti'nden istifâ ederek bâ'demâ hiçbir alâkamız olamayacağımın mu'teber ceridenizle i'ânını ricâ eyleriz. Ordu'nun Bucak Mahallesinden Hardolaşzâde Osman."

"İstifaname", *Tarık*, No: 98, 2 Şubat 1327 (15 February 1912), p. 2.

232 "İntihabatın Te'hiri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 357, 18 Şubat 1327 (2 March 1911), p. 3; "Te'hir-i İntihabat", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 119, 21 Şubat 1327 (5 March 1912), inside cover; "İntihabata Başlanıyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 360, 29 Şubat 1327 (13 March 1911), p. 2.

233 "Şu'abat-ı İntihabiye", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 121, 6 Mart 1328 (18 March 1912), inside cover.

234 "Belediye Re'isi ve Azaları Namzedliklerini Vazi' Edemeyecekler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:362, 7 Mart 1328 (20 March 1912), p. 2.

235 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Müntehib-i Sani Namzedleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 362, 7 Mart 1328 (20 March 1912), p. 4.

minorities on the one hand while accusing the other party of collaborating with them. The Armenian Taşnaksutyun Society allied with the Unionists, while *Hınçaks* and Greeks sided with the Freedom and Understanding Party. However, former representative Kofidi Efendi's supporters declared that they would side with the Unionists. As a result, two Armenian candidates appeared on the list of the Committee of Union and Progress while there were no Greeks. There were four Greeks on the delegate list of the Freedom and Understanding Party and based on a complaint one Armenian candidate was later added.²³⁶

Tarık published an article claiming that the Unionists had sent 7,000 lira to Trabzon for the election and that two Unionist preachers engaged in propaganda all the way from Trabzon to Dersim targeting the Freedom and Understanding Party.²³⁷ In the end, the delegates of the Freedom and Understanding Party only won in the third region, where members of the Greek minority lived, but in the other six regions, the candidates of the Committee of Union and Progress won.²³⁸

The candidates for Trabzon representatives were listed in a declaration prepared by the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress and published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. It included Kalcızade Mahmut Bey, Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi, Eyyüpzade İzzet Efendi, Matiev Kofidi Efendi, Ordulu Ali Osman Bey (Debre Administrative Officer, *Mutasarrıfı*), education inspector Hacısalihzade Servet Efendi, and Samsun penal court chair Sürmeneli Hafız Mehmet Efendi. It was noted that those were the only Unionist candidates²³⁹ and that others who announced their candidacy in defiance of that decision were expelled from the Committee including Arif Efendi (former head clerk of the city council), Hüseyin Efendi, (former sub-district governor (*kaymakam*) of Of), and Arnavut Ahmet Efendi.²⁴⁰

In the 110th issue of *Tarık*, the Freedom and Understanding Party responded to allegations in two articles published in *Tanin* that their party members had deceived the public and a complaint was lodged with the Grand Viziership

236 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 43.

237 "Ne İçin Telaş Ediliyor?", *Tarık*, No: 106, 13 Mart 1328 (26 March 1912), p. 3.

238 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf'ın İlk ve Son Muvaffakiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 364, 14 Mart 1328 (27 March 1912), p. 2; "İttihad ve Terakki'nin Namzedleri Kazanıyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 364, 14 Mart 1328 (27 March 1912), p. 1; "İttihad ve Terakki'nin Namzedleri Kazanıyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 365, 17 Mart 1328 (30 March 1912), p. 3.

239 "İttihad ve Terakki Namzedleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 366, 21 Mart 1328 (3 April 1912), p. 1.

240 Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, "İlan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 368, 28 Mart 1328 (10 April 1912), p. 1; Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, "İlan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 369, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 1.

over the issue.²⁴¹ Another article in the same newspaper alleges that Küçükibrahimoğlu Mehmet Ağa from Yomra's Arsin Village and his cousin Mehmet Efendi carried out propaganda for the Freedom and Understanding Party and were arrested for being reactionaries.²⁴² Even though no crime to speak of had actually been committed, they were arrested on the orders of the governor and accused of perjury and bearing false witness. In response, the Trabzon branch of Freedom and Understanding Party applied to the Ministry of Justice for reprieve.²⁴³

Freedom and Understanding Party members complained primarily about the governor of Trabzon, Bekir Sami Bey. They alleged that the governor was appointed with the promise that he would help the Unionists win the election and that Unionists went to the polling stations to pressure people to vote for Unionist candidates. Hasan Hicabi Bey wrote a petition of complaint to the prosecution claiming that people who resided elsewhere voted without proper documents, some people who lacked the official capacity to do so voted on behalf of other citizens, and some officials pressured the public to vote for Unionist candidates.²⁴⁴

Tarık was full of news about corruption in the election while the Unionists were pleased with how the election turned out. Kalcızade Mahmut Bey, Nemlizade Hacı Osman Efendi, Eyyüpzade İzzet Efendi, Debre Administrative Officer (*Mutasarrıf*) Ali Osman Efendi, education inspector Hacısalihzade Servet Efendi, Samsun penal court head Hafız Mehmet Efendi and Matiev Kofidi Efendi were elected as second-term Trabzon representatives to parliament.

As mentioned earlier, the leading notable families of Trabzon were quite influential in local politics and adept at making their voices heard in the election. That held true not only for the Committee of Union and Progress but also its opponents like the Freedom and Understanding Party. Nemlizades, Kalcızades, Eyyüpzades and Hacısalihzades, all dignitaries in Trabzon, dominated in politics yet again. Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi Bey was the representative of the Freedom and Understanding Party who lost the election. He not only lost, but three lawsuits were filed against him based on complaints.²⁴⁵ Hasan Hicabi Bey could not bear the pressure, and in 1913 following the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa his newspaper *Tarık* was closed down and he was sent into exile.

241 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Merkez-i Umumisi'nden Makam-ı Sadarete Takdim Kılınan Protesto Suretidir", *Tarık*, No: 110, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 1.

242 "İntihab Cilveleri ve Kanun Mütecevizleri", *Tarık*, No:110, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 2.

243 Ibid., p. 2.

244 Emiroğlu, ibid., p. 44.

245 Ibid., p. 46.

Ottoman society adapted well to the elections that came about through constitutionalism. The Committee of Union and Progress and other political organizations tried to inform the public about the elections and manipulate them in accordance with their own views. Newspapers and magazines were the primary tools of these efforts, leading to a competitive environment in publications.

The press took centre stage in the elections in Trabzon as well. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was the mouthpiece of the Unionists and its disputes with *Tarık*, the newspaper of the opposition, bore witness to that competition. Minorities tried to find middle ground in the process, so they could get their own representatives elected and as a result the Greeks managed to send a representative to parliament, but the Armenians failed to do the same. Overall, from 1908 onwards Trabzon dignitaries influenced election procedures and selected their own candidates, not necessarily those of the Unionists.

1.11. Impacts of Wars on Trabzon

1.11.1. The War of Tripoli (1911)

In 1871, Italy attained national unity but compared to other European countries, it was far behind in the race for colonization. The Italians tried to invade Ethiopia and then targeted Tripoli, the last territory of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa. After obtaining the approval of other European states, on 29 September 1911 Italy sent troops to Tripoli, starting its occupation of the territory. The Ottoman navy was weak compared to the Italian navy and unable to send warships to the region. Great Britain, which was in control of Egypt, did not allow the Ottomans to deploy troops on its soil so volunteer Ottoman officers including Enver Bey and Mustafa Kemal Bey secretly went to Tripoli. The Italian advancement was thus stopped with a resistance movement led by the volunteers and backed by the locals, especially the Sunusi tribe. The Italian occupation forces were thus prevented from advancing into the hinterland from the coast.

Italy bombed some Ottoman ports in the Mediterranean in order to force the Ottoman Empire to accept its terms of peace and concede Tripoli to Italy. The Italians also occupied Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands, and besieged the Dardanelles Strait. However, Italy was unable to achieve the definitive victory it sought but then the outbreak of the Balkan War opened a window of opportunity as Ottoman officers in Tripoli were forced to return to Istanbul. Most of the Ottoman officers returned (arriving in late 1912 or early 1913) while a handful stayed behind in Tripolitania. As the result of negotiations,

however, in 1912 the Ottoman Empire signed the Ouchy Treaty and conceded Tripoli to Italy.²⁴⁶

The occupation of Tripoli was met with protests all over the Ottoman Empire, including in Trabzon. An examination of the extant local press of the period reveals that the people of Trabzon reacted strongly to the occupation and sought to closely follow what was happening. An article in the 312th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that before the occupation, Italy was distraught by the appointment of a new governor to the region and expressed their frustration diplomatically. According to the article, the Italians demanded that the new governor be informed that Italy would maintain its economic influence in Tripoli.²⁴⁷ The Italian government tried to legitimize its occupation of Tripoli by saying it had to protect Italian interests as well as the Italian citizens living there, but of course that was nothing more than a way to legitimize their aggressive stance. Another article discussed public reactions to the occupation and a need to defend the homeland by going to war.²⁴⁸ A declaration issued by the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress about the occupation was published in the newspaper's 316th issue. It stated that Ottoman society, which had been long oppressed, had gotten a second wind with constitutionalism, which disturbed its long-term enemies. The article mentioned Bulgaria's declaration of independence, Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the issues in Albania and Monte Negro, and Italy's aggression towards the last Ottoman territory in North Africa. It also stated that 300 million Muslims in Asia, Europe, and Africa would oppose an attack against the centre of the caliphate with all their might and that the Ottoman Empire would fight down to its last citizen. However, it also stressed that caution was needed in terms of the extent of protests lest the Europeans get the upper hand as they sought such an opportunity. The article claimed that all ethnic and political differences would be set aside in those times of crisis to present a common front to the enemy, to the extent that Greeks and Armenians in Trabzon would be expected to fight alongside other Ottoman citizens. Afterwards, as was usual in such cases, the people of Trabzon were warned to be vigilant against all kinds of evil.²⁴⁹

246 Melek Öksüz, "Trabzon'da Meşveret Gazetesine Göre Trablusgarp Savaşı'nın Trabzon'daki Yansımaları", *Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, No: 14, Spring 2013, pp. 59-60.

247 "Trablusgarb Meselesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 312, 7 Eylül 1327 (20 September 1911), p. 2.

248 Naci, "Osmanlılar Harp Karşısında", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 315, 21 Eylül 1327 (4 October 1911), p. 1.

249 "Senelerden beri bir girdâbat-ı felâket içinde yuvarlanıb giden vatan-ı 'azizimizin hayat-ı mukaddesi Cenâb-ı Hakk'ın 'inâyetiyle tablis edilmiştir. Dört senelik bu nevzâd-ı meşrû'-u meşrûtiyet yıllarının ağûş-u terakkî ve te'âlisinde serafrâz olmağa başladığını cismâni hırs ve intikâmıyla görmeğe tahammül edemeyen ezeli ve ebedî düşmanlarımız nihâyet gayz ve kinlerini

In the next issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* a telegram from Tripoli was published. Derna commander Nazif Bey reported that three Italian destroyers had been sunk, which was in fact nothing more than war-time propaganda. The article announced that “freedom fighters” Enver Bey, Niyazi Bey, and Eyüp Sabri Bey had been appointed as the commanders of the National Defence Committees in order to prove that the Committee of Union and Progress would defend the homeland to their deaths.²⁵⁰ In another article in the same issue, a telegram from Berlin was published which stated that the Islamic Community had decided to boycott all Italian goods in Egypt, Tunisia, India, Crimea and Caucasia.²⁵¹ An article in the 318th issue noted that the Committee had attempted to obtain external support from Europe after Italy attacked Tripoli.²⁵² As the fighting

muhafazada sebât edemeyerek i'lân-ı 'adâvete yüz tuttular. Bu cümleden olmak üzere Malisör ve Karadağ meş'ele-yi zâ'ilesinde açıktan açığa vukû' bulan agva'ât ve ilka'ât-ı müfessidât-kârânesine mukâbil eline bir şey geçiremeyen İtalya hükümeti mülkümüzün bir kısım-ı mühimmi bulunan ve belki Afrika kıt'asındaki mevcûdiyet-i Osmaniyeyi temsil eden Trablusgarb kıt'a-i vâsi'asına hukûk-u düveliye ve insâniyeyi paymâl edercesine nagihâni bir tecâvüzde bulunmuştur ki bu hâlin evsâf-ı kâmile-i medeniyeti şahsiyetlerinde temsil ettirdikleri iddi'asında bulunanlarca en mezmûm bir hareket-i şekâvetkârâneneden 'ibâret olarak telâkki edileceğinden şüphemiz yoktur. Afrika, Asya ve Avrupa kıt'alarında mesûn üç yüz milyon Müslümanın kiblegâh ve tahtgâh-ı hilâfetlerini seîre-i ihtirâmında taşımakla fahrü'l-en'âm olan memleketimizin velev bir cüz'üne olsun hiçbir hakk-ı meşrû'a müstenid olmaksızın vukû' bulacak tecâvüzü tel'in edecekleri ve icâbı halinde kanlarıyla canlarıyla müdâfa'aya çalışacakları varesteyi iştibâhdır. Ma'mâfih bir târih-i pür-i şân ve şerefîn vares-i müfahhareti olan bu milleti necibenin bir ferdine varıncaya kadar hukûk-u insâniyeti şeref ve nâmûs-ı vatânı müdâfa'adan geri kalmayacağını her zaman isbâte mahya bulunduğu meşhûr-u cihândır. Bu nûr-u hakikât Osmanlı kavminin bilâ-tefrik-i cins u mezheb bütün evlâdının cebhe-i hamiyetinde lem'ân eyler. Bu mülkün terakki ve te'alisini kendilerince bir felâket 'add eden yakın ve uzak birçok düşmanları mevcûd olduğunu bugün değil her zaman bilmek bütün Osmanlıların vecibe-i zimmetidir. ... Bu mukaddes hakpâk-ı vatanda yaşayan bi'l-cümle vatandaşlarımızı da kendimizden hiçbir zaman ayırmadığımız gibi bugün de bilâa-tefrik-i cins u mezheb anâsır-ı muhtelifeye mensûb Osmanlı kardeşlerimizin tezâhürat-ı vatanperverânelerini ilmen göreceğimize kalben emîn olarak bu gibi kemâl-i iftihar ile 'aleme i'lân eylemekte tereddüd etmeyiz. Bilhassa Trabzon'da mütemekkin Ermeni, Rum kardeşlerimizin herbâlûkâra karşı kalbleri bizimle berâber darbân ederek bir vifâk-ı tâm içinde Osmanlı kiile-yi mu'azzamasının hükümet-i meşrûatımızın emrine amâde bulunduğu sırası geldiği zaman 'âlem nazarında tebeyyün edecektir.”

Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi, “Beyanname”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 316, 24 Eylül 1327 (7 October 1911), p. 1.

250 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisi'nden Dün Akşam Alınan Telgraflar”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 317, 28 Eylül 1327 (11 October 1911), p. 2.

251 “İtalya'ya Boykotaj”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 317, 28 Eylül 1327 (11 October 1911), p. 2.

252 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisi'nden Âlem-i Medeniyete Müraca'at”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 318, 1 Teşrinievvel 1327 (14 October 1911), p. 2.

continued, internal political conflicts roused tensions in Trabzon,²⁵³ and such clashes at a time when national unity was needed most were criticized.²⁵⁴

In another issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* the Committee of Union and Progress called on local citizens to continue to unite against Italy.²⁵⁵ In that issue, a telegram sent from the headquarters of the Committee announced that the Italians had been unable to hold out against Ottoman attacks and abandoned three of the six locations they had occupied, leaving behind ammunition and weapons. Also, it was reported that Arabs were bravely fighting alongside Ottoman soldiers.²⁵⁶

Some striking news items can be found in *Envar-ı Vicdan* as well. An article published in the *London Opinion* decried the cruelty and violence of the Italians in Tripoli, which was considered significant enough for the Trabzon press to send a telegram expressing its gratitude. It was signed by *Hekim, Envar-ı Vicdan, Tarık, İkbâl, Faros Tis Anatolis, Trabzon'da Meşveret, Pjijik, and Üryan*.²⁵⁷

In addition to those publications, advertisements were placed in newspapers as a way to raise funds for the families of soldiers who fought and died in Tripoli.²⁵⁸ Also, a committee was formed under the leadership of Mahir Efendi, the Mufti of Trabzon, to raise funds for the forces fighting the occupation in Tripoli.²⁵⁹

253 Naci, "Osmanlılar Vatan Çırpınıyor, İhtilafı Terk Edelim", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 322, 15 Teşrinievvel 1327 (28 October 1911), p. 1.

254 Naci, "Osmanlılar, Vatani Harici İttifak Değil, Dâhili İttihad Kurtaracaktır", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 324, 22 Teşrinievvel 1327 (4 November 1911), p. 1.

255 "İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Osmanlı Milletine Beyannamesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 323, 19 Teşrinievvel 1327 (1 November 1911), p. 1.

256 "Selânik İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumi'si'nin Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi'ne Keşide Ettiği fi 17 Teşrinievvel sene 327 Tarihli Telgrafname Sureti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 323, 19 Teşrinievvel 1327 (1 November 1911), p. 2.

257 "Londra'da (London Opinion) gazetesine; İtalya vahşetine karşı i'lân-ı nefret ve lâ'net ve 'alem-i insâniyete ibrâz-ı hamiyet yolundaki neşriyat-ı insâniyet göstermelerine teşekkürler ederiz. İn'anat-ı necibâneleri cidden ri'âyetkâr İngilizlerin akvâm-ı insâniyetin muhafızlığı ve vâzife-i tezyihalarına bu def'â dahi sâdık kalacaklarından ve bunu da Türkleri târik-i terakkilerinde mazhâr-ı mu'âvenet etmeleriyle isbât edeceklerinden eminiz. Trabzon Matbu'âtı: Hekim, Envar-ı Vicdan, Tarık, İkbâl, Faros tis Anatolis, Meşveret, Pjijik, Üryan" "İngilizler Osmanlıların Lehinde", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 106, 13 Teşrinisâni 1327 (26 November 1911), inside cover.

258 "Trabzonlular, Trabluslular Muavenet Bekliyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 326, 29 Teşrinievvel 1327 (11 November 1911), p. 1; "Trablus Evlad-ı Şühedanına Muavenet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 328, 5 Teşrinisâni 1327 (18 November 1911), pp. 1-2.

259 "Trablus'a Muavenet Komisyonu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 328, 5 Teşrinisâni 1327 (18 November 1911), p. 3; Also see. Melek Öksüz, "Trablusgarp ve Bingazi Havalisi Mevakini Harbiyesi İane Defterine Göre Trablusgarp Savaşı İçin Trabzon'dan Toplanan Yardımlar," *Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, No: 15, Fall 2013, pp. 147-204.

The Italians started to engage in wartime propaganda when they realized that they could not win on the battlefield. The technique they used was to throw fliers from planes promising Arabs that they would get twenty lira if they surrendered with their weapons. One Arab fighter snuck all the way up to the Italian commander's lodgings and left a declaration which was published in the Trabzon newspapers. The declaration stated that the cruelty and massacres carried out by the Italians was not befitting a civilized state and that efforts to estrange Arabs from Turks were futile.²⁶⁰ Another article in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* exposed the propaganda operations being carried out by the Italians; it had been reported that Enver Bey, the commander of the Ottoman troops in Bengazi, had been killed in order to break the morale of the troops. However, that claim was soon proven to be false.²⁶¹

The Ottoman Empire took precautions to ensure that Italians living in Ottoman territories did not come to harm during the war. However, as the war raged on and Italian brutalities escalated, it was decided that it would be best to deport the Italians living on Ottoman lands. As a result, twelve Italian families living in Trabzon left the city. The accountant of Regie Company later left the city on a German ship to go to Batum as he had been fired from his job.²⁶²

In the 403rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, a telegram that had been sent by the commander of Bengazi to the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress was published. In the telegram, Enver Bey stated that an officer from Trabzon named Veysel Efendi had been wounded in Tripoli and praised the officer's patriotism, not failing to congratulate the people of Trabzon for having brought up such a hero.²⁶³

Italy occupied the last Ottoman territory in North Africa in an act of colonialism, which provoked strong reactions in Ottoman society. The Ottoman Empire turned to the Europeans demanding that Italy be stopped but to no avail. The resistance that had begun with just a few officers and soldiers grew in a short period of time and stopped the Italians, a fact that resonated strongly in Trabzon. The people of Trabzon took a close interest in what was transpiring in Tripoli, but in the end conflicts in internal politics undermined

260 "İtalyanlara Cevab-ı Müskit", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 361, 3 Mart 1328 (16 March 1912), p. 3.

261 "Enver Bey", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 376, 25 Nisan 1328 (8 May 1912), p. 2.

262 "Şehrimizde İtalyan Kalmadı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 387, 2 Haziran 1328 (15 June 1912), p. 1.

263 Mutasarrıf ve Umum Bingazi Kumandanı Enver, "Bir Vesika-yı Hamiyet: Trabzon Vilayeti İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi'ne", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 403, 28 Temmuz 1328 (10 August 1912), p. 1.

how the Ottomans handled the situation. All of these issues were discussed in detail in the local press and the political divide was already visible prior to the Balkan Wars.

1.11.2. The Balkan Wars (1912-1913)

The ideology of nationalism that emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution affected the inhabitants of the Ottoman province of Rumelia, which led to insurgencies throughout the nineteenth century. Those wars and uprisings resulted in the independence of Greece in 1821 and then Serbia, Monte Negro and Romania in 1878. Lastly, Bulgaria broke away in 1908 with the support of the Great Powers. Those newly founded states fought each other after declaring independence and also tried to annex the remainder of the Ottoman territories in Rumelia.²⁶⁴

The administrative and military weaknesses of the Ottomans in the aftermath of the constitutional period encouraged the Balkan states in their ambitions. It could be argued that at the time of the proclamation of the Second Constitution, each of the Balkan states had nationalistic plans to take over Ottoman territory in the Balkans. However, popular support for the Committee of Union and Progress and therefore the Ottoman administration stymied their plans. The Italian invasion of Tripoli, which revealed to the world the military weakness and political desperation of the Ottomans, not only gave them courage but also laid the groundwork for the right political and military conditions. The Balkan states found an opportune moment to strike when Italy took on the Ottoman Empire in Tripoli and the Europeans left the Ottomans in diplomatic isolation. In 1912, Monte Negro declared war on the Ottoman Empire and then Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria followed suit, achieving surprising victories. The Ottomans not only lost most of their territory in Rumelia but also were at risk of losing Edirne, the empire's former capital, to Bulgaria. They managed to stop the Bulgarian army only 50 kilometres away from Istanbul in Çatalca. A group of Unionists led by Enver Bey made the claim that the government was planning to give up Edirne in peace talks after the ceasefire and on 23 January 1913 they led the Babiâli Coup to overthrow the government. Taking advantage

264 For further information, see: Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu: Oluşumu ve 1908'e kadar Gelişimi*, trans. İhsan Çatay, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001; İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia 1878-1908*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014; Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, *Jön Türkler ve Makedonya Sorunu (1890-1918)*, trans. İhsan Çatay, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2008.

of the internal territorial conflicts going on in the Balkans, the Ottomans waded into the Second Balkan War and took back Edirne.²⁶⁵

The First Balkan War, which resulted in some of the worst defeats in Ottoman history, was closely followed in Trabzon and the local press stirred up emotions with its reporting. It is possible to track local impressions of the Balkan Wars through various issues of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* but unfortunately some issues of Trabzon newspapers for this period are missing. For example, issues for *Trabzon'da Meşveret* up to the Babiâli Coup are available whereas the issues following the Coup no longer exist.

An article in the 418th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* about the First Balkan War titled “To Arms” (*Silah Başına*) was written by the owner of the newspaper, Naci Bey. The article states that the Ottoman government had mobilized its troops for a possible war in the Balkans.²⁶⁶ In the same issue another article notes that during a meeting held at the Trabzon Municipality a rally was organized in Kavak Square to support going to war. The rally was under the leadership of Mayor Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Efendi together with the committee members, who were Müftü Efendi, the Greek Metropolit, an Armenian representative, Alizade Mehmet Salih, former representative Servet, lawyer Mithad, the former clerk of the Administrative Council of Vilayet Arif, Pilosyan Bedros, and Serasi Efendi.²⁶⁷ An article in the following issue describes the rally in detail. Thousands of people gathered in Kavak Square to listen to a fiery speech given by Mayor Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Efendi and then went to the governor's office chanting “We want war!” Governor Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey made a speech in which he praised the patriotism of the people who had gathered there and he listed their civic duties. After prayers, a telegram of support was sent to the Sultan and then the crowd dispersed.²⁶⁸ The amount of support for the war is notable and of course suggests that people expected a quick and decisive win. Of course, as the Unionist press grossly overstated such issues in many cases, it is always necessary to double-check these kinds of reports about popular enthusiasm with more neutral outside sources.

265 For further information, see: M. Hakan Yavuz & İsa Blumi (eds.), *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13 and Their Sociopolitical Implications*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013; Edward J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishing, 2003; Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

266 Naci, “Silah Başına”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 418, 22 Eylül 1328 (5 October 1912), p. 1.

267 “Muharebe Mitingi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 418, 22 Eylül 1328 (5 October 1912), p. 2.

268 “Büyük İçtima’ ve Harp İsteriz Sadaları”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 419, 26 Eylül 1328 (9 October 1912), p. 2.

Naci Bey wrote an editorial in which he argued that war was necessary to solve the problems in the Balkans.²⁶⁹ In the same issue, an article announced that Pirağazade Asım Ağa and Arap Hafız Mehmet Efendi had launched a volunteer brigade to enlist soldiers to fight in the Balkans.²⁷⁰ In an editorial in the following issue, Naci Bey claimed that the nation needed war to teach those “spoiled Balkan states” a lesson and shrug off the Ottoman Empire’s lethargy.²⁷¹ In another article in the same issue, it was reported that the volunteer brigade had recruited more than a hundred and fifty troops in just a few days.²⁷² Different segments of society in Trabzon vied with each other to meet the needs of these volunteer soldiers. Women collected underwear, shirts and socks for them and the shoemakers of Trabzon donated 52 pairs of shoes.²⁷³

An editorial in the 422nd issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* argued that permanent peace could only come about through war in the problematic Balkans.²⁷⁴ In the next issue, an article reported again on the committee led by Mufti Efendi, stating that it had provided winter clothes for the volunteer soldiers in the 87th Regiment heading to the Balkans and the Trabzon volunteer brigade.²⁷⁵ Another article thanked the women of Trabzon for their efforts in gathering winter clothes.²⁷⁶ In the same issue, the claim was made that Greek citizens were leaving the country because of the war, so if they had tax debts, they needed to be quickly collected.²⁷⁷

In the 424th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters issued a declaration requiring all of its branches to provide

269 Naci, “Rumeli’yi Harp Kurtaracaktır”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 420, 29 Eylül 1328 (12 October 1912), p. 1.

270 “Gönüllü Sancağı”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 420, 29 Eylül 1328 (12 October 1912), p. 2.

271 Naci, “Millet Harp İstiyor”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 1.

272 “Gönüllü Taburu”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 2.

273 “Hanımlarımızın Muaveneti”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No:421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 3; “Çapulacı Esnafının Himmeti”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No:421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 3.

274 Naci, “Sulhu Harp Te’min Edecek”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 422, 6 Teşrinievvel 1328 (19 October 1912), p. 1.

275 “Kahraman Askerlerimize Elbise-i Şita’iye Tedarik Edelim”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 423, 10 Teşrinievvel 1328 (23 October 1912), p. 2.

276 “Hanımlarımızın Askerlere Muaveneti”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 423, 10 Teşrinievvel 1328 (23 October 1912), p. 3.

277 “Yunanlılar Gidiyorlar”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No:423, 10 Teşrinievvel 1328 (23 October 1912), p. 3.

for soldiers' families as well as ensure that they had decent work.²⁷⁸ In another article, it was reported that the youth would convene under the Trabzon volunteer brigade.²⁷⁹ In the same issue, the claim was made that some people were refusing to help a committee and insulted its members, thereby incurring the wrath of the author of the article who demanded justice for such an outrage.²⁸⁰

In other news, it was said that some citizens of countries at war with the Ottomans were still at large in Trabzon and stirring up trouble. The government was asked to deport such people as soon as possible to appease the public.²⁸¹ In the following issue, it was reported that Talat Bey, one of the leaders of the Committee who served as a minister in previous governments, volunteered to go to war in the Balkans.²⁸² In the 427th issue, it was said that there were reports in some Armenian newspapers that Sultan Abdülhamid II was being brought back to Istanbul from exile in Salonika but because of the state of censorship in Istanbul nothing definitive could be known.²⁸³ However, in the next issue it was reported that Sultan Abdülhamid II had indeed arrived in Istanbul on the ship *Lorelei*, which was owned by the German Embassy, and he was staying at the Beylerbeyi Palace.²⁸⁴ In another article in the same issue, it was said that volunteer brigades were being assembled all around Anatolia in order to stop the enemy, which by then had advanced as far as Çatalca.²⁸⁵ In the 429th issue,

278 "Ahval-i Hazıra Münasebetiyle: İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Bütün Merakizine Tebligat", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 2.

279 "Gönüllü Taburu Müteşekkildir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 2.

280 "Şu günlerde gerek doğrudan doğruya ve gerek bi'l-vasıta hükümete yapılacak mu'avenet için teşekkül eden komisyonlar tarafından tarafı i'âneler toplanıyor. Mesmû'ümüze nazaran bu komisyonlardan biri isimlerini zikr etmek istemediğimiz ehl-i besardan birkaç zât tarafından kemâl-i hakâretle redd edilmiştir. Bunlar biriktirdikleri servet-i bu memleketin evlâdından fezâ etmişlerdir. Böyle bir sırada memleketin hayrına şitâb etmeyen kimselere millet boykotla mukâbele etmelidir. Verecek oldukları üç beş gurus i'âne için bir komisyon hey'etini bardâne bir sûrette kabul etmek insâniyete, nezâkete menâfi' olduğu gibi bu gibilerin vatana güzel bir his ile mütehasıs olmadıklarını gösterir."

"Boykota İstihkak Kazanıyorlar", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 2.

281 "Hâlâ İçimizde Bulunuyorlar", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 2.

282 "Dün Nazır, Bugün Gönüllü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 425, 17 Teşrinievvel 1328 (30 October 1912), p. 1.

283 "Hakan-ı Mahlu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 427, 24 Teşrinievvel 1328 (6 November 1912), p. 2.

284 "Hakan-ı Sabık", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 428, 27 Teşrinievvel 1328 (9 November 1912), p. 3.

285 "Gönüllü Taburları Teşkili", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 428, 27 Teşrinievvel 1328 (9 November 1912), p. 3.

a declaration prepared by the Committee of Union and Progress was published which stated that the country was facing trying times, so all Ottoman citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, had to be united against social unrest and that every Unionist had a fundamental responsibility to work for social order.²⁸⁶

Trabzon'da Meşveret ran a report about 200 Armenian volunteers from Van, Erzurum and Bayburt who were travelling to Trabzon to join the Ottoman troops.²⁸⁷ According to other reporting in the same issue, Trabzon students at the Mekteb-i Sultani who wanted to help the wounded in the battlefield had to first apply to the school principal.²⁸⁸ In the next issue, a notable article reported that former travel inspector Kemal Bey from the Trabzon Municipality had been arrested because he was trying to dissuade volunteers from going to war and spoke out against the government.²⁸⁹ In the 434th issue, it was reported that Major Mehmet Ali Bey, the Commander of the Volunteer Brigade from Trabzon, and Arab Hafız Mehmet Efendi had been killed in the battle at Çatalca.²⁹⁰

The defeat of the Ottoman Army in the First Balkan War shocked everyone, including the inhabitants of Trabzon. Naci Bey, owner of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, wrote an article questioning the defeat, stating that the biggest cause was ignorance and that he wanted the lost territory to be reclaimed as soon as possible.²⁹¹

286 “Memleketin şu cera’atli dakikalarında Osmanlılar kemâl-i ittihad ile vatanın imdâdına koşmakla mükellef olduğu gibi bu ittihadın dâhilen husûl ve idâmesini ve sükûn ve asayişin muhafazasını temîn edecek ve müşkilat ve gava’il-i cedide tahdîsine meydan vermeyecek bütün esbâba tevessülü de vazife-yi vataniyeleri muktezâsı olduğundan bi’l-cümle anâsıra mensûb vatandaşlarımızın yekdiğerinden emniyeti selb edecek her türlü ahvâl ve hareketdan içtinâb ve hatta bi’l-’akis bütün vatandaşları birbirine takrib edecek vesâile bu sırada kat kat daha gayret etmeleri menâfi’-i ‘aliyye-i memleket icâbat-ı kat’iyesindendir. İşte bu mukaddes gâye-i ittihad-cüyâne ve asayişperverâneyi düşünerek İttihad ve Terakki’ye mensûb olan her ferdin kendi muhitinde o yolda bezl-i gayret ve tenvir-i fikr ile tatmîn ve teskin-i ezhâra ve husûl-i aheng ve vifâka ve hükümet tarafından da bu yolda sarf edilecek mesâ’iyi teshile çalışması ve kezâlik ecnebî misâfirine ri’âyet mine’l-kadîm Osmanlılığın en şayan-ı iftihar hasâ’il-i mihmânperverânesinden olduğundan ecânibe dahi aynı sûret-i müntekârânede mu’âmele olunması esbâbına teşebbüs etmesi lüzûmu kemâl-i ehemmiyetle tavsiye olunur.”

“İttihad ve Terakki’nin Beyannamesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 429, 31 Teşrînievvel 1328 (13 November 1912), p. 1.

287 “Ermeni Gönüllüler”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 431, 7 Teşrînisâni 1328 (20 November 1912), p. 2.

288 “Gönüllü Talebeler”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 431, 7 Teşrînisâni 1328 (20 November 1912), p. 2.

289 “Tevkîf”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 432, 14 Teşrînisâni 1328 (27 November 1912), p. 3.

290 “İki Şehid-i Sa’id”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 434, 21 Teşrînisâni 1328 (4 December 1912), p. 1.

291 “Artık mağlubiyetimizin esbâb ve ‘avâmilini tedkik ederek selâmet-i memleket ve milletin mevcûdiyet-i siyâsiye ve hâkimiyetsini temîne çalışmak bu topraklar üzerinde yaşayan her ferde müteveccih bir vazîfe-yi vataniyedir. Başkumandan vekili Nâzım Paşa, belediye riyâsetinden

The defeat led to the siege of Edirne by the Bulgarians and the loss of all Rumelia, as well as political crises in the capital Istanbul. A group of Unionists led by Enver Bey carried out a coup known as the *Babiâli Baskını*, citing the failure of the government and the possibility that Edirne would be left to the Bulgarians in the ongoing peace talks. With the coup, the Committee seized complete power, a fact that was reflected on the pages of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. Naci Bey wrote an editorial defending the Unionists²⁹² and declarations made by the Committee and the new government were printed on the first page of the newspaper.²⁹³

The Balkan Wars led to a major breaking point in the social life of Trabzon. When some Greeks and Armenians rejoiced over the news of defeat on the front, the spirit of unity was shattered in the city and ethnic disunity prevailed. In addition, the soldiers of the Trabzon Volunteer Brigade, the third battalion of the 87th Regiment, had nearly all been killed. From a brigade of 500, only two soldiers survived and returned to Trabzon.²⁹⁴

The Balkan Wars led to a major elimination of the Turkish Muslim population from the Balkans, which in turn prompted a huge wave of migration to Anatolia and increased the influence of nationalism. That in turn propelled

keşide edilen tebrik telgrafına verdiği cevâbda esbâb-ı mağubiyet olarak işâret buyurdıkları “avâmil-i meçhûle” terkiib-i garibi üzerinde tedkikât icrâsının bugünkü ahvâl dolayısıyla kimlere ‘âid olduğunu gösteremez isek de herhâlde târih bu ‘avâmil-i meçhûleyi bi-tarafâne şerh ve tefsîr edecektir. Binâ’en’aleyh biz esbâb-ı mağlubiyeti bir takım meçhûlâtâ ‘atfetmeyerek doğrudan doğruya milletin cehâletine ‘atf edeceğiz. Gerçi bu acı bir hakikattir. Fakat bu acı hakikati ne vakit takdîr eder ve cehlîmizin izâlesi için ‘ilm ve ma’ârif ehemmiyet verir ve çocuklarımızı ‘ilm silâhları ile mücahhez, vatan hisleriyle mesbu’ olarak yetiştirir isek belki o zaman manzûme-i düveliyedeki mevki’imizi muhafaza edebiliriz. ... Bulgar ordusunda okuyub yazma bilmeyenler yüzde altı derecesinde iken ihtimâl bizde yüzde altı derecesinde ancak okuryazar vardır. ... Ümîd ederiz ki bu muhârebedeki mağlubiyetimizden bil-cümle ‘Osmanlılar bir ders-i intibâh olarak bâ’demâ samîmiyetle birbirlerine sarılırlar ve asıl büyük düşmanları cehâlete karşı ‘lân-ı harb ederler. ...”

Naci, “Niçin Mağlub Olduk?”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 435, 24 Teşrinisâni 1328 (7 December 1912), p. 1.

292 Naci, “Milletin Mevcudiyeti ve Tebdil-i Vükela”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 449, 12 Kanûnisâni 1328 (25 January 1913), pp. 1-2.

293 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisi’nin fi 10 Kanunisâni Sene 328 Tarihiyle Bütün Şu’abata Keşide Etdiği Telgrafname Sureti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:449, 12 Kanûnisâni 1328 (25 January 1913), p. 1; “Tebliğ-i Resmî”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:449, 12 Kanûnisâni 1328 (25 January 1913), p. 1.

294 Veysel Usta, *Balkan Harbinde 87. Alay – Trabzon Gönüllüleri*, Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2009, p. 34.

the process of nation building.²⁹⁵ Although Muslim refugees from the Balkans did not go to Trabzon, news about the violence, attacks, and massacres they suffered reached the city. The Muslim population of Trabzon was very moved by what they learned from the Istanbul and local press. The defeat of the Ottoman army in the Balkans also changed the attitudes of some non-Muslim Ottomans, especially Greeks in the case of Trabzon. Later, this situation would become extremely influential in the boycott movement against Greeks throughout Anatolia.²⁹⁶

1.12. Commemoration of the Second Constitutional Period in Trabzon: The Celebration of 10 July

It was decided that the date of the proclamation of the Second Constitution, 10 July (23 July), would be commemorated as a national holiday thanks to a proposal made by Istanbul Representative Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın) Bey on 1 June 1909.²⁹⁷ Afterwards, 10 July was commemorated with large-scale celebrations in Istanbul, Salonika, and throughout the Ottoman territories, including Trabzon, which by then was a stronghold of the Committee. The first anniversary of the Second Constitutional Period on 23 July 1909 (10 July 1325) was accompanied by the release of the first issue of the magazine *Kehkeşan*, in which was published an official message for the Celebration of 10 July.²⁹⁸

The celebrations of 1910 included a range of activities. The 193rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* made mention of a celebration organized by the Trabzon Committee of Union and Progress. According to the program, first members of the Zeytinlik and Ortahisar clubs visited each other and then all of the club members joined Freedom School students and marched to Freedom Square accompanied by a military band. After the speeches and celebratory events were over, they returned to their clubs for congratulatory visits. Streets were decorated with flags during the day and torches burned at night.²⁹⁹ In an article from the 194th issue of the same newspaper, it was noted that 10 July was a festival

295 For further information, see: M. Hakan Yavuz, "Warfare and Nationalism", *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13 and Their Sociopolitical Implications*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz & İsa Blumi, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013, pp. 31-84.

296 For further information, see: Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *Osmanlı Müslümanlaştırmak: Kitle Siyaseti, Toplumsal Sınıflar, Boykotlar ve Milli İktisat (1909-1914)*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015.

297 Volkan Aksoy, "Trabzon'da 'On Temmuz' Bayramı Kutlamaları", *Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, No: 13, Fall 2013, pp. 50-51.

298 "İyd-i Milli-yi Osmani", *Kehkeşan*, No: 1, 10 Temmuz 1325 (23 July 1909), p. 3.

299 "10 Temmuz sene 326'da İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tarafından İcra Kılınacak Seremoniye Dair Program" *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 193, 7 Temmuz 1326 (20 July 1910), p. 2.

of deliverance and revival.³⁰⁰ In the following issue, an article stated that for the second anniversary of the Constitutional Period there were festivities all around the city and houses of trade were decorated with red and green flags. An unprecedented number of people gathered for the festivities, allegedly thanks to the Committee of Union and Progress.³⁰¹ In the same issue, telegrams from the Trabzon branch of the Committee to Sultan Mehmet V Reşad and other committee chapters were published.³⁰²

The celebrations held in 1911 were livened by the presence of Cavit Bey, the former Minister of Finance, and his companions, as was mentioned earlier. In an article from the 295th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the previous year's celebrations were recounted.³⁰³ Again in the same issue, the full text of Cavit Bey's speech in Freedom Square was published.³⁰⁴ In an article in the following issue, again there is mention of 10 July festivities; it was reported that citizens decorated all of the shops with flags and adorned official buildings with flags and torches. A large archway was put up in front of the Committee Club on Uzun Sokak where an oil painting depicting a battleship that represented Ottoman power had been hung and all of the windows of the club building had been decorated with flags. Governor Bekir Sami Bey, former Minister of Finance Cavit Bey, and Committee headquarter member Ömer Naci Bey attended the military parade in Freedom Square. Also, the Trabzon clergy, along with Greek and Armenian religious leaders, Trabzon representatives, city dignitaries, and Committee Club members attended the ceremony. Afterwards, Governor Bekir Sami Bey accepted congratulatory visits at the city hall and then went to Zağnos to officially open a new road to the district of Eksotha. As all of the buildings had been decorated with torches and oil lamps, it was said that at night Trabzon had become a city of lights. It was reported that the military band gave a concert in Kavak Square in front of the Governorship and Municipality buildings, and then played homeland and army marches in front

300 M.S., "On Temmuzdan On Temmuza", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 194, 10 Temmuz 1326 (23 July 1910), pp. 2-3.

301 Naci, "On Temmuz Şenlikleri Münasebetiyle", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 195, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910), p. 1.

302 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Trabzon Hey'et-i Merkeziyesi Tarafından İy-d-i Milli Münasebetiyle Hazret-i Hilafetpenahiye Keşide Edilen Tebrik Telgrafı Sureti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 195, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910), p. 1; "Trabzon İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nden Tebrik", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 195, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910), p. 1.

303 "On Temmuzdan On Temmuza", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 295, 10 Temmuz 1327 (23 July 1911), pp. 2-3.

304 "Tarihi Bir Gün", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 295, 10 Temmuz 1327 (23 July 1911), pp. 3-4.

of the Committee Club.³⁰⁵ The magazine *Envar-ı Vicdan* also noted that the celebrations were quite lively.³⁰⁶ An article from the 300th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* offered a detailed analysis of the three years that had passed since the proclamation of constitutionalism.³⁰⁷

1.13. Governors and Incidents

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, former governor of Trabzon Ferit Bey was relieved of duty due to public pressure and he was replaced by the elderly Arifi Paşa in August 1908. Arifi Paşa was incapable of carrying out his duties efficiently due to old age and illness, so Ahmet Faik Hurşit (Günday) Bey, a member of the retinue of the governor of Trabzon, handled the city's affairs.³⁰⁸ Arifi Paşa was the first administrative officer appointed to the position of governor by the constitutional government and he served as the governor of Trabzon until November 1909, when he was replaced by Mustafa Bey, who had been working at the *Şura-yı Devlet* (State Council) for many years.³⁰⁹ After some time, Mustafa Bey started suffering from severe kidney problems, and with the approval of the *Sadaret* (Grand Viziership) he departed for Istanbul, leaving his post to the Commander of the Trabzon Squadron.³¹⁰ In the 245th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* dated 28 January 1911 (15 Kanûnisânî 1326), it was reported that the governor of Van, Bekir Sami Bey,³¹¹ had been appointed as the governor of Trabzon and he arrived in the city from Istanbul on a German ship.³¹² Bekir Sami Bey was efficient in his work and inspected the western districts of Trabzon, which were reported to be exemplary new administrative models brought about by constitutionalism. By visiting the area, the governor was able to listen to the problems of citizens

305 "On Temmuz Şenlikleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 296, 13 Temmuz 1327 (26 July 1911), p. 2.

306 "Osmanlıların Milli ve Büyük Bayramı 10 Temmuz", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 97, 15 Temmuz 1327 (28 July 1911), p. 1.

307 Naci, "Üç Senelik Hayat-ı Meşrutiyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 300, 27 Temmuz 1327 (9 August 1911), p. 1.

308 Günday, *ibid.*, p. 11.

309 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 2 December 1909, pp. 125-126.

310 BOA., DH. MTV., 7-2, 24. N. 1328 (29 September 1910).

311 Bekir Sami (Kunduk) Bey worked as a government official in various positions during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. After 1908, he held a number of positions and joined the Nationalist Movement after the First World War, becoming the first Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first cabinet established in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bekir-sami-kunduk_un_-ozgecmisi.tr.mfa, access date: 25 April 2016).

312 "Muvasalat-ı Vilayetpenahı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 245, 15 Kanûnisânî 1326 (28 January 1911), p. 1.

in situ and see whether or not the system was working effectively.³¹³ Another article about Bekir Sami Bey appears in the 301st issue of the newspaper, according to which the governor of Trabzon had been promoted to the position of governor of Tripoli just before the Italian invasion but he had been unable to take on his new duties because of the occupation. The people of Trabzon organized a rally in Freedom Square to press for the governor to continue his work in Trabzon.³¹⁴ In its 99th issue, *Envar-ı Vicdan* announced the new appointment of Bekir Sami Bey with the headline “We Lost a Governor.” This piece of news illustrates the displeasure that the government’s appointment caused and how it was a major loss for Trabzon.³¹⁵ Bekir Sami Bey issued a statement thanking the people of Trabzon and asked them to help further his efforts.³¹⁶ It is notable that people organized a rally to stop the relocation of a popular governor, as it demonstrates that the governor was accepted by the people as well dignitaries and the local press. As a result of publications in local newspapers and magazines, especially those with Unionist tendencies, a rally was held in Trabzon, which is a striking phenomenon on its own. Another person who served as governor in Trabzon and then left office with some amount of public outcry during the Second Constitutional Period was Süleyman Nazif Bey.³¹⁷ In some articles in the 308th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* it was reported that Süleyman Nazif Bey arrived at Trabzon’s port on a German boat.³¹⁸ A number of odd events occurred when Süleyman Nazif Bey was governor of Trabzon, as a result of which he was removed from his position. According to an article in

313 Naci, “Meşrutiyetin Tecelliyatı”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 284, 1 Haziran 1327 (14 June 1911), p. 1.

314 “Miting”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 301, 30 Temmuz 1327 (12 August 1911), p. 2.

315 “Valiyi Kaçdı”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 99, 29 Temmuz 1327 (11 August 1911, inside cover.

316 “Şu’un: Veda”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 100, 5 Ağustos 1327 (18 August 1911), inside cover.

317 Süleyman Nazif Bey (1869-1927) was a poet, writer, and journalist. He escaped to Paris and joined the Young Turks during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. He wrote columns that were critical of the sultan for *Meşveret* newspaper. Later, he returned to Istanbul and was given the position of secretary of the governor of Bursa when he was exiled there. After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, he resigned from the post and returned to Istanbul, where he started to work as a journalist. Because his articles were critical of the Committee of Union and Progress, he was exiled from Istanbul and served as the governor of Basra (1909), Kastamonu (1910), Trabzon (1911), Musul (1913) and Baghdad (1914). After World War I, he supported the Nationalist Movement and became famous for an article titled “Kara Gün,” which protested the occupation of Istanbul by Allied Forces. He was then exiled to Malta by the British occupation authorities.

Muhammed Gür, “Süleyman Nazif”, *DİA, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları*, vol: 38, 2010, pp. 92-94.

318 “Süleyman Nazif Bey”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 308, 24 Ağustos 1327 (6 September 1911), p. 1.

the 112th issue of *Envar-ı Vicdan*, a shoemaker named Ardaş got drunk in the district of Taksim and shot a few rounds into the air. Salih Efendi, an off-duty police officer, heard the gunshots and chased the drunken gunman. When they were passing by the house of the governor, Süleyman Nazif Bey accused Salih of being the shooter and had him beaten. Unable to explain the situation in all the tumult, police officer Salih took the beating but the next day he filed a complaint against the governor. Süleyman Nazif Bey was unable to stop the case from going to trial and he refrained from signing the subpoena. He also accused Police Commissioner Saki Bey of conspiring against him and complained about him to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, asking for his removal from office. In the meantime, Süleyman Nazif Bey assigned a deputy to the Police Commissioner's post. The Police Commissioner stated he would not leave his post unless ordered to do so by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.³¹⁹ *Envar-ı Vicdan* reported in its following issue that Governor Süleyman Nazif Bey was sentenced to ten days in prison for the case brought against him by police officer Salih Efendi.³²⁰ Rumours began to spread that Süleyman Nazif Bey might be removed from office and replaced by the former governor, Bekir Sami Bey.³²¹ In the 115th issue of *Envar-ı Vicdan*, it was reported that State Inspector Haydar Bey had gone to Trabzon to settle the dispute between Governor Süleyman Nazif Bey and Police Commissioner Saki Bey.³²²

Later, the Ministry of Internal Affairs published a statement in newspapers saying that Süleyman Nazif Bey had been summoned to Istanbul where better use could be made of his knowledge and experience.³²³ Bekir Sami Bey, who was reappointed as governor, went to Trabzon on the ship *Gülcemal*.³²⁴ However, Bekir Sami Bey's second term as governor was short-lived, as he was relieved of duty by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the grounds that he opposed the

319 "Meşrutiyet Panoramalarından: Vali Beyin Polisi Darbı", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 112, 3 Kanûnisâni 1327 (16 January 1912), inside cover.

320 "Vali Beyin Mahkûmiyeti", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 113, 10 Kanûnisâni 1327 (23 January 1912), inside back cover.

321 "Vali Değişecek", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 114, 17 Kanûnisâni 1327 (30 January 1912), inside cover.

322 "Müfettişler", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 115, 24 Kanûnisâni 1327 (6 February 1912), inside cover.

323 BOA., DH. MTV., 6.2-86, 28. S. 1330 (17 February 1912); "Süleyman Nazif Bey", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 356, 15 Şubat 1327 (28 February 1912), p. 2.

324 "Yeni Valimiz: Bekir Sami Beyefendi Hazretleri", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 116, 31 Kanûnisâni 1327 (13 February 1912), inside cover.

anti-Unionist central government and had interfered with the elections. He was replaced by the Governor of Yanya, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey.³²⁵

The term of Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey³²⁶ was cut short after about a year. According to his own account in his memoirs, one evening as he was listening to a lecture about Spinoza that was being given by one of the teachers at Trabzon High School he learned about the Bab-ı Ali Coup from a telegram. He found out that Nazım Paşa had been assassinated and the telegram instructed him to take precautions to maintain peace in the city. It was signed with the name “Talat.” He said, “This gesture reminds me of the Patrona Halil Incident.” This slip of the tongue was immediately reported back to Istanbul, upon which Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey was removed from duty.³²⁷ Such incidents demonstrate that there was a lack of political culture in general and unprofessional relationships existed between Ottoman state bureaucrats and members of the Committee of Union and Progress and its politicians. This could be interpreted as a kind of politicization of Ottoman bureaucracy, just as Ottoman army officials had inevitably become during the Second Constitutional Period. Samih Rifat Bey³²⁸ was appointed to Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey’s post in June 1913.³²⁹

1.14. Consulates in Trabzon

Trabzon attracted the attention of foreign states as it started becoming increasingly important for international commerce in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Because of its strategic location, numerous consulates were opened in the city. Even though the consulates initially had commercial aims, over the course of time they started operating politically in the region.

325 “Vali Azledildi”, *Envâr-ı Vicdan*, No: 138, 21 Ağustos 1328 (3 September 1912), inside cover.

326 Mehmet Ali Aynî (1869-1945) was an Ottoman statesman and intellectual. He held various government posts between 1896 and 1913. He retired in 1913, when he was governor of Trabzon, and went on to teach philosophy in the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University. He wrote many works on philosophy, morality, and sufism. İsmail Arar, “Aynî, Mehmet Ali”, *DİA*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, vol: 4, 1991, pp. 273-275.

327 Mehmet Ali Aynî, *Hatıralar*, ed. İsmail Dervişoğlu, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yay., 2009, pp. 111-112.

328 Samih Rifat Bey (1875-1932) was a poet, writer, linguist, and statesman. He held a number of government posts before he was assigned to be the governor of Trabzon in 1913. He was elected as a member of parliament for the district of Biga in 1923. Later he became the president of Turkish Language Society.

TBMM Albümü 1920-2010, Ankara: TBMM Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Müdürlüğü Yayınları, vol: 1, 2010, p. 86.

329 Sinan Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkânı ve Ricali (1839-1922)*, *Prosopografik Rehber*, İstanbul: Isis Yayınları, 2003, p. 41.

The 1904 city almanac indicates that the Austro-Hungarian Empire, France, Russia, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Iran, Belgium, and Greece had consulates in Trabzon.³³⁰

The consuls working at these foreign missions followed the political, economic, and social developments in Trabzon very closely and reported about them to their embassies in Istanbul. In addition, they intervened when problematic situations arose for their citizens by demanding that Ottoman institutions find solutions, a situation that commonly arose in the reports of British consuls. The Greek consul visited Greek citizens in the city during the boycott against Greece, asking to be informed about any losses of property incurred, and he stated that the consulate would demand compensation for damages from the Ottomans.³³¹

Besides officials from abroad, Greek and Armenian Ottomans also worked at the consulates. In a British report dated 14 January 1909, there was a list of employees working at the British consulates in Trabzon and Samsun. According to the list, Armenak Karagözyan worked as a translator, Saraçoğlu Salih was the first *kavas* (security guard), and Semizalioğlu Ahmet ibni Yakup was the second *kavas*.³³² Another report dated 1 July 1909 indicated that a German consulate had also opened in Trabzon primarily for economic reasons, but its jurisdiction also included the province of Erzurum. Dr. Bergfeld had worked as a translator at the German consulate in Istanbul, and he was appointed as the Trabzon consul with an annual salary of 1,400 Franks.³³³

There are also Ottoman archival documents concerning the consulates in Trabzon. One of these mentions that Mr. Domariç, the Austrian consul to Trabzon, caught a contagious disease while in Erzurum. Since he was not quarantined, the disease started to spread to Trabzon as well so the Austrian Embassy demanded that he be sequestered at his home in Trabzon, which the Ottoman authorities agreed to do.³³⁴

Another Ottoman archival document stated that Mr. Mayevsky, a Russian consul in Rize who had been living in Trabzon for many years, made a few long trips to Anatolia which the pre-constitutional era government knew about. The document emphasized that Mr. Mayevsky, who was a retired staff colonel,

330 Kudret Emiroğlu (ed.), *Trabzon Vilayeti Salnamesi 1904*, vol 22, Ankara: Trabzon İli ve İlçeleri Eğitim, Kültür ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı Yayınları, 2009, p. 251.

331 “Boykotajdan Mutazarrır Olanlar ve Tazminat”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 207, 25 Ağustos 1326 (7 September 1910), p. 1.

332 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 14 January 1909, p. 13.

333 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 12 October 1910, p. 92.

334 BOA., DH. İD., 51-2, 13. N. 1328 (18 September 1910).

had been appointed to map out Anatolia during those trips. It was also noted that, as he had been ill for some time, he was resting at his rented home in the district of Iskenderpaşa and did not engage in any harmful activities.³³⁵

Another Ottoman archival document states that the Bulgarian government applied to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs to open a consulate in Trabzon, which the Sultan said was permissible.³³⁶ In another document, the Dutch government notified the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs that it saw no need to have a consulate in Trabzon. For that reason, the Austrian consulate stopped protecting the interests of Dutch citizens in Trabzon during World War I, which was reported to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³⁷

The consulates in Trabzon tried to closely follow local developments after the proclamation of the Second Constitution. In particular, the British consulate attempted to keep track of and -if possible- intervene in the unfolding of events in the city. Such consular reports make it possible to follow the political, economic, and social changes that occurred in Trabzon, as they provide detailed information about the political conflicts that arose after the proclamation of the Second Constitution. They document the efforts of local notables to preserve their social status, as well as their desperate efforts to protect their sovereignty first against the Committee of Union and Progress and later their integrity with the Committee of Union and Progress. Lastly, they also provide information about the changing attitudes of the Unionists regarding these local notables. In this respect, consular reports are of great importance for the local history of the city. For example, critical information about the destruction of some Austrian goods belonging to a local notable at the hands of the Boycott Committee in Hürriyet Square is only available in a report that was written by the British consul in Trabzon.³³⁸

Conclusion

Before the declaration of constitutionalism, Prince Sebahattin's group, which advocated for autonomous government, was more influential than the Unionists in Trabzon, but the balance of power shifted quickly. For a while, Trabzon dignitaries and the leaders of the most important families kept a distance from the Unionists, who represented themselves as having founded constitutionalism, but later they sided with them. They whole-heartedly adopted the new regime and the changes it introduced. As a result of Unionist propaganda and

335 BOA., DH. İD., 159-61, 21. Ca. 1331 (28 April 1913).

336 BOA., DH. İ. UM., EK-67-24, 22. Z. 1331 (22 November 1913).

337 BOA., DH. İ. UM., EK-74-54, 22. S. 1332 (20 January 1924).

338 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 30 December 1908, p. 296.

manipulation, they became keen advocates of both the new regime and the Committee. The elections of 1908 reveal that the representatives who were elected in spite of the Unionists were dignitaries and leading local notables. It is interesting to note, however, that while they may have won in the election on the Committee list, they were not doing party work. Still, these dignitaries quickly managed to strengthen their position in the Committee.

The people of Trabzon were sensitive about and questioned the benefits of the constitutional regime. The press regulations that were introduced provoked strong reactions and even led to rallies, and the 31 March Incident was perceived as being anti-constitutional and led to riots which took a long time to quell. Still, the inhabitants of Trabzon formed volunteer groups to help put down the revolt in Istanbul. When Sultan Abdülhamid II was dethroned at the end of the revolt, they rejoiced in the idea of a strengthened constitutional regime.

In 1911, the opposition united under the banner of the Freedom and Understanding Party across the country and managed to get a foothold in Trabzon as well. In the end, however, the pitched elections of 1912 resulted in a victory for the Unionists despite the efforts of the opposition, who were then subjected to severe sanctions, as was the case in Trabzon. While the opposition may have lost the “big stick elections” of 1912, they managed to install a Freedom and Understanding government. But following the *Babıali Baskını* the Committee of Union and Progress put increased pressure on the opposition, especially after the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa. Also, one of the first newspapers to be closed down after Mahmut Şevket Paşa’s assassination was *Tarık* in Trabzon, and owner Hasan Hicabi Bey was sent into exile.

The wars that broke out in this period were closely followed by the residents of Trabzon. European indifference regarding the injustices the Ottomans suffered served to increase patriotic zeal in Trabzon, especially European apathy concerning the occupation of Tripoli by the Italians. Despite the fact that there was much enthusiasm for war when the Balkan Wars broke out, the Ottoman defeat dampened the spirits of the people of Trabzon, in particular in light of the fact that the city had sent a volunteer brigade which they had worked hard to equip. The Muslim segment of the population of Trabzon believed that constitutionalism was the ultimate solution for the Ottomans as they thought the new regime would eliminate the evils brought about by the old one and society would prosper. However, their hopes were dashed. Mistakes in foreign policy, wars, losses of territory, financial difficulties, and increasingly authoritarian governments disillusioned the Ottoman elite and society in general. The people of Trabzon, who once had high hopes for constitutionalism, also had their fair share of disappointment.

The proclamation of the Second Constitution was welcomed by Ottoman society and expectations soared. However, the political and social honeymoon of the first few months following the declaration of freedom soon gave way to disagreements and widespread disappointment, as can be seen in Trabzon as well. The people of Trabzon then accepted the Second Constitution regime and a great majority of Trabzon residents did not hesitate to join the Committee of Union and Progress and support its members.

The reactions of the people of Trabzon to the proclamation of the Second Constitution indicate that they quickly adopted the regime, as did much of Ottoman society. In this way, it can be said that Trabzon was in the much same position as the rest of the country. It is notable that Trabzon supported the constitution and Unionist efforts to persevere in light of the fact that the city was significant not only because of its multi-cultural urban setting and its strategic position, but also the support it provided to the constitutional regime and the spread of Unionist ideas into Anatolia. The majority of the Muslim population of Trabzon remained Unionist even after the Ottoman defeat in World War I and Trabzon supported Enver Paşa over Mustafa Kemal Paşa during the National Struggle for Independence.

Chapter II

ECONOMIC LIFE IN TRABZON

(1908-1914)

2.1. The Economy before the Proclamation of the Second Constitution in Trabzon

Throughout history Trabzon has remained an important port city for all of the empires and states that have risen and fallen in Anatolia, all of which strove to keep it within their grasp. As a result of the Industrial Revolution and developments in shipping technologies, Trabzon became an important trade hub between Europe, Iran, Caucasia, and Central Asia, which increased the economic as well as the strategic significance of Trabzon.

Until 1774, the Black Sea was under the complete control of the Ottomans, which made Trabzon critical as a port city, but when Russia acquired commercial privileges in the Black Sea with the signing of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty in 1774, Ottoman economic clout declined in the region, as did the economy of Trabzon. When the Black Sea was opened up to international commerce, Ottoman-Iran trade routes were affected as well because Armenian merchants started trading directly between Trabzon and Tebriz. Russia was concerned about that shift in routes so it started to take a closer interest in the Armenian population, especially merchants in Trabzon and Tebriz.¹

The most important factor that increased trade in Trabzon was the British desire to find a shortcut for its exports to eastern markets. Previously, Black Sea trade between Europe and Iran was mostly along the Odesa-Suhumkale-Tiflis and Erivan route—in other words, through Russian territory. In 1832 when Russia abolished tax exemptions, the Trabzon-Erzurum-Tebriz route became a

1 Hikmet Öksüz-Veyssel Usta-Kenan İnan, *Trabzon Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Tarihi 1884-1950*, Trabzon: Trabzon Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Yayınları, 2009, p. 35.

better option for European merchants. The Crimean War, which lasted from 1850 to 1853, and developments in steamship transportation contributed to the increase of commerce in Trabzon.² However, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Europeans started shifting their shipments south instead of taking the Trabzon route. Because the Russians wanted to draw the European-Iran route back into their own territories, a railway was built between Poti and Tbilisi in 1872, which again diminished Trabzon's importance as a hub of trade.³

Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, the majority of Ottoman Christians, who by that time were under the protection of European Powers, played an important role in the Ottoman economy. That played out in Trabzon as well. In 1884, of fourteen large commission agencies in Trabzon, three were run by Iranians, one by a Swiss man, and the rest by Greeks and Armenians. Out of thirty-three exporters, three were Muslim, one was Swiss, and the remainder were again non-Muslim Ottoman merchants, who also dominated the import and insurance sectors. As trade was under European sway and controlled by non-Muslims in Trabzon, the development of economic and financial services also broadened the socio-economic gap between Muslims and non-Muslims.⁴

In the 1820s, many embassies, foreign shipment and insurance agencies, and banks opened in Trabzon as the city grew as a commercial hub. In 1891, Osmanlı Bank opened a branch in the city, followed by Ziraat Bank a few years later. The Trabzon chamber of commerce, which was established in 1884, worked hard to develop the economy of the city.⁵ A railway construction project as well as an improved road were proposed at the end of the nineteenth century in order to expand the Trabzon-Iran trade route, but those projects were never realized.

2.2. The Railway Problem of Trabzon

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Trabzon had many problems with transportation and infrastructure despite its importance as a commercial hub in the Black Sea region. A paved road running from Trabzon Erzurum was built in the mid-nineteenth century, but it was poorly maintained and almost unusable. What was needed was a railroad connecting Eastern Anatolia and Iran to the rest of the world via the Black Sea. The plan to construct a railroad

2 Ibid., p. 35.

3 Ibid., p. 36.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

between Trabzon and Erzurum, which historically was a commercial transit route between Europe and Asia, was born of developments in transportation technology as well as the re-discovered importance of the route.⁶ The plan was to extend the railway all the way to Doğu Beyazıt, which lies on the Iranian border. In this way, both trade with Iran would increase and surplus products could be sent to foreign markets. It was thought that this would increase the value of those products and bring prosperity to both manufacturers and the region as a whole. Such commercial transactions would increase trade in Trabzon and contribute to the prosperity of the city as well as its economic, military, and strategic importance. However, that dream would not be realized until years later because of geographical conditions, lack of financial resources, and conflicts of interest among the Great Powers.

Russia thought that a railway built in the Eastern Black Sea and Eastern Anatolian regions would conflict with its own commercial and strategic interests, so it first cornered Iran and then the Ottoman Empire about the issue. In the early 1900s, Russia signed a treaty with the Ottoman Empire forcing the Ottomans to agree to build the railroad themselves or grant concessions to the Russians in exchange, thereby preventing other foreign powers from getting a foothold in the region. In 1907 Russia convinced Britain during the Reval Talks to stay out of the region and in 1910 Germany agreed in the Postdam Talks to stay away as well, thereby ensuring that Russian interests would be protected.⁷

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the issue of constructing a railway between Trabzon and Erzurum was often discussed in news editorials. As the treaty with the Russians had expired by that time, the Ottoman Empire was free to construct a railroad or commission its construction, which brought the issue to the foreground in the Trabzon press as well.

A report penned on 19 July 1909 by H.Z. Longworth, the British consul in Trabzon, noted that public expectations about a railroad were on the rise, but he added that such a project did not realistically stand a chance as far as time and financial resources were concerned. He also stated that the public wanted a railroad between Trabzon and Erzurum as well as between Samsun and Sivas, which would connect the Black Sea coast to the Anatolian hinterland. Longworth emphasized that the Trabzon-Erzurum line was indeed important and that Russia was keeping a close eye on any developments in that regard. The consul noted that meetings were held following extensive coverage of the issue in the Trabzon press and it was decided that action would be taken together

6 Murat Küçüküçürlü, "Meşrutiyet Devrinde Trabzon-Erzurum Demiryolu Teşebbüsleri", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, XXXII, 2008, p. 283.

7 Ibid., pp. 291-292.

with the representatives of hinterland cities and towns. As a result of these endeavours, an application was sent to parliament asking it to be the guarantor for a 3 million pound debt at 5% interest for the construction and management of the railway line. They said they could post 2% of customs revenue as collateral, which corresponded to 80,000 pounds. The city administrators wanted British firms to bid on the deal even though Russia was putting pressure on them. Longworth stated that as a result of a meeting he had with city administrators, he believed that British companies could bid on the Trabzon-Erzurum railway project but expressed concerns about when that could happen.⁸

A Trabzon-Erzurum railway project was again on parliament's agenda in 1909, and as it was accepted in principle, it was sent to the Ministry of Public Works. In early 1910, Beyazıt representative Süleyman Sudi and seventy-one of his associates made a motion to bring the issue to the agenda again, asking the government to take swift action.⁹

The issue long occupied public opinion in Trabzon, as can be seen in articles published in newspapers in 1910. One such article reported that three engineers sent by the Ministry of Public Works went to the city to carry out preliminary surveys for a railroad between Trabzon and Erzurum. They were greeted by city dignitaries upon disembarking and citizens accompanied them with local music.¹⁰

Construction of a railroad was considered to be a point of privilege for foreign companies because of the financial difficulties of the state and the inability of local firms to carry out such a project. In negotiations with foreign companies, however, the Trabzon-Erzurum line was considered to be secondary.¹¹ A later piece of news reported that the Ottoman government had attempted to borrow money from France for the construction of railway lines between Samsun and Sivas and Erzurum and Van, and that Sadrazam Hakkı Paşa and the Minister of Finance, Cavid Bey, went to Paris to strike a deal.¹² The dignitaries of Trabzon immediately understood that the Trabzon-Erzurum line was not going to be built. Mayor Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Bey sent a telegram to *Sadaret* (the Office of the Grand Vizier) expressing his disappointment and demanding that the situation be rectified. Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Bey wrote in the telegram

8 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 19 July 1909, p. 90.

9 Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: 1, İçtima Senesi: 2, vol. 2, 26 Kanûnîsânî 1325 (8 February 1910), pp. 190-193.

10 "Mühendislerin Vürudu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 165, 31 Mart 1326 (13 April 1910), p. 2.

11 Küçükuşurlu, *ibid.*, p. 304.

12 "Asya-i Osmanîde Şimendüfer Hattı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 260, 9 Mart 1327 (22 March 1911), pp. 1-2.

how important the Trabzon-Erzurum and Samsun-Sivas railway lines were, a fact that had been confirmed by parliament. However, he went on to say that as only the Samsun-Sivas line had been considered for construction and the Trabzon-Erzurum line was postponed, he held a meeting at City Hall where it was decided that they would continue to push for the construction of that crucial railway which would revive trade in the region as well as throughout the country, and that they would not stop until they got a positive answer. He demanded that the decisions of the committee regarding the construction of the Trabzon-Erzurum railway line be taken into consideration as it would have a positive impact on numerous provinces, cities, and towns in social, economic, and military terms.¹³

The Grand Viziership consulted with the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Public Works, and based on their replies sent a telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the province of Trabzon. The telegram stated that the engineers sent to the region to find a route for the Trabzon-Erzurum line reported back that the mountain range between Trabzon and Bayburt would make construction difficult but noted that a line that followed the Harşit Valley from Tirebolu to Erzurum could be more viable. It was noted that such a line would benefit all the towns between the coast and Erzurum and that construction would start as soon as the necessary funds were procured.¹⁴

In 1911, the French company *Regie Generale des Chemins de Fer* expressed a desire to construct the regional railway lines, which brought the subject to the foreground again. Local newspapers reported that the company was going to send a committee to survey the regions of Samsun-Sivas, Erzurum-Trabzon, and Harput for railway lines.¹⁵ Approximately twenty days later, other local newspapers stated that a committee led by an engineer named Verdingsman from *Regie Generale des Chemins de Fer* had gone to Trabzon to survey the routes for the Sivas-Erzincan-Erzurum, Sivas-Harput, and Trabzon-Erzurum lines.¹⁶ Other articles noted that the aforementioned engineers had set off from Trabzon to Erzurum.¹⁷ An article penned by İhsan for *Envar-ı Vicdan* reported about the construction of a Trabzon-Erzurum railway line along with a settlement made with *Regie Generale des Chemins de Fer*. The author emphasized the necessity

13 BOA., DH. İD., 4.1-19, 15. R. 1329 (16 March 1911).

14 BOA., DH. İD., 4.1-19, 15. R. 1329 (16 March 1911).

15 “Şimendüfer İnşaatı”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 96, 8 Temmuz 1327 (21 July 1911), inside cover.

16 “Şimendüfer Mühendislerinin Muvasalatı”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 300, 27 Temmuz 1327 (9 August 1911), p. 2.

17 “Şimendüfer Mühendisleri Geldi, Gidiyor”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 99, 29 Temmuz 1327 (11 August 1327), inside cover.

of that line regardless of the cost, as it would consolidate public support for the constitutional regime.¹⁸ That undertaking was not realized in 1911 or 1912 because of Russian pressure on both the Ottoman Empire and France.¹⁹

The Trabzon-Erzurum railway line came to the agenda once again just before World War I and it was a major issue in the region. The *Şimendüfer Hey'et-i Fa'alesi* (Active Committee of Railroads) sent numerous telegrams to the Grand Vizier's Office, Ministry of the Interior and parliament between May and June of 1914, saying that the line had to be prioritized over the other Anatolian lines. The telegrams were signed by president of *Şimendüfer Hey'et-i Fa'alesi* Cemal Bey, Catholic and Armenian delegates, Greek Metropolitan Hrisantos, Trabzon Müfti Mahir, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, Hami, and Deputy Mayor Mehmet Avni, as well as members Yorgi, Kemal Hikmet, Sokrati, Osman, Sadi, and Mithat,²⁰ indicating who was on the committee. In 1914, the governor of Trabzon, Samih Rıfat Bey, also sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior stating that there was a pressing need for a railway line in and around Trabzon, and he noted that a committee had been established by the people of the region. In April 1914, negotiations with the French and subsequent preparations that had lasted until July 1914 fell apart with the outbreak of World War I.²¹

2.3. Port Problems in Trabzon

Historically Trabzon was a key commercial and strategic city as it was located on a side branch of the historic Silk Road. In the nineteenth century, Trabzon became even more important as the volume of trade increased in the Black Sea and steamships came into use. The port in the district of Çömlekçi was not suitable for large ships so merchandise had to be brought ashore on small rented boats,²² meaning that a fully equipped port needed to be built. Port construction started in 1879 thanks to the efforts of the Minister of Public Works, Hasan Fehmi Paşa, and continued until 1903 but was not completed. The Committee of Union and Progress devoted special attention to the construction of railway, highway, and port infrastructure starting in 1908 to stimulate economic growth.²³

18 İhsan, "Şimendüferimiz İçin", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 99, 29 Temmuz 1327 (11 August 1327), pp. 1-3.

19 Küçükuşurlu, *ibid.*, p. 314.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 314-316.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 317-320.

22 Yaşar Baytal, "Trabzon Limanı İnşası", *History Studies*, vol. 5. No: 3, June 2013, p. 23.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The Trabzon port was high on the public agenda for a long time. In an article written by M. Sadık for the 22nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the need for a new port was discussed in detail. The author emphasized that Trabzon was the gateway to five or six hinterland cities as well as Iran, and that with little effort the volume of trade could be increased in the city. He stated that a decade earlier few ships stopped in Trabzon but now five or six ships came by weekly to unload as many as 20,000 products, which meant that in a couple of years that volume could reach the port in a single day. It was noted that the busiest period for the port was July and December, which was when the Black Sea was at its roughest, so some ships were forced to leave without completely unloading their cargo and accidents were commonplace. Such accidents, the author argued, resulted in commercial losses, casualties, and the sinking of rowboats. He stated that those problems were the result of inadequate infrastructure. The article also suggested that an Ottoman company could be established for the completion of the half-finished port, which would enhance trade and provide employment for the people of the region. The author also pointed out that not only Trabzon but also nearby cities and towns would benefit from the port and demanded that the necessary procedures be initiated as soon as possible.²⁴ In another article published in a different issue, the author argued that a committee had to be set up for the construction of the Trabzon port and that fees could be collected for goods that were unloaded to pay for the construction.²⁵ In another issue of the same newspaper, an article announced that a protocol for the Trabzon and Samsun ports was going to be signed with *İtibar-ı Milli Bank* (National Prestige Bank) after being reviewed by the Cabinet.²⁶

On 21 August 1911, an agreement was signed between the Ottoman Empire and *İtibar-ı Milli Bankası*,²⁷ news of which was very warmly received in the Trabzon press. Articles with striking headlines reported about the engineers to be sent to Trabzon by *İtibar-ı Milli Bankası* to do preliminary surveys.²⁸ However, all these efforts fell to the wayside with the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and then World War I.

24 M. Sadık, "Bir Limana Muhtacı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 22, 1 Teşrînisâni 1324 (14 November 1908), p. 1.

25 "Trabzon Liman ve Rıhtımı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 24, 8 Teşrînisâni 1324 (21 November 1908), pp. 3-4.

26 "Trabzon ve Samsun Limanları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 302, 3 Ağustos 1327 (16 August 1911), p. 1.

27 Baytal, *ibid.*, p. 24.

28 "Trabzon Limanı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 306, 17 Ağustos 1327 (30 August 1911), p. 2; "Trabzon Limanı Artık Yapılacak", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 102, 19 Ağustos 1327 (1 September 1911), inside cover.

2.4. The Trabzon General Directorship of Customs

Another institution that was influential in Trabzon's economy was the Trabzon General Directorship of Customs. Customs was important because it connected the city and region to the outside world, and the customs organization and its work also concerned foreign missions. The reports of the British consulate in Trabzon reveal that the British closely followed developments in customs and intervened on behalf of British merchants and other merchants who traded with Britain to protect their rights in their dealings with the Ottoman authorities.

A report made by the British consulate in Trabzon dated 7 March 1908 stated that a new pier was being built by the municipality as well as a new transit depot. However, it was noted that construction on the transit depot was going very slowly; the blueprints for the port and the new transit depot were included in the report.²⁹ A report written a month later said that some progress had been made on the new pier but construction had been halted upon orders of the General Directorship of Customs in Istanbul and that an inspector was checking the pier construction. The same report stated that the governor wanted to continue with work on the transit depot and extend a narrow-gauge railway from the coast to the customs office, the current depot, and the new transit depot that was under construction.³⁰ A few days later, it was reported that new orders from the General Directorship of Customs in Istanbul dictated that extra taxes would be placed on merchants to cover the cost of completing the new pier.³¹ In yet another report written a month later, the pier was said to have been extended a little more but no progress had been made on construction of the new transit depot construction.³²

An archival Ottoman document dated 26 May 1908 (13 Mayıs 1324) stated that Trabzon Customs Director Şükrü Efendi and Trabzon General Director Galip Bey had been relieved of their duties as the result of a corruption investigation and that Erzurum Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey had been appointed as the new director.³³ A British consulate report dated 10 September 1908 stated that work to develop the Customs Department in the Trabzon port had come to a halt and a new Customs Director, Mehmet Emin Bey, had been appointed. The report indicated that the new director held sway over the customs officers and he made a speech to them which was published in a

29 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 7 March 1908, p. 53.

30 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 7 April 1908, p. 69.

31 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 11 April 1908, p. 77.

32 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 9 May 1908, p. 100.

33 BOA., Y.A.RES., 1326. 4. 25 (27 May 1908).

local newspaper. The consul emphasized that the customs officers were more diligent after the appointment of the new director and the previously existing system of tips had been abolished.³⁴ According to an article published in the 28th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, corruption was rampant in the pre-constitutional era as regards customs, and the state had suffered huge financial losses. The article claimed that with the proclamation of the constitution, the Trabzon Customs Directorship was diligent and made a profit of over 5,000 lira within a three and a half months period despite the boycotts on Austrian and Bulgarian goods. The article emphasized the role of Trabzon Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey and the other customs officers in this accomplishment and they were thanked for their efforts.³⁵ A British consulate report dated 19 May 1909 indicated that while no progress had been made on the construction of the customs building, the consul praised Mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey and Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey for their hard work.³⁶

A British consulate report dating from 10 January 1910 mentioned that there was still no progress in the Trabzon customs construction and that a new Customs Director by the name of Hürrem Bey had been appointed. The report emphasized that with Hürrem Bey's appointment, there was an improvement in customs irregularities and that complaints had decreased. The consul complained about the existence and influence of boatmen and porters who held an important position in the workings of customs and noted that Ottoman officers were powerless against them. The consul listed the reasonable demands of shipping agencies who ran into trouble with the boatmen and porters as follows:

1. Every guild needs to have an office and a leader.
2. A constant and comprehensible tariff system needs to be implemented.
3. There needs to be a constant number of, let us say, 30 boatmen and 80 porters.
4. These guilds need to supervise the safe docking of merchandise.

The British consul stated that such demands could be met only if the embassy in Istanbul put pressure on the Sublime Port and if the Sublime Port put pressure on the Governor of Trabzon.³⁷

Another consulate report, this one dated 13 April 1910, stated that the pier in the port had been completed and that the boatmen could now easily

34 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 10 September 1908, p. 190.

35 "Numune-i Sa'ý ve Himmet ve Trabzon Gümrükçüleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 28, 22 Teşrînisânî 1324 (5 December 1908), pp. 3-4.

36 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 19 May 1909, p. 57.

37 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 10 January 1910, p. 2.

load and unload their goods. The report also said that construction of the pier, which had been started by the municipality, had been completed by the General Directorship of Customs.³⁸ A consulate report dated 8 September 1910 stated that the new customs director, Enver Bey, was treating shipping companies harshly and that the Russian and French consuls had also complained about this issue. Enver Bey was accused of being incompetent and uncivil, which slowed down customs proceedings a great deal.³⁹

In another British consulate report dating from 16 March 1911, there was a complaint that crates belonging to the company Sudbeaziyan and Brothers, the largest importer of British merchandise in Trabzon, had been opened and inspected one by one. It was also noted that even though Enver Bey had been relieved of duty, customs officers continued that practice.⁴⁰

2.5. The Private Sector in Trabzon

The Unionists sought to make economic progress after the proclamation of the Second Constitution and create a national capitalist class. In this period, it was thought that Ottoman citizens could pool their capital to establish companies and set the Ottoman economy right by making it independent. Such ideas had arisen in Istanbul but they were soon felt in Trabzon as well. Various publications emphasized that it was not right to expect everything from the state and that the state could not solve all the economic problems in the country so citizens had to share the burden.

An article that appeared in the 22nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentioned that prior to the Constitutional period, citizens were discouraged from establishing companies, so little commercial progress had been made. The article argued that in the new era it was possible to establish new companies, make money, revive commercial life, maintain public works, and keep the poor from going abroad to make a living.⁴¹

In another issue of the same newspaper, an article argued that the economic progress of Europe owed its success to companies and that in the nineteenth century companies started “economic warfare” instead of bloody wars. However, the author argued that there were not many entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire who could set up companies and that merchants needed to fill that

38 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 13 April 1910, p. 30.

39 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 8 September 1910, p. 83.

40 PRO., F.O., 195/2386, 16 March 1911, p. 9.

41 M. Sadık, “Bir Limana Muhtacı”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 22, 1 Teşrînisâni 1324 (14 November 1908), p. 1.

gap.⁴² In a different issue, an article claimed that many people had emigrated to America from Anatolia in the previous five to ten years because of hunger and poverty. Such emigrants, the author argued, included not just Armenians fleeing the absolutist regime but also other Ottoman citizens. The argument was made that those waves of emigration depleted the workforce and reduced the number of skilled workers, and, as such, had to be dealt with. The author mentioned that wealthy entrepreneurs needed to pool their resources in order to set up companies, create new job opportunities, and contribute to the economy. The article added that economic progress was now possible under the constitutional regime and that the Ottoman Empire could only make economic progress through the efforts of entrepreneurs.⁴³ Such news reports and articles published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which of course was the mouthpiece of the Unionists, suggest that the Unionists placed great importance on companies in achieving economic progress.

News articles encouraging corporatization and private enterprises turned out to be quite influential. An article in the 20th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* noted that fourteen merchants had come together to set up a joint-stock corporation with 10,000 shares, each of which was valued at one Lira, in order to establish a brick and tile factory, and the entrepreneurs were thanked for their efforts.⁴⁴ Some articles in the newspaper *Feyz* announced that a joint-stock company had been established under the name of the Trabzon Brick and Tile Factory Corp., and each of their shares were valued at two lira. It was reported that the founders each bought 1,000 shares, and the founders were thanked for their work and the author wished them the best of success.⁴⁵

Another example of corporatization in Trabzon was the construction of a drinking water pipeline. Articles in the 226th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that a company was being established to pipe fresh water from the district of Kalyon to the city because the water quality in Değirmendere was so low. It was argued that people would thus be protected from the diseases brought on by contaminated water.⁴⁶ An article in another issue stated that since the municipality could not afford to make improvements in the infrastructure, a meeting was organized by the governor together with the mayor, dignitaries,

42 “Bizde Şirketler”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:158, 6 Mart 1326 (19 March 1910), p. 1.

43 “Erbab-ı Teşebbüs Lazım”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 162, 20 Mart 1326 (2 April 1910), p. 1.

44 “Memleketimiz İçin Mühim Bir Teşebbüs”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 20, 25 Teşrînisâni 1324 (7 November 1908), p. 4.

45 “Trabzon”, *Feyz*, No: 72, 18 Mayıs 1325 (31 May 1909), inside cover.

46 “Kalyon Suyu ve Şirket Teşkili”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 226, 3 Teşrînisâni 1326 (16 November 1910), p. 2.

and merchants in order to find a solution. In the end they decided to form a committee to raise funds and then establish a company. The governor was appointed head of the committee and the Greek Metropolit was his deputy. The members consisted of Nemlizade Cemal Bey, Banker Kostaki Efendi, Vasil Yuvanidi Efendi, Fosturopolu Yorgi Efendi, Arslanyan Haçık Efendi, Hacıhamdizade Hacı Hami Efendi, Çarlahazade Hacı Kadir Efendi, Kırzade Şevki Efendi, Hoştıraser Efendi, Mahufyan Onik, and Mısıryan Oseb Efendi.⁴⁷

Another project involved tramway construction privileges. Newspapers announced that the district of Soğuksu was unable to develop because transportation was limited even though it was the Çamlıca⁴⁸ of Trabzon. The owner of the Kisarna mineral water company proposed the construction of a tramline, which was being considered by the municipality.⁴⁹

Efforts at corporatization were influential in maritime trade as well. Newspapers published articles stating that even though the Ottoman Empire had the longest coastline after Britain, it was incapable of effectively engaging in maritime trade. One article stated that economic progress required the setting up of companies and purchasing of ships, as well as transporting Ottoman passengers and cargo on Ottoman ships.⁵⁰ Another article mentioned that the local public was quite impressed with ships bearing the Ottoman flag in the Black Sea line⁵¹ and yet another stated that Ottoman ships that had started to operate with the reorganization of the Ottoman *Seyr-i Sefain* Administration needed support. It was also mentioned that the ship *Gülcemal* would make voyages to Trabzon.⁵² The *İttihad Seyr-i Sefain* Corp., which had been established by Ottoman citizens, had shareholders in Trabzon as well, according to articles in local newspapers.⁵³

In addition to such discussions about private enterprise in Trabzon, it was reported that the Ottoman Merchants Club, which had been established with the aim of increasing trade in Trabzon and improving cooperation among

47 “Dünkü İçtima”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 277, 7 Mayıs 1327 (20 May 1911), p. 1.

48 The highest hill of İstanbul which had a panoramic view of Bosphorus.

49 “Tramvay İmtiyazı”, *Envâr-ı Vîcdan*, No: 108, 6 Kanûniyyel 1327 (19 December 1911), inside back cover.

50 Naci, “Osmanlı Vapurları”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 180, 22 Mayıs 1326 (4 June 1910), p. 1.

51 “Osmanlı Vapurları”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 284, 1 Haziran 1327 (14 June 1911), p. 1.

52 “Trabzonlular Gülcemal Geliyor”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 289, 18 June 1327 (1 July 1911), p. 1.

53 “İttihad Seyr-i Sefa’in Şirketi Hissedarına”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 319, 5 Teşrîniyyel 1327 (18 October 1911), p. 3.

merchants, faced closure as it was not living up to its own expectations.⁵⁴ The article noted that the poor faced hardships because of the high price of wheat, corn, barley, and flour. The Trabzon Chamber of Commerce had applied to the Ministry of the Interior to request permission to import duty-free grain but the claim was made that such a move would benefit merchants rather than the poor.⁵⁵

2.6. Agriculture in Trabzon

Agriculture was a component of Trabzon's economy even though the area was not very suitable for agriculture because of its rough terrain. Also, agriculture did not develop in the region because primitive methods were used, proper crops were not chosen, and the small plots of arable land always changed hands because of inheritance issues. Also, there was a general understanding of agriculture which saw it as a way to meet the needs of the family rather than large-scale production, with the exception of a few crops.⁵⁶

Corn, white beans, wheat, barley, rye, hazelnuts, and tobacco were the primary crops in central Trabzon. There was not enough corn, wheat, barley, or rye to meet local needs, but white beans, hazelnuts, and tobacco were export crops.⁵⁷ In 1910, 70% of the white beans grown in Trabzon were exported to the United States, 20% went to Europe, and the remainder went to Istanbul, according to records. In the following year, 70% of the crops were sent to the United States, 20% to France, and the rest to various countries.⁵⁸

Another important local crop was hazelnuts, which grow well in the damp climate of the region and yield quality crops. The majority of the harvest was sold to Germany, Egypt, the United States, France, Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Romania, and the rest were sold in Ottoman lands.⁵⁹

The most profitable crop in Trabzon was tobacco. However, an agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Public Debt Administration stipulated that the processing of tobacco was only to be carried out by the Regie Administration monopoly (*Memalik-i Osmaniye Duhanları Müsterekü'l-Menfaa*

54 "Osmanlı Tüccar Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 59, 18 Mart 1325 (31 March 1909), p. 3.

55 M. Sadık, "Fukara İstifade Edebilecek Mi?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 56, 7 Mart 1325 (20 March 1909), pp. 1-2.

56 Ahmet Karaçavuş, "XIX. Yüzyıl Sonu ve XX. Yüzyıl Başlarında Trabzon'da Tarım", *Uluslararası Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, No: 9, Fall / 2010, pp. 48-57.

57 Abdulvahap Hayri, *İktisadi Trabzon*, ed. Melek Öksüz, Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2008, pp. 72-78.

58 Ibid., p. 74.

59 Ibid., pp. 77-78.

Regie Şirketi).⁶⁰ The relationship between tobacco farmers and the Regie Administration was strained, and that problem plagued the public as well. Tobacco farmers complained about the construction of depots, licencing, low prices, disregard for contracts, and the abusive behaviour of the guards, while the Regie Administration complained about unlicensed tobacco production and the corruption of state officials in terms of tobacco smuggling.⁶¹

The Regie issue continued to be a contentious topic in Trabzon even after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, and tobacco farmers continued to rail against the oppressive Regie Administration and its guards. From September 1908 until February 1909, an intensive struggle brought to the surface previously unexpressed demands. The newspaper *Feyz* published news about the demonstrations of tobacco farmers, backing them in their cause.⁶² Female guards working for the Regie Administration carried out random body searches of female passers-by, forcing them to remove their headscarves, which stirred up public discontent. After receiving some complaints, the local government demanded that the involved parties be punished because the Regie guards did not have the authority to carry out such searches.⁶³ In the 16th issue of *Feyz*, there was a complaint about the abusive behaviour of the Regie guards and the author threatened that there would be uprisings if the abusive guards were not replaced.⁶⁴

An article in the 63rd issue of the same newspaper reported that tobacco farmers applied to the governorship to force the Regie Administration to respect the conditions of its contracts. It was announced that even though the governorship of Trabzon sent their petition to the relevant authorities, no response came, so the farmers decided to hold a rally. After the rally, the farmers intended to apply to the Grand Vizier's Office, and should that fail, they would go on strike. *Feyz* accused the Regie Administration of only adhering to clauses that favoured their interests and disregarded those that helped the farmers. The article also proclaimed its support for the farmers and expressed hope that the government would rule in their favour.⁶⁵ It seems, however, that the farmers may not have been the only ones facing problems. An article in the 200th issue

60 Kudret Emiroğlu, "Trabzon'da İkinci Meşrutiyet'te Tütün Rejisiyle Mücadele", *Trabzon*, No: 7, 1993, p. 34.

61 Filiz Dıgıroğlu, *Memalik-i Osmaniye Duhanları Müsterekü'l-Menfaa Reji Şirketi: Trabzon Reji İdaresi, 1883-1914*, İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2007, p. 61.

62 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 35.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

65 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 63, 10 Mart 1325 (23 March 1909), inside back cover.

of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Regie guards could not make ends meet with their current salaries and had asked for a raise.⁶⁶

The questionable practices of the Regie Administration were also discussed in parliament and the issue was raised about whether or not it should be abolished when its contract expired.⁶⁷ However, the economic difficulties brought on by the war in Tripoli and the Balkan Wars forced the Ottoman government to borrow money from the Regie Administration and therefore renew the contract and overlook its abusive and unfair practices.⁶⁸

Numerous feasibility studies were carried out as a way to improve agriculture in Trabzon so that greater yields and revenue could be obtained. A report written by Ohannes Efendi, Trabzon's Agricultural Inspector, titled *Trabzon Vilayeti Ziraatının Islahı Hakkında Layiha* ("Project Concerning the Improvement of Agriculture in Trabzon Province") contained ten main topics. First was the protection of life, property, and honour, with an emphasis on labour and work. Second was the need to reorganize taxation. Third was the importance of the construction of roads, railroads, canals, and ports. The fourth and fifth articles concerned the establishment of agricultural chambers of commerce and the implementation of legal regulations. The sixth clause stressed that the government needed to encourage people to set up *Cemiyet-i Ziraiyye-i Hayriyye* (Beneficial Agriculture Societies). The seventh article said that every *sancak* should have one agricultural official and that every province should have one agricultural engineer. The eighth article stipulated that a system of agricultural exhibitions and awards should be put into place. The ninth article stated that funds needed to be provided for agricultural chambers of commerce. The tenth proposed the establishment of a school of agriculture in the province of Trabzon.⁶⁹

Ohannes Efendi's list included significant points but the circumstances at the time and the outbreak of World War I made it impossible to implement them. Agriculture in Trabzon had remained inefficient for a long time because of the geographically rough terrain, rudimentary methods used, and the wars that plagued the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

66 "Reji Kolcuları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 200, 31 Temmuz 1326 (13 August 1910), p. 2.

67 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 45.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

69 Trabzon Ziraat Müfettişi Ohannes, "Meclis-i Umumiye Takdim Olunan Trabzon Vilayeti Ziraatinin Islahı Hakkında Layihadır", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 60, 21 Mart 1325 (3 April 1909), pp. 2-3.

2.7. Various Issues Regarding Commerce in Trabzon

The British consulate in Trabzon sent a report to their embassy in Istanbul about commerce in Trabzon. The report, dated 5 October 1910, contained information about a steamship line that would connect the Black Sea coast to the United Kingdom⁷⁰ as well as observations concerning import and export rates in and around Trabzon. According to the consul's report, 30 percent of the 90,000 tons of imports going to Trabzon originated from other regions in the Ottoman Empire and 52 percent of exports were sent to Istanbul and other regions of the empire. Also, it was reported that in 1910, there were 39,600 tons of imports and 31,300 tons of exports from Samsun, 18,500 tons of imports and 9,800 tons of exports from Giresun and 7,000 tons of imports and 6,000 tons of exports from İnebolu. The increase in maritime trade in 1910 was attributed to a high yield of hazelnuts that year, with production in the region increasing to 50,000,000 pounds. In the Samsun region, twice as much tobacco was harvested compared to the previous year. It was said that all of the produce was of good quality, with the exception of beans, and that was expected to improve with the coming rains. Also, the report noted that some metal ore was to be exported to England or the United States, which had the potential to offer opportunities for shipping, but that would not benefit Britain if the metal ore was to be sold to other mining companies because they would use their own steamships.⁷¹

The consul wrote that he found out from the local agent of an English shipping company that large profits could be made doing business in the Black Sea and he noted that the steamships used would have to have luxury cabins for first and second class as well as a lot of space for third class passengers and a large depot for sheep. The report indicated that every year 110,000 to 120,000 sheep were transported from Trabzon to Istanbul, which made for very good maritime business. The consul pointed out that the steamships would have to weigh between 3,000 and 4,000 tons and travel at 12 naval miles per hour in order to have a competitive edge over other ships in the Black Sea. Also, the ships would be required to stop over in all the port cities up to Batum. Since it would be too costly to travel directly to Britain, the agent suggested that the line could connect via Alexandria or Malta. The agent also added that such a line would be able to charge between 600 to 800 pounds for the transport of cargo and passengers per ship if a regular travel schedule was established.⁷²

70 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 5 October 1910, pp. 80-81.

71 Ibid., p. 80.

72 Ibid., p. 81.

The consul also stated that travel had increased with the proclamation of constitutionalism and the abolition of domestic passports, and that was expected to increase even more as the country developed. In addition, he noted that because of the boycott, Greek cargo and passengers were carried by other lines but he stated that it was a temporary situation.⁷³

The information in the consul's report indicates that maritime trade on a Black Sea line through Alexandria or Malta indeed had the potential to prove profitable for Britain. The temporary boycott on Greek ships had arisen because of the Crete issue, and the Black Sea trade had changed hands, so the introduction of a British shipping company in the region at that point was considered a smart move. Also, the report makes it clear what kinds of preparations Britain made before launching an enterprise.

In that era, however, epidemics, especially cholera, had proven to be problematic for the commercial life of Trabzon. A newspaper article reported that people had retreated to the villages because of a cholera epidemic and that shops and businesses were closed. That was why commercial life in Trabzon almost came to a halt at one point. Afterwards, the authorities increased preventive measures in order to revive trade in the city.⁷⁴

Some news stories about the boatmen in Trabzon indicated that they wanted to organize so they could increase their bargaining power because they had difficulty making ends meet, but reactions were fierce.⁷⁵ Another article noted that boatmen pooled their money and collected 600 lira under the leadership of Yahya Kâhya⁷⁶ to donate to the military, navy, and the needy, as well as to save the schools in the districts of Aya Filibo and İskenderpaşa, as they were

73 Ibid.

74 Naci, "Şehrimizde Buhran-ı Ticaret," *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 214 18 Eylül 1326 (1 October 1910), p. 1.

75 Umum Kayıkçı Esnafı, "Sergüzeşt ve Temenniyatımız: Vaki' olan Hücumlara", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 194, 10 Temmuz 1326 (23 July 1910), p. 4.

76 Yahya Kâhya (1885-1922) was a member of a branch of Karaosmanoğlu family from Manisa which had settled in Trabzon. He was elected as the leader of the boatmen in Trabzon when he was just seventeen years old. He had become an important figure for the Unionists in Trabzon as the leader of the boatmen who had control of the port trade. He was very active in the boycotts against Austria, Bulgaria, and Greece. He was also very active during the Balkan Wars. He also took part in some operations carried out by the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) during World War I. He was suspected of killing Mustafa Suphi, one of the leaders of Turkish Communist Party and his associates, during the National Struggle for Independence. Yahya Kahya supported Enver Paşa against Mustafa Kemal Paşa during the National Struggle. He was assassinated on 3 July 1922. For further information, see: Uğur Üçüncü, *Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Trabzon'da İttihatçı Bir Sima: Kâhya Yahya*, Trabzon: Serander Yayınevi, 2015.

about to be closed.⁷⁷ Because they were guilds, porters, boatmen, and bargemen were under Kara Kemal's control in Istanbul and made up the street force of the Unionists. Under the leadership of Yahya Kahya, the boatmen in Trabzon were the Unionists' brawn, and as such they controlled and monopolized the loading of ships and transport. Yahya Kâhya was an ardent supporter of the Committee, and as with the case of the boycott, they influenced politics in Trabzon.

As the municipality did not have the budget to install telephone lines from the governorship of Trabzon to the city hall, customs office, port administration, precincts, and chamber of commerce, Mösyö Sani, who was a music aficionado, gave a concert at the theatre hall in Tuzluçeşme and the revenue from the concert went to the installation of that phone line.⁷⁸ However, six months after work had begun, only a few points in the city were connected, which provoked reactions.⁷⁹

During the constitutional period, the municipality of Trabzon did not make much progress. Numerous news articles reported about unlit streets, muddy roads, unsupervised bakeries, and a lack of phone lines, so it can be inferred that many projects never saw the light of day because of insufficient funds and technical difficulties. In short, the dynamism of the Unionists in coming up with projects was not commensurate with their ability to complete them.

2.8. Boycotts in Trabzon:

2.8.1. Boycott against Austria and Bulgaria

On 24 July 1908, after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the Ottoman Empire faced numerous foreign policy problems. On 5 October 1908, the Bulgarian Principality declared independence and on 6 October 1908 the Austro-Hungarian Empire announced that it was annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina as it had controlled it *de facto* since the 1878 Berlin Treaty. This shocked the Unionists as they believed that the constitutional regime would solve many of the empire's problems.

The Ottoman Empire did not recognize these political *fait accompli* and protested them. However, it was not deemed possible to wage war at a time

77 "Kayıkçıların Ma'arife Büyük Bir Mu'aveneti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 320, 8 Teşrinievvel 1327 (21 October 1911), p. 2.

78 "Telefon Tesisi ve Konser", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 172, 24 Nisan 1236 (7 May 1910), p. 1.

79 "Aylar Geçti, Telefon Te'sis Edilemiyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 306, 17 Ağustos 1327 (30 August 1911), pp. 1-2.

when the new regime was being established. All of these political developments, which resulted in boycotts against Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary through the manipulation of the Unionists, were protested by Ottoman society. The Committee of Union and Progress used the press as well as civil societies to create an agenda regarding the boycotts and mobilize society.

The boycotts spread across the empire, bringing together many different segments of society. Ranging from port workers to merchants and from officials to journalists, Ottoman citizens from all walks of life participated in them. People had a chance to express themselves through this social movement and create a strong sense of public opinion.⁸⁰

The 1908 Ottoman Boycott quickly formed its own organizations, the Economic Warfare Society (*Harb-i İktisadi Cemiyeti*) and Boycott Society (*Boykotaj Cemiyeti*). The former was mostly a civil society that tried to spread the boycott movement to different parts of the empire as well as to different social groups whereas the latter was organized by merchants who refused to buy or import Austrian and Bulgarian goods.⁸¹

The Boycott Society tried several times to organize and mobilize merchants and the public around the boycott movement, and in doing so channel street rallies to a less dangerous arena. Since the leaders of the boycotts sought to involve merchants and port workers in order to make them more effective, those two occupations were usually targeted for action, particularly the latter.⁸²

Newspapers, magazines, posters, meetings, conferences, and rallies made a significant impact in a short period of time and an effective boycott movement was launched against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. The boycott had a greater impact on Austria, which had more commercial ties to the Ottoman Empire than Bulgaria. The increasing cost of the boycott movement brought Austria to the negotiating table while strengthening the bargaining power of the Ottoman government.

As a result of negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Austria, the latter agreed to pay 2.5 million Turkish pounds in remuneration for Bosnia-Herzegovina and signed the agreement on 26 February 1909. The negotiations with Bulgaria came to an impasse on account of remunerations, so Russia stepped in and suggested that the remainder of remunerations the Ottomans had to pay for the 1877-78 Russo-Ottoman War be counted as compensation for the

80 Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, 1908 *Osmanlı Boykotu: Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004, p. 35.

81 Ibid., p. 44.

82 Ibid., p. 317.

amount to be paid by the Bulgarians. The treaty signed on 23 April 1909 was approved by the Ottoman parliament, thus ending the crisis with Bulgaria.⁸³

2.8.1.1. The Impact of the 1908 Boycott on Trabzon

The boycott was implemented quite effectively in Trabzon. Austro-Hungarian goods shipped down the Danube and across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea ended up in Trabzon, making up a large part of the commercial life of the city. Two telegrams that the governor Arifi Paşa sent to the Grand Vizier's Office offer the first clues about the boycott in Trabzon. In the first telegram, Arifi Paşa announced that the people of Trabzon were invited to a rally in Freedom Square by the Trabzon branch of Committee of Union and Progress because of a telegram sent by the headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonika when the Bulgarian Principality and Austro-Hungarian Empire broke the conditions of the 1878 Berlin Treaty. He added that the governorship had taken all necessary measures to prevent any upheaval.⁸⁴ In the second telegram, he mentioned the peaceful rally where three thousand Muslims and non-Muslims gathered to express their united will to protect the rights of the Ottoman Empire. After the speeches of the Muslim, Greek, and Armenian representatives, telegrams of protest were sent to the Great Powers and the crowd dispersed without much tumult.⁸⁵

The British consul also wrote a report about the rally. He stated that the speeches given at the rally, which was led by the *Müftü* and Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey, purportedly also the leader of the Unionists, were translated into Armenian and Greek. He also mentioned that the committee led by the *Müftü* sent a telegram to all the states which had signed the 1878 Berlin Treaty protesting the current situation and demanding immediate intervention.⁸⁶

The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress summoned the merchants of Trabzon for a discussion of the annexation, again under the leadership of Trabzon Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey, who had been given instructions to do so from headquarters in Salonika and Istanbul on 12 October 1908.⁸⁷ The meeting, which was held at Zağnos School, convened "for the protection of homeland and honour." It was decided that they would boycott goods from Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, and they also decided to not allow cargo or passengers on Austrian ships. The *Hamiyet-i Milliye* Trade

83 Ibid., pp. 118-119.

84 BOA., A. MTZ. (04).171-47, 26 Eylül 1324 (9 October 1908).

85 BOA., A. MTZ. (04).171-47, 26 Eylül 1324 (9 October 1908).

86 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 12 October 1908.

87 Kudret Emiroğlu, "Trabzon'da Avusturya Boykotu 1908", *Toplumsal Tarih*, No: 8, 1994, p. 17.

Committee was established to oversee the implementation of the boycott. The committee declared that starting on 28 October 1908 (15 Teşrîniyevvel 1324) cargo on such ships would not be unloaded.⁸⁸ After the meeting, they decided that merchants and middlemen would have to be civil in their correspondences to communicate their cancellations of previous orders and not sell their existing merchandise at high prices.⁸⁹ Eight Muslims and seven Armenians and Greeks served on the committee.⁹⁰

An article in the 13th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary had become concerned that the Ottoman Empire was flourishing instead of collapsing because of the efforts of the Unionists and was getting mobilized. The claim was made that through a comparison of the population size, land area, and trade relations of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria with those of the Ottoman state, it became clear that the best response would be to declare “economic warfare” —in other words, boycott them.⁹¹

Discussing the independence of Bulgaria, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Greece's attempted annexation of Crete, another article demanded that all Ottomans support their government in resisting those moves.⁹² A telegram dealing with the same issue announced that all Turkish, Greek, and Armenian merchants in Trabzon had decided to boycott Bulgaria and Austria, and that all of the Turkish, Greek and Armenian merchants in Gümüşhane supported their decision.⁹³

An article in the 18th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that the impact of the boycott against Austria-Hungary could already be seen, adding that Czechs now under the sovereignty of the Austrians rallied in Prague chanting, “We do not want Bosnia to be annexed!” and that there were similar protests in Hungary. It was also reported that Hungarian merchants demanded that a better ambassador be appointed to Istanbul as the Turkish boycott on Hungarian merchandise had brought trade to an almost complete standstill. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* interpreted this complaint in terms of the results of the boycott. Also, the newspaper stressed that products such as sugar and fez fabric, which were normally imported from Hungary, should be produced in Ottoman territories

88 “Hamîyet-i Millîye Ticaret Komisyonundan Varid olan İ‘lan Suretidir”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 14, 4 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (17 October 1908), p. 2.

89 Ibid., p. 2.

90 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 15 October 1908.

91 M. Sadık, “Bulgaristan-Bosna Hersek: Nüfusu-Taksimât-ı Mülkiyeleri-İktisadî Harb”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 13, 1 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (14 October 1908), pp. 2-3.

92 M. Sadık, “Osmanlılık Hayatı”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (24 October 1908), pp. 1-2.

93 “Suret”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (24 October 1908), p. 2.

by newly established local companies so that the Ottomans would not become dependent on Austro-Hungarian products again. The article in question even proposed setting up a factory in Trabzon to produce fake crocodile skin and pointed out that some merchants imported one thousand sacks of sugar from Marseille delivered on the ship *Pake*. However, merchants were warned not to take advantage of the situation for the sake of unethical profiteering.⁹⁴

Lloyd, an Austrian company, reported that it had been unable to unload its cargo of sugar at the ports of Samsun, İnebolu, Trabzon, Ordu and others, even from Greek ships. It was said that customs officers and boatmen worked together to inspect the goods coming in so that they could determine their origin.⁹⁵ In another example, a Bulgarian ship carrying Bulgarian flour docked in Salonika but the boatmen and porters refused to take it ashore. In the end, the ship went to the port in Pirenne to transfer its cargo to a Greek ship. When that ship arrived in Salonika, the boatmen did not realize where it had come from and carried the goods ashore. However, during customs procedures, their origin was discovered and the porters refused to carry it to the shops, so it remained in the customs depot. The author of this article, which was published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, stated that since Bulgarian merchants were deceptive in their business dealings, there was no need to pity them when they suffered financial losses and offered a warning to others who might try to do business in similarly deceitful ways.⁹⁶

Following a sugar shortage, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated in an article that just as France had managed to produce plant-based sugar when the country experienced a shortage of sugar, the Ottomans should follow suit. The author recommended that merchants from Trabzon, Samsun, Erzurum, Sivas, and Van come together to set up sugar factories instead of spending exorbitant amounts of money on importing sugar. In that way, it was argued, a staple like sugar could be produced independently.⁹⁷

A meeting was held at Zağnos School to discuss possible solutions to the sugar shortage. During the meeting, a merchant from Trabzon announced that he would import *kırma* (cut) sugar from Marseille instead of Trieste and sell

94 “Harb-i İktisadinin Avusturyaya Te’siri”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 18, 18 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (31 October 1908), p. 4.

95 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 17.

96 “Boykotaja Dair”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 22, 1 Teşrînisâni 1324 (14 November 1908), p. 4.

97 Salim, “Şeker Vesaire”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 23, 5 Teşrînisâni 1324 (18 November 1908), p. 1.

it at cost just to serve citizens' needs. His announcement was roundly praised by the participants of the meeting.⁹⁸

However, an article in *Feyz* objected, calling that particular merchant a scoundrel. They said they investigated the situation and found out that merchants who claimed to sell sugar without making any profit would actually make at least 5 *kuruş* profit per kilo and thus monopolize the business on the basis of their claims since the other merchants at the meeting did not agree to the 'non-profit' sugar import scheme. Also, *Feyz* noted that it would be foolhardy to buy into the merchant's deception.⁹⁹

Following the lead of *Feyz*, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported on the merchant in question and accused *Feyz* of misinforming the public, defending the merchant by publishing a copy of the invoice sent by the sugar supplier.¹⁰⁰ *Feyz* countered that its claims were indeed true,¹⁰¹ so *Trabzon'da Meşveret* repeated that *Feyz* had misinformed and misled the public, claiming that their investigation had shed light on the issue.¹⁰² Most likely, the merchant was in fact affiliated with the Unionists' Trabzon branch since *Trabzon'da Meşveret* had defended him.

An article published in the 28th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* claimed that the boycott had started to take effect in Austria and should be maintained.¹⁰³ *Feyz* announced its appreciation of the boatmen's support for the boycott.¹⁰⁴ It was reported in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* that the people of Trabzon cared deeply about their homeland and honour, and that one evening over 300 people showed up at the Ottoman Club chanting "Long live the boycott!" They then expressed their satisfaction with the boycott against Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian goods in an announcement made to the Committee.¹⁰⁵ Other articles dealing

98 "Marsilya Kıрма Şekeri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 20, 25 Teşrinievvel 1324 (7 November 1908), p. 4.

99 "Şeker Mes'esi", *Feyz*, No: 28, 31 Teşrinievvel 1324 (13 November 1908), pp. 3-4.

100 "Şeker Mes'esini Şeker Gibi Halledelim", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 23, 5 Teşrinisâni 1324 (18 November 1908), p. 2.

101 "Meşveretin Şeker İtirazına", *Feyz*, No: 30, 7 Teşrinisâni 1324 (20 November 1908), pp. 3-4.

102 "Şeker İş Şekerleşti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 25, 12 Teşrinisâni 1324 (25 November 1908), p. 4.

103 "Aman Sebat, Acısı Duyulmaya Başlamış", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 28, 22 Teşrinisâni 1324 (7 December 1908), p. 1.

104 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 38, 5 Kanûnievvel 1324 (18 December 1908), p. 4.

105 "Boykotaj ve Muhabbetperveran-ı Vatan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), pp. 2-3.

with the issue mentioned that bargemen, porters, and boatmen had taken an oath to take the boycott to a new level.¹⁰⁶

Despite the government's calls to end the boycott, the Unionists in Trabzon remained resolute, just like in Istanbul, and continued the boycott through the support of the dock workers. The Trabzon branch of the *German Levant Line* announced that the boycott in Trabzon was more effective than the one in Izmir and that during the month of November, no Austro-Hungarian goods were unloaded from their ships.¹⁰⁷

On 3 December 1908, the Istanbul, Salonika, and Trabzon boycott committees decided that they would treat cargo from the Izmir Port as foreign merchandise if the workers there did not go along with the boycott. The same day, a porter who was specially hired to carry some Austro-Hungarian goods was attacked in Trabzon, and his load was burned on the street.¹⁰⁸ According to a report of the British consul in Trabzon dated 30 December 1908, on the previous day three bales of paper originating from Austria-Hungary were burned and twenty-five guns that had been made in Austria were destroyed in Freedom Square. The consul estimated the value of the destroyed property to be 100 lira.¹⁰⁹ *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported on the incident from a rather different perspective, saying that it had been done to teach people who ignored the boycott a lesson. The newspaper reported that a group had marched with flags and pieces of broken Austrian guns on a platter around the market accompanied by a band and chants of "Teach them a lesson!" They then burned some paper from Austria in Freedom Square.¹¹⁰

In January 1909, the support of the merchants for the boycott had started to dwindle. The members of the last boycott committee included Mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey, a lawyer, two merchants, a shipping agent, and two Turks. The group objected to the Customs Director's proposal to expand the boycott to include Lloyd ships. However, when the bargemen and the porters did not obey the committee's orders, the committee dissolved itself. From that point onwards, the boycott was run directly by the Unionists and implemented by their porters. In January and February, the boycott was still being strictly enforced.¹¹¹

106 "Mavnacılar, Kayıkçılar ve Hamallar", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 31, 3 Kanûnievvel 1324 (16 December 1908), p. 3.

107 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 18.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

109 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 30 December 1908, p. 296.

110 "Şehrimizde Boykotaj", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 35, 17 Kanûnievvel 1324 (30 December 1908), p. 3.

111 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 18.

On the one hand, they were defying government orders to end the boycott, and on the other, they objected formally to news that the boycott had come to an end. In the 40th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* it was said that some merchants had been informed of the termination of the boycott by telegrams that had actually been sent by Austrian shipping agencies and subjects. However, the newspaper administration soon discovered that an Austrian newspaper had announced that a settlement had been reached with Austria when the latter paid 2.5 million pounds for Bosnia-Herzegovina and that the rumour was based on that piece of news. However, the article insisted that the issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina had not yet been settled and that the boycott was continuing everywhere in full force.¹¹²

An article published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that thanks to the Ottoman boycott, the Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria crises would be solved more efficiently. It was reported that because European countries were afraid that a large war could ignite in Macedonia, they would favour finding a solution to the crisis.¹¹³

As regards news about a protocol between the Ottomans and Austria-Hungary, an article in the 53rd issue of *Feyz* stated it would not have any legitimacy unless approved by the Ottoman Parliament. The news story also questioned the cost of the settlement of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. At the same time it stressed that the protocol would mean accepting that Bosnia-Herzegovina belonged to Austria, which would conflict with national interests.¹¹⁴

An announcement was made in the 59th issue of *Feyz* stating that the Ottomans settled the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue with Austria provided that the rights of the Muslims would be protected and that Austria would pay 2.5 million pounds in remuneration.¹¹⁵ The following day, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the deal had been signed and the boycott needed to end.¹¹⁶

The Committee of Union and Progress managed to garner public support in Trabzon during the boycott. On 22 December 1910, American consul Milo wrote in a report that the influence of the governor, ambassadors, and

112 "Boykotaja Dair", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 40, 7 Kanûnisâni 1324 (20 January 1909), p. 4.

113 M. Sadık, "Akibet Ne Olacak?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 43, 21 Kanûnisâni 1324 (3 February 1909), pp. 1-2.

114 Mehmed Halid, "Siyasiyyat: İ'tilaf Milli Değildir!", *Feyz*, No: 53, 27 Kanûnisâni 1324 (9 February 1909), pp. 1-2.

115 "Boykotaj Kalktı", *Feyz*, No: 59, 17 Şubat 1324 (2 March 1909), p. 4.

116 "Boykotun Lağvı Hakkındaki Telgrafname-i Sadaretpenahi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 51, 18 Şubat 1324 (3 March 1909), p. 3.

foreigners had dwindled and that the Committee of Union and Progress took complete control of the city through the support of porters and bargemen.¹¹⁷

2.8.2. The Greek Boycott in Trabzon

The Greeks in Crete, seeking to take advantage of the chaotic political situation after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, declared that the island was part of Greece. Crete had only symbolically been under Ottoman sovereignty since 1896 because of a century of revolts, massacres, and interventions by the Great Powers. However, the decision of the Cretan Parliament was not accepted by Greece as the result of pressure exerted by the Great Powers. The Ottomans asked the Great Powers to protect the internationally recognized status of Crete.¹¹⁸

When Muslim representatives in the Cretan Parliament were forced to pledge allegiance to the Greek King, they refused to do so, and they were therefore barred from parliament. This led to many protests in Ottoman society between 1909 and 1910, including a boycott on Greek merchandise and ships.¹¹⁹

Just as with the boycott against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, Trabzon became an important centre for the boycott. The Ottoman government tried to stop the boycott in order to avoid continuing international negotiations, but Trabzon implemented the boycott anyways, and it did so strictly. Trabzon Governor Arifi Paşa sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior stating that a Greek shipping company called Destoni had been boycotted first in Rize and then in Trabzon. Arifi Paşa asked for directives about what to do concerning the boycott even though it was only economic in nature. The Ministry of the Interior sent a directive to Trabzon and other provinces to prevent such actions.¹²⁰ Trabzon Governor Arifi Paşa sent another telegram to the Ministry of the Interior about a month later, stating that he tried to stop the boycott but all the boatmen in Trabzon, both Muslim and non-Muslim, declared that they would unload Greek ships for the following two weeks, but boycott all other Greek ships after that date, meaning that the ships that were already underway would be exempt. Also, merchants and passengers in Trabzon decided not to

117 Emiroğlu, *ibid.*, p. 18.

118 Melek Öksüz, “Girit Meselesinin Belirsizlik Yılları (1908-1913), *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, Bahar 2010, No: 25, pp. 93-98; for further information, see: Pınar Şenışık, *The Transformation of Ottoman Crete: Revolts, Politics and Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

119 Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, “Muslim Merchants and Working Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilisation and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914”, [PhD Dissertation, Leiden: Leiden University, 2010], pp. 109-112.

120 BOA., DH. MKT., 2896-81, 1327. B. 24 (11 August 1909).

use Greek ships. The bargemen and boatmen followed the lead of their counterparts in Istanbul as the latter published a declaration in Turkish newspapers on 8 August 1908 (26 July 1325). Governor Arifi Paşa continued his telegram saying that using force would not be effective under the circumstances and asked for further directives from the Ministry of the Interior, who responded by saying that the Greek boycott would adversely affect international relations and the political efforts of the government, and for that reason should therefore immediately be put to an end.¹²¹

The 175th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* contains an article about Crete stating that Christian representatives in the Cretan Parliament had pledged allegiance to the Greek King and demanded annexation of the island by Greece. The article goes on to say that there were plans for a rally in Trabzon a few days later where telegrams of protest were to be sent to the authorities.¹²² In the following issue, it was reported that on 20 May 1910 (7 May 1326), a Friday, 10,000 people gathered in Freedom Square to express their willingness to defend Crete at any cost.¹²³

An article published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*'s 178th issue mentioned that the Greeks were persecuting Muslims on the island for the sake of the annexation of Crete. It also reported that the Greeks of Crete denied Muslim representatives access to parliament as the former had declared the island, which was under the protection of the Great Powers, to be part of Greece. The same news article stressed that the boycott would continue if Greece did not back out of Crete. Trabzon boatmen, who had proved their patriotism during the Bosnia-Herzegovina incident, declared that they would continue the boycott and establish a boycott committee to that end. The newspaper then called for a boycott on Greek goods.¹²⁴ In the following issue, a declaration concerning the boycott committee in Trabzon was published, stating that as of 14 May, Greek ships would not be allowed to dock at or pick up passengers from the Trabzon port and that Greek goods carried by other shipping companies would not be allowed onshore.¹²⁵

The new Governor of Trabzon, Mustafa Bey, sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior in which he said that the boycott was continuing despite the directives of the latter, and both merchants and passengers were using

121 BOA., DH. MKT., 2901-35, 1327.B.28, (15 August 1909).

122 "Miting", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 175, 5 Mayıs 1325 (18 May 1910), p. 3.

123 "Miting", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 176, 8 Mayıs 1325 (21 May 1910), p. 1.

124 "Yunanistana Boykotaj", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 178, 15 Mayıs 1326 (28 May 1910), p. 1.

125 "Boykotaj Komisyonundan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 179, 19 Mayıs 1326 (1 June 1910), p. 2.

non-Greek shipping companies. Mustafa Bey added that they continued to give the necessary advice.¹²⁶

On the one hand, the boycott committee tried to expand the boycott in Trabzon, and on the other, it carried out propaganda activities full speed ahead. The former Minister of Finance, Mehmet Cavit Bey, and Ömer Naci Bey, who was a member of the Unionists' headquarters committee, talked about the Crete issue at a conference, stressing the importance of Crete for the Ottomans.¹²⁷ The 182nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that a meeting had been held at the municipality, where they decided to create a volunteer brigade for the defence of Crete. Mayor Hacı Ahmet Efendi, Nemlizade Cemal Efendi, Murathanzade Ziya Bey, Kırzade Şevki, Hacı İbrahim Cudi, Hacısalihzade Servet, Hacıalihafizzade Hakkı, Şatırzade Mahmut, Haratmaszade Baki, Mercanyan Dikran, Karagözyan Ohannes, and Fosturopulo Yorgi Efendis established a committee in that regard.¹²⁸ The same issue of the newspaper reported that the volunteer brigade committee had met in the house of Murathanzade Ziya Bey to determine the necessary procedures for enlistment. They decided to organize a rally where they would enlist volunteers and accept donations. The committee was to give each volunteer and donor a document, and then hold such rallies in other places as well.¹²⁹

An article was published in the 183rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* saying that Crete belonged to the Ottomans and that its annexation by Greece would never be allowed. It was stressed that any and all steps would be taken to ensure that Crete remained an Ottoman territory, including fighting to the death.¹³⁰ An article on the same page stated that another rally was held in Freedom Square for the sake of Crete and that a number of telegrams had been sent in that regard.¹³¹ In addition to telegrams sent to the Office of the Grand Vizier and parliament, another was sent to Enver Bey, who at the time was stationed in Berlin as a military attaché, asking him to kindly lead the Volunteer Brigade of Trabzon.¹³² In the next issue, it was reported that about 500 volunteers

126 BOA., DH. MUİ., 98.1-56, 1328. Ca. 26, (5 June 1910).

127 "Konferansın Esasları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 181, 26 Mayıs 1326 (8 June 1910), p. 1.

128 "Gönüllü Alayı Teşkili", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 182, 29 Mayıs 1326 (11 June 1910), p. 1.

129 "Gönüllü Komisyonunun İştigalatı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 182, 29 Mayıs 1326 (11 June 1910), p. 3.

130 M. Sadık, "Ya Girit, Ya Ölüm", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 183, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1326), p. 1.

131 "Miting ve Galeyan-ı Hamiyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 183, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1326), pp. 1-2.

132 "Gönüllü Cemiyeti Tarafından Çekilen Telgraflar", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 183, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1326), p. 2; "Berlin Ateşemiliteri Kahraman-ı Hürriyet Enver Bey'e", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 183, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1326), p. 2.

had carried out military exercises in Kavak Square accompanied by flags and students chanting the Homeland March. They marched as far as Tabakhane and returned through the marketplace.¹³³

The 186th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* contained an important piece of news about how the boycott committee had published a list of the names of Greek citizens in Trabzon whose shops were to be boycotted. The list included Kosti Kunduzi's Pařísko Han, tailor İoniki's shop on Uzun Sokak next to the Catholic *Murahhasane*, Hotel Maranko, Hotel Soris, Dr. Metaksa, Dr. İspitoru's son, merchant Vasil Yuvanidi, haberdasher Karayanidi in Semerciler Bazaar, club owner Yanko Papadopulo in Çömlekçi, the Bank of Athens, Destoni shipping agent Diryand Efilidi, Nemse shop manager Leonidi Kunduzi, cobbler Josef Palikandriyoni's shop on Uzun Sokak, cobbler Poli Amor on Uzun Sokak, shipping commissioners Josef Livori and Givanni Palikari, cobbler Nikolaki Raemondo's shop adjacent to the Square, cafe owner Iraki's place in Çömlekçi, cafe and bar owner Yanko's place in Çömlekçi, and Messageries Maritimes policy agent Yorgi.¹³⁴

Trabzon'da Meşveret reported that the boycott on Greek ships and goods was continuing in Istanbul and that the boycott committee distributed documents to merchants so that they could identify Greek shops to target. The article also mentioned that bars, restaurants, and shops belonging to Greeks in Galata had closed down because they weren't getting enough business.¹³⁵ Another issue of the same newspaper noted that the French Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to the French consul in Trabzon concerning the boycott on the Bank of Athens, stating that it was actually a French bank. Consequently, the boycott committee stopped the boycott against the bank to avoid straining friendly relations with France.¹³⁶

A report prepared by the British consul in Trabzon dated 21 July 1910 included a list of the decisions that the Trabzon Boycott Committee had made thus far. It noted that the boycott on Greek goods was continuing in full force. The Boycott Committee banned the purchase and sale of Greek goods, travelling on Greek ships, and sending cargo via Greek shipping companies. The report stated that while Greek goods were not to be allowed ashore if delivered

133 "Gönüllüler", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 184, 5 Haziran 1326 (18 June 1910), p. 3.

134 "Memleketimizdeki Yunanlıların Esamisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 186, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910), p. 2.

135 "Boykotaj", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 187, 17 Haziran 1326 (30 June 1910), p. 2.

136 "Boykotaj Komisyonundan", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 189, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910), p. 2; Çetinkaya, *ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

by Greek ships, merchandise from other countries that were carried on Greek ships would be allowed ashore.¹³⁷

In another article, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the boycott had taken on a new dimension. It was reported that Talat Bey, the Minister of the Interior, went to the Customs General Administration in Istanbul and spoke with Director Sırrı Bey as well as the local porters. As instructed, the porters promised they would only bring ashore Greek goods brought in by non-Greek ships as well as merchandise from other countries that arrived on Greek ships,¹³⁸ which gives the impression that the government was starting to back off the boycott in Istanbul.

The 207th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Greek consul went around the city to ask Greek merchants to compile reports concerning their losses caused by the boycott. The Greek consul purportedly said that he was going to ask the Ottoman government to compensate merchants for the losses they had suffered. Unimpressed by this show of words, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* said that the ambassador's efforts amounted to nothing more than a vain attempt to console Greek citizens and that they would come to nothing.¹³⁹ In the 201st issue of the same newspaper, it was reported that bargemen, porters, and co-achmen gathered to protest Greece and step up the boycott by not unloading any merchandise from Greek ships or bring ashore Greek goods, regardless of which country the ship hailed from.¹⁴⁰ An article in the 221st issue reported that Venizelos, who had incited the armed rebellion of Cretan Christians, had been appointed prime minister of Greece. This was cited as evidence that Greek-Ottoman relations would not be normalized and the newspaper called for an escalation of the boycott on Greek goods.¹⁴¹ The newspaper also reported that during a rally held in Freedom Square which was attended by four or five thousand people a call had been made to step up the boycott.¹⁴²

During the course of the boycott a Greek ship flying under a Romanian flag sailed into the port but the boatmen and porters refused to unload her cargo, which led to a diplomatic crisis. The Romanian Ambassador in Istanbul asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to solve the problem and take precautions

137 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 21 July 1910, p. 72.

138 "Boykot", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 197, 21 Temmuz 1326 (3 August 1910), p. 2.

139 "Boykotajdan Mutazarrır Olanlar ve Tazminat", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 207, 25 Ağustos 1326 (7 September 1910), p. 1.

140 "Boykotaj", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 210, 4 Eylül 1326 (17 September 1910), p. 3.

141 "Boykot Teşdid Edilmelidir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 221, 16 Teşrinievvel 1326 (29 October 1910), p. 1.

142 Naci, "Tezahürat-ı Milliyeden: Dünkü Miting", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 281, 21 Mayıs 1327 (3 June 1911), p. 1.

to ensure that Romanian ships do not face the same treatment again. After the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Ministry of the Interior about the situation, the latter asked the Trabzon province to report on the situation and take measures. Trabzon replied that the ship *Destoni* was in fact Greek, not Romanian, and that she was sailing under the Romanian flag as a ruse to deceive the boatmen and porters, who saw through the game and refused to unload her cargo.¹⁴³

The 324th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that according to a statement signed by Yahya Kahya some foreign shipping companies claimed that boatmen overcharged passengers travelling on foreign ships when they boarded or disembarked and were rude, trying to force them to travel on Ottoman ships. Yahya commented that the boatmen would never engage in such behaviour and that passengers, in his words “as everyone knows,” preferred traveling on ships flying the Ottoman flag out of a sense of good intentions and patriotism. He added that while Greek ships were subject to the boycott, passengers who travelled on other foreign ships were treated the same as those who travelled on Ottoman ships.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

Trabzon became a very important commercial centre as it was the gateway to Iran and Eastern Anatolia. Muslim merchants as well as their non-Muslim counterparts started to play an important role in international trade and became wealthy in the process. The increase in the volume of international trade revived the commercial life of the city, and as the number of embassies increased, foreign companies, shipping agencies, banks, and insurance companies took on an important role in the commercial life of the city as well.

The inhabitants of Trabzon closely followed any and all developments that had the potential to further revive the commercial life of the city. In particular, the issue of building a railway line that would connect Trabzon to the hinterland occupied public opinion for a long time. When the people of Trabzon realized that the railway project was stalling, they came together to put pressure on the government but the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, and later World War I, dashed their hopes for having a railway built. Another major issue in Trabzon was the port. Locals stated that a large port was needed that could accommodate large ships, but that never materialized either. The failure to realize the railway and

143 BOA., DH. SYS., 22-1.28, 17. Za. 1329 (9 November 1911).

144 İskele Kethüdası Yahya, “Beyanname”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 324, 22 Temmuz 1327 (4 August 1911), p. 3.

port projects prevented Trabzon from making a major leap forward in terms of growing as a commercial centre.

The Unionists tried to encourage private enterprise and corporatization in Trabzon as well as across the country. They publicized such ideas, arguing that it was wrong to expect the state to do everything and that people needed to take the initiative. Indeed, a few companies were established thanks to the influence of such encouragement but in the end the desired outcomes could not be obtained. In addition, efforts were made to develop agriculture in Trabzon but because of the rugged geographical landscape and a lack of financial support, those efforts did not yield fruit either. The boycotts against Austria, Bulgaria, and Greece that were held between 1908 and 1909 had a large impact on the commercial life of the city. In an attempt to shore up the economy, the Committee of Union and Progress laid the foundations of the National Economy Policy and took action to boost economic growth.

Chapter III

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL LIFE IN TRABZON

(1908-1914)

3.1. Educational Life

3.1.1. Educational Life in Trabzon before the Second Constitutional Period

Trabzon was conquered by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461. After the conquest, mosques were set up in the city along with madrasas and elementary schools. According to the records of the 1898 *Trabzon Salnamesi* (Trabzon Yearbook), there were thirteen elementary schools in the city at that time providing an education to 752 pupils,¹ clearly indicating that not all of the children in the city were receiving an education. There were also junior high schools (*Rüştiye*) in the nineteenth century in Trabzon: Trabzon Mekteb-i Mülki Rüştiye, which was founded in 1858; Trabzon Mekteb-i Askeri Rüştiyesi, which was founded in 1879; and Trabzon İnas (Girls) Rüştiyesi, which was founded in 1891.² High schools (*İdadi*) were established in the city during Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign. Trabzon Hamidiye Mektebi was established in 1888 followed by Trabzon Mekteb-i İdadi-i Mülki, which today is Trabzon Lisesi.³ In addition to those schools, Trabzon Islahhane Mektebi was established in 1867,⁴ and in 1907 it would be replaced by the Sanayi Mektebi (Industrial Vocational School).⁵

1 Hüseyin Albayrak, *Trabzon Milli Eğitim Tarihi*, Trabzon: Trabzon Valiliği İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü Yayınları, vol.1, 2008, p. 29.

2 Ibid., pp. 36-46.

3 Albayrak, *ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

4 Ibid., p. 71.

5 Ibid., p. 99.

When word got out that an Industrial Vocational School was going to be established, members of the city council in Trabzon province sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior expressing their gratitude. They also asked about when construction would begin, how many classrooms it would have, how large the building would be, and whether the construction costs would be covered entirely by the government or not. The response stated that a 32-year-old abandoned building was going to be converted into the school with eight classrooms, three workshops, a kitchen, a dining hall, a garden, and some annexes. The telegram emphasized that the city had enough revenue to cover the cost of the current *Islahhane* for 120 lira annually, and that while the cost of the new school would also be paid by the municipality, they stated that they were continuing to look for other sources of revenue.⁶

In the 1890s as the number of elementary schools using new methods of education (*usûl-ı cedîd*) grew, there was an increased demand for teachers so in 1892 the Trabzon Darulmuallimini (Teachers College) was officially opened.⁷ In addition to these schools, there were also nine madrasas in Trabzon which provided various levels of religious education.⁸ The most well-known of these are Fatih Madrasa, which was founded right after the conquest, and Pazarkapı Madrasa, which was founded in the mid-nineteenth century. Some of the madrasas closed down over time. Also, there were four libraries owned by the madrasas in the city centre.⁹

3.1.2. Minority Schools

Before the Second Constitutional Period, there were several minority schools in Trabzon belonging to the Greeks and Armenians living in the area. While they were under state control, they set their own curricula. Greeks were the second major ethnic group in the city after Muslims and *Kemerkaya Rum Koleji* (Kemerkaya Greek College) was their most prominent school. It was founded in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and on the eve of the Second Constitutional Period it had 782 students, 358 of whom were in primary school, 298 of whom were in junior high, and 126 of whom were in high school.¹⁰

6 BOA., DH. MKT., 1200-15, 1325. Ş. 01, (9 September 1907).

7 Ibid., p. 73.

8 Ibid., p. 102 The madrasas in Trabzon city center and their dates of establishment are as follows: Fatih Medresesi (1462), Hatuniyye Medresesi (1514), İskender Paşa Medresesi (1529), Hamza Paşa Medresesi (1544), Zeytinlik Medresesi (1722), Müftü Camii Medresesi (1839), Çarşı Camii Medresesi (1839), Saraçzade Medresesi (1848), and Pazarkapı Medresesi (1849).

9 Ibid., pp. 125-135.

10 Ibid., p. 144.

The Greeks also had another school called the *Jimnasyum* (Gymnasium)¹¹ and in 1885 they set up a school for girls. In addition, there were two more schools administered by the Greek Metropolit's Office in Kemer kaya District.¹² A document from the Ottoman archives dated 10 November 1907 (28 Teşrîni evvel 1323) states that the girls' school in Tuzlu çeşme was in bad repair and the Greek Patriarchate was requesting permission to rebuild it. Once permission was granted, the lots around the school were connected to create an area of 1,666 square meters, upon which a new stone school building was constructed. The plan for the building was that it was going to be 33.65 meters long, 31.50 cm wide, and 17 meters high with three floors. The 3,528 Ottoman gold units needed for construction was to be paid from church funds.¹³

Demographically speaking, Armenians were the third largest group in the city and like the Greeks they were also dedicated to education. Some of them went to foreign schools in the city while others attended Armenian schools. Armenians were divided into three Christian denominations: Gregorians, Catholics, and Protestants, with Gregorians constituting the largest group, and their schools were better equipped than the others.¹⁴ In a *salname* dating from 1903, two Armenian schools are mentioned in the city centre along with numerous others, such as the Armenian Mikhitarist Girls School and the Armenian Language School, which belonged to the Catholic Armenian community.¹⁵

3.1.3. Mission Schools

Foreign schools were also opened in Trabzon, some of which were established by missionaries while others were founded by foreign missions. Among them, French schools were the most prominent. French missionaries established the French Primary School for Girls. In 1852, Lusie Fornie opened the school, which offered courses in languages, handcrafts, and music. Education lasted for a year, and one record indicated that at one point there were twelve students enrolled who were Italian, Ottoman, and Russian subjects.¹⁶ Another school established by French missionaries was the French School. In 1852, nuns from the St. Joseph convent in Marseille opened the school, which offered a five-year education which covered the primary and middle school levels. When it was

11 Musa Şaşmaz, "İngiliz Konsolosu Alfred Biliotti'nin 1885'teki Raporuna Göre Trabzon Vilayeti'ndeki Eğitim Durumu", *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 163, July 1997, p. 45.

12 Ibid., p. 45.

13 BOA., MF. MKT., 1039-38, 1326. M. 07 (10 February 1908).

14 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 153.

15 Ibid., p. 155.

16 Şamil Mutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları*, İstanbul: Kurtiş Matbaacılık, 2005, pp. 148-149.

closed down in 1914 because of the war, eight teachers were working there and there were 76 female students who were Ottoman, Italian, and Greek subjects.¹⁷ Another French school, Saint Greguar School, was established in 1875.¹⁸ Apart from these, the two other French missionary schools established in Trabzon were Pères de la Doctrine Chérétiennes Seminary School, which was founded in 1891, and the French Convent, which was established in 1904.¹⁹ All of these French schools were closed down in 1914 with the advent of World War I and all their assets were confiscated. According to records, some of the school buildings were converted into hospitals during the war.²⁰

Americans also established schools in Trabzon. In particular, the American Board of Missions set up a school in 1865 which offered seven years of education. The school was co-ed and catered especially to Armenians.²¹ The school was closed down in 1917, when the United States entered the war against the Ottoman Empire. Even though three more American schools were said to exist in Trabzon, there is scant information about them.²²

Records also indicate that there was an Iranian community living in Trabzon which consisted of a few thousand people. Mirza Mehmet Ağa set up a school to educate Iranian children in 1884.²³ The school had about thirty male students who studied Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. The costs of the school were covered by a levy of one kuruş per bundle carried by Iranian caravan merchants, and the 120 lira collected in this way were spent to meet the needs of the school.²⁴ The school was exempt from taxes as of 1895. The school later burnt down in a fire, and the Iranian consulate in Trabzon applied to the governorship office to rebuild the school. It was decided that the school building would be rebuilt on the same lot with the following dimensions: 13.30 meters in length, 17 meters wide, and 8 meters tall with two stories. The construction costs were to be covered by Iranians living in Trabzon.²⁵

17 Ibid., p. 233.

18 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 159; Gülbadi Alan, "Amerikan Board Misyonerlerinin Trabzon ve Çevresinde Yürüttükleri Faaliyetler Çerçevesinde Eğitim Alanındaki Çalışmalar," *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Prof. Dr. Bayram Kodaman'a Armağan Özel Sayısı, January 2010, p. 167.

19 Mutlu, *ibid.*, p. 161.

20 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 161; Alan, *ibid.*, p. 164.

21 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 169; Alan, *ibid.*, p. 164.

22 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 169.

23 Ibid., p. 175.

24 Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 52.

25 BOA., İ.AZN., 80-1326, 1326. Ş.22 (19 September 1908).

There were also three Italian schools in Trabzon according to some sources,²⁶ but little detailed information is available concerning them.

3.1.4. Education in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period

The Committee of Union and Progress planned to invest in education as a means of enabling social progress when they took power following the proclamation of the Second Constitution. Their two main objectives were to eliminate illiteracy, modernize the education system, and build schools in every part of the country. However, because of the outbreak of successive wars they were unable to realize those goals.

Education was a prime matter of concern in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period. The Unionists thought constitutionalism would help solve the problems of education. Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey, who was the Customs Director, said they would “sow textbooks like seeds.”²⁷ One of the biggest shortcomings of the city was a lack of schools, especially for Muslim children. Literacy rates were very low in Muslim Turkish villages, which stood in contrast to the high levels of literacy in Greek and Armenian villages, a fact which alarmed Muslim administrators and the intellectuals of the period.

An anonymous article titled “Village Schools” in the third issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* took up the matter of education. The article claimed that peasants needed the most help in Ottoman society and that there were no schools or skilled teachers in any of the villages in the province of Trabzon. The claim was made that while every village had an imam, they were not qualified to teach children. The article went on to say that the most important reason why there were no teachers in the villages was financial duress. Even though graduates of teacher's colleges were sent to some village schools, the enterprise ultimately failed as there wasn't enough money to pay their salaries. The article pointed out that even imams who graduated from madrasas in the district of Of were paid very little, and such meagre wages would not be enough for a teacher who graduated from a teacher's college. To overcome such problems, the author argued, the peasants themselves would have to at least make an effort to pay the teachers' salaries while the government would cover the other costs. The article also claimed that an education movement starting in the villages would help defeat illiteracy all around the country.²⁸

26 Mutlu, *ibid.*, p. 50.

27 Günday, *ibid.*, p. 17.

28 “Köy Mektepleri”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 3, 27 Ağustos 1324 (9 September 1908), pp. 2-3.

An article in the 15th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* also deals with the issue of education. It stated that since children could learn how to read and write within one year thanks to new educational methods, it was wrong to insist on using old methods which took three years to teach literacy. In addition, the article claimed that teachers who graduated from teacher's colleges were needed so that modern education could be offered, but the author lamented that the teacher's college in Trabzon had very few students. It was also noted that around two or three hundred teachers had graduated from the teacher's college in Trabzon in the previous twenty years but they were all employed at schools in the city centre. The article added that the Ministry of Education planned to open a school in every village in the province, meaning that over 2,000 teachers would be needed. Under the current circumstances, the author argued, the teacher's college in Trabzon could not train that many teachers even in a century.²⁹ As a solution, the author proposed that by appointing a few more teachers to teach at the Trabzon *Darulmuallimini*, the number of graduates could increase in a short time. He also said that teacher's colleges were also needed in the districts of Canik, Gümüşhane, and Of. He emphasized that instead of expecting the government to do everything, the Committee of Union and Progress should bring together local clubs with the people of Trabzon to come up with solutions. The article suggested that a committee consisting of respected figures in the city could be set up in order to start a fund-raising campaign and help cover the costs of education.³⁰

An organization called the *Tamim-i Maarif ve Himaye-i Etfal* was established for the purpose of providing an education to orphans. The members of the organization convened under the leadership of Vali Paşa at the Zağnos Mektebi and pooled their money, the amount of which was then recorded in a donation book (*iane defteri*).³¹

An article in the 20th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that Ottoman society had been liberated and made important reforms but strength in unity was needed to continue this development. Education was posited as being the key to mobilizing that strength in unity. The article emphasized that Ottoman

29 Hafız Zühdü, "Bir İhtar-ı Mühim Daha", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 15, 8 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (21 October 1908), p. 1.

30 Hafız Zühdü, "Bir İhtar-ı Mühim Daha (ma'bad)", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (24 October 1908), p. 1.

31 "Terakki-i Maarif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti", *Feyz*, No: 24, 12 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (25 October 1908), pp. 3-4; "Tamim-i Maarif ve Sahabe-i Etfal Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 17, 15 Teşrîniyevvel 1324 (28 October 1908), p. 1.

society would march to a happy future under the guidance of a system of education strengthened by unity.³²

The newspaper *Feyz* ran an article about the general convention of the Committee of Union and Progress and the decisions that were made there, some of which were about education. Among the proposals were evening classes, conveniently located private schools, the appointment of competent teachers, and above all industrial vocational schools. In addition, they decided to publish books that the general populace could understand, books that would tell them about the efforts of the government and thus help gain public support for the party. They also decided to train specialists in every field and send deserving students to Europe on scholarships.³³ Another article in the same issue of the newspaper emphasized the importance of education for Ottoman society, saying there was a pressing need to ensure that education became more widespread in the country.³⁴

One of the more interesting incidents of the Constitutional Period occurred in Trabzon as ideas were put forward on the issue of education. It started with the transfer of Trabzon High School's principal, Hazım Efendi, to Bitlis. Before he departed, he appointed Hafız Mesud Efendi as the acting principal. The latter was well-loved by the students as he worked hard for the school. The students wrote a petition with 200 signatures in order to prevent the Ministry of Education from appointing another principal, as they wanted Hafız Mesud Efendi to be appointed. They submitted their petition to the Director of Education in Trabzon, who sent the students to the post office saying that while their request was legitimate, they had to directly apply to the Ministry of Education via telegram. After a while, the Ministry of Education appointed Celil Efendi as the school's new principal. When he showed up at the school to take up his new post, the students immediately marched to the Governor's Office and then to the Directorship of Education. After the protest, a student by the name of Nedimefendizade Badi Efendi tried to console the other students by saying that they had no right to object to a principal appointed by the Ministry of Education and eventually he managed to convince most of the students to return to the school. Some of the other students rushed to the post office to send a telegram to the Ministry of Education, but they were prevented from doing so. An investigation by the governorship ensued, whereby around thirty

32 Ş. Asım, "Fikr-i İttihada Hâdim Makale", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 20, 25 Teşrînievvel 1324 (7 November 1908), pp. 2-3.

33 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Kongresi", *Feyz*, No: 32, 14 Teşrînisânî 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 2.

34 Mustafa Vafî, "Ma'arif", *Feyz*, No: 32, 14 Teşrînisânî 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 3.

students out of approximately 500 stated that they refused to accept the new principal and wanted their own candidate to be the new principal.³⁵ It was thought that the Unionists played a part in this rather remarkable incident. Feyz held the Director of Education responsible for the event and called on the governor of Trabzon to have the director removed from his post, while *Trabzon'da Meşveret* sided with the students and vilified the new principal.³⁶

An article on perceptions of education was published in the 66th issue of Feyz. The article discussed the importance of education in the progress of society, concluding that Europe had once been in the throes of ignorance as well but by conquering Andalusia, it benefitted from the high level of education and science there and was thus able to attain a more civilized state. The article also noted that it was not enough to just save the day and that society had to work hard for the future by developing and spreading education.³⁷

In an article titled “Towards Progress” (“*Terakkiye Doğru*”), M. Sadık stated that great progress was needed in the sciences and that the government had a major responsibility in ensuring that such an aim was achieved. He said new schools needed to be opened, existing ones had to be repaired, and textbooks needed to be procured. However, he noted, nine months after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, no progress had been made.³⁸ Another article in the next issue of the same newspaper talked about the importance of schools as well as the importance of opening more and more schools, a duty that all citizens needed to support.³⁹

As the Unionists debated about how to regulate the education system after the declaration of the Second Constitution, Christian minority representatives applied to the Trabzon Education Directorship with a petition asking for financial support. The petition was signed by the Trabzon Greek Metropolit, Armenian *Murahhası* (representative), and Armenian Catholic *Murahhası*. They expressed how proud they were to be Ottoman citizens, how it was their natural right to receive an education regardless of ethnicity or religion, and how bettering the education system would benefit the entire country. They also added that they never received a share of the education tax collected

35 “Mekteb-i İdadide”, Feyz, No:32, 14 Teşrinisani 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 4; “Mekteb Meselesi ve Kabahat Kimde?”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 26, 15 Teşrinisani 1324 (28 November 1908) pp. 2-3.

36 Kudret Emiroğlu, “1908’de Trabzon Lisesi’nde Boykot”, *Trabzon*, No: 4, December 1990, pp. 36-38.

37 “Maarifimiz Ne Halde?”, Feyz, No: 66, 7 Nisan 1325 (20 April 1909), pp. 29-30.

38 M. Sadık, “Terakkiye Doğru”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 70, 25 Nisan 1325 (8 May 1909), p. 1.

39 Emin, “Mektub”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 71, 29 Nisan 1325 (12 May 1909), p. 1.

from all Ottoman citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The Christian community representatives emphasized the principles of equality, justice, and fraternity guaranteed by the *Kanun-i Esasi* (Constitution). They demanded a share of the education budget in proportion to the size of the population of each minority group. The Trabzon Directorship of Education examined the application and responded by saying that the education budget was allocated to vocational schools and junior high and high schools according to the Education Regulations. He added that the establishment and administration of primary schools was left to minority groups according to the 3rd and 4th articles of the Education Regulations. Also, he noted that the vocational schools and high schools were not only open to Muslims, but to all Ottoman citizens, and that no applications had been made by non-Muslim communities to establish junior high or high schools. Therefore, he argued, the cost of primary schools belonged to the communities, whereas the cost of junior high, high school, and vocational schools for non-Muslim Ottoman citizens was paid for by the education budget. For that reason, he argued, it was out of line for community representatives to make such a request and a negative answer could be the only proper response. When the governorship of Trabzon was notified of the situation by the Directorship of Education, they notified the Ministry of the Interior and asked how to proceed. The Ministry of the Interior consulted the Ministry of Education and then sent a reply to the Governorship of Trabzon stating that primary education was compulsory for all Ottoman citizens.⁴⁰

Also of note was that almost all non-Muslim villages had schools and teachers. This state of affairs did not go unnoticed by the dignitaries of Trabzon as well as state officials, as indicated by a report dated 4 September 1909 (22 August 1325) which was prepared by state inspector Ali Seydi Bey. He reported that the biggest borough of Trabzon was Maçka, which had a population of 35,000 people and had many historical buildings and a large monastery. He added that the Greeks, who numbered more than 20,000, opened schools in all of the villages, and the priests freely conducted rituals and proselytized as they pleased. As a result, it was argued, the illiterate Muslim population, who was familiar with the Greek language, gradually were converting to Christianity but hid their conversion from the authorities by not changing their former (Muslim) names. Ali Seydi Bey said that the situation had been confirmed by the Trabzon deputies and needed to be rectified. He added that the state could not intervene in the freedom of religion and belief but the special situation of the Muslim population in Maçka required attention. He suggested Maçka become a *kaza* (town) instead of *nahiye* (borough) on account of its remoteness from

40 BOA., DH. MKT., 2867-6, 1327. C. 17 (6 July 1909).

the city centre and high population. In this way, he argued, there would be a *şer'ia* court and a junior high school in the town centre, and several primary schools would be opened in its boroughs. He claimed that it was important to appoint officials to the area considering its special circumstances in order to reduce illiteracy.⁴¹ By making such remarks, Ali Seydi Bey seemed to consider Muslims converting to Christianity to be worse than illiteracy. The Ministry of the Interior examined the report and agreed with his suggestions, and then turned to the Office of the Grand Vizier to ask for approval to take those steps.⁴²

In 1909, Ferit Bey was appointed as the Trabzon Director of Education. Local newspapers wrote about the work he was doing in his new post. In nine months, he made sure that school buildings were repaired and ready for classes; a teacher's college was opened; the İnas Rüştîyesi (junior high school for girls) in the city centre was reorganized and more teachers were hired; junior high schools in a nearby district were revamped; and, a plan was developed by which the cost of schools to be built in Lazistan was to be divided between the public and the Ministry of Education. In addition, he ensured that 275,000 kuruş would be allocated in the second half of the 1909 budget for various school expenditures in the province of Trabzon, and 55,000 kuruş of that was to be allocated to non-Muslim schools. He encouraged the public to cover half the costs of the schools to be built in Dalyan, Rize, Saçlıhoca and Tekfurçayırı. Ferit Bey also procured 50,000 kuruş from the Ministry of Education to pay for primary school teachers' salaries as well as for supplies and equipment. In addition, he took over the administration of the Industrial Vocational School and tried to make sure that all of its needs were met. It was also noted that in those days travelling preachers were appointed to villages to tell people about the importance of education. Moreover, eleven junior high schools and 220 primary schools were opened during this period.⁴³

An article in the 161st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* discussed the challenges that the Committee of Union and Progress was facing in its attempts to save the country from oppression and illiteracy as well as promote social progress. The article also made the claim that despite all the efforts of the Committee, out of a sense of envy some people published articles critiquing the Committee as a way to prevent it from achieving its goals.⁴⁴ The 168th issue of the same

41 BOA., DH. MUI., 31.1-1, 1327.L.22 (6 November 1909).

42 BOA., DH. MUI., 31.1-1, 1327.L.22 (6 November 1909).

43 "Ma'arif İdaresinin Dokuz Ay Zarfındaki Teşebbüsü ve Muvaffakiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 160, 13 Mart 1326 (26 March 1910), pp. 1-2.

44 "İttihad ve Terakki", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 161, 17 Mart 1326 (30 March 1910), p. 1.

newspaper announced that students at the *Darulmuallimin* (Teacher's College) were to do internships at primary schools in the city centre three days a week.⁴⁵

In an archival document dated 28 April 1909 (15 April 1325), it was reported that the French Embassy applied for a permit to build a new school in Trabzon on the lot where there had once been a French seminary known as Pères de la Doctrine Chrétienne. The new school was to be 89 meters long, 10 meters wide, and 12 meters high, with two dormitories, six classrooms and a recreation area. Ultimately the application was approved.⁴⁶

An article in the 186th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentioned that there was going to be a graduation ceremony at the Armenian Catholic Muhtaryan Gymnasium School, which had been open for twenty years.⁴⁷ In the following issue, the editorial was devoted to Şems-i Hürriyet Primary School, which had been founded by the Committee of Union and Progress in the Muhittin neighbourhood four months before the news story came out. The article praised the achievements of the students and the progress they had made after just four months of education.⁴⁸

Naci Bey, the owner and chief writer of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, devoted his editorial to education in the newspaper's 188th issue. The article was titled "İstikbal Bizimdir" ("The Future is Ours"). He wrote about how schools and education are crucial for civilization, and added that they would not have been subjected to the previous absolutist regime for thirty-three years if they had not been deprived of education. Also, he said that just as the Committee of Union and Progress had saved the people from that regime, they would also save them from illiteracy by spreading education.⁴⁹ In his editorial in the following issue, Naci Bey talked about incentives for peasants.⁵⁰

In this period, educational activities included sending top students to Europe for higher education. A competition was held in order to select two such students in Trabzon. Two graduates from Trabzon High School, Safvet and

45 "Darulmuallimin Talebesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 168, 10 Nisan 1326 (23 April 1910), p. 2.

46 BOA., DH. İD., 117-26, 1329. Ra. 3 (29 March 1911).

47 "Muhtaryan Gimnazyum Mektebinin Tevzi'-i Mükâfâtı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 186, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910), p. 3.

48 Naci, "Şems-i Hürriyet Mektebi ve Dört Aylık Bir Tahsil", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 187, 17 Haziran 1326 (30 June 1910), p. 1.

49 Naci, "İstikbal Bizimdir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 188, 19 Haziran 1326 (2 July 1910), p. 1-2.

50 Naci, "Köylüler Teşvik İster", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 189, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910), p. 1.

Mehmet, won the competition and were invited to Istanbul by the Ministry of Education to be sent to Europe.⁵¹

One of the decisions made at the Committee of Union and Progress convention was to organize evening classes at the Committee's Trabzon branch. They offered courses in Turkish history, geography, economics, law, French and math, as well as reading and writing to adults and children who were unable to get a formal education.⁵²

An article in the 237th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* suggests that the people of Trabzon appreciated the evening courses offered by the Committee of Union and Progress Club.⁵³ In the following issue, it was noted that the Committee of Union and Progress was involved in planning important educational activities which resulted in a daily increase in the number of schools in the region.⁵⁴

An archival document concerning educational institutions in Trabzon stated that permission was given for the construction of a school building on lots 20, 22 and 137 in the İskenderpaşa and Frenkhisar neighbourhoods which were registered in the name of St. Joseph nuns. The school was planned to be 17 meters long, 20 meters wide, and 18 meters high with a monastery on the premises. The document also mentioned that the construction had the Sultan's approval, which meant that the nuns would not be liable for any fees.⁵⁵ Another archival document states that Captain Mehmet Said Efendi, a teacher at the Trabzon Military Junior High School, set up a centre of Physical Education (*Terbiye-i Bedeniyye*) and that he deserved a medal for his efforts and work.⁵⁶

In the 251st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that on the previous night Education Inspector Servet Efendi had given a speech on history and politics at the Committee of Union and Progress Club. Following the speech, Dr. Haşim Bey from the 7th *Nişancı* (Sharpshooter) Battalion gave a talk on tuberculosis and how it is spread.⁵⁷ In an editorial in the next issue, it was reported that the new governor of Trabzon, Bekir Sami Bey, had asked city dignitaries about the needs of the province but only two people gave written replies. The

51 "Avrupaya Talebe İ'zamı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 217, 2 Teşrinievvel 1326 (15 July 1910), p. 3.

52 "İttihad ve Terakki Kulübünde Gece Dersleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), pp. 2-3.

53 "Arz-ı Memnuniyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:237, 18 Kanûnievvel 1326 (31 December 1910), pp. 2-3.

54 "Cem'iyet-i Muhtereme ve Ma'arif", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 238, 22 Kanûnievvel 1326 (4 January 1911), p. 2.

55 BOA., DH. İD., 117-22, 1329.M. 17 (18 January 1911).

56 BOA., DH. MUİ., 95-2, 1328.Ca. 5 (15 May 1910).

57 "Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 251, 5 Şubat 1326 (18 February 1911), p. 2.

editorial also noted that the most pressing problem in Trabzon was education; while roads were important, the author pointed out, education should have priority. The author lamented that because of insufficient government funds primary schools did not get the money they needed and that there was not enough funding to open schools in every village, despite the fact that they were desperately needed. The article also mentioned that non-Muslims managed to open schools on their own. In order to solve these problems, it was argued, the government needed to train better teachers at teacher's colleges and appoint them to village schools through the efforts of the public, just like non-Muslims. The article mentioned that when Commander Abuk Paşa was the acting governor, he had set up a committee called the Muhafaza-yı Mekâtib-i İbtidaiye Hey'et-i Fahriyesi which chose one person from each district to oversee education and the committee tried to raise funds for schools in need. Given the current state of affairs, the author noted, the committee needed to be reactivated.⁵⁸

An article in the 263rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that many Ottoman students were getting an education in Europe to learn about the important fields of science and technology. The author claimed that some of those students needed help and could not be expected to provide quality services upon their return if they did not receive some form of aid. The article mentioned that the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters was trying to find a solution to this predicament. One idea was to establish a committee which would communicate with students in Europe on a regular basis and help needy students by providing them with funding. In this way, the author argued, those young active minds would be able to concentrate on their studies and work for the progress of the Ottoman Empire rather than struggle to make a living.⁵⁹

In the 271st issue of the same newspaper, it was reported that for the anniversary of Sultan Mehmet V Reşad's coronation, Mekteb-i Sultani students in Trabzon had prepared a banquet in the name of *İttihad-ı Osmaniye* together with students from other schools, and they had invited Greek and Armenian students as well.⁶⁰ An article in the same issue reported that again for the coronation of the Sultan, Mekteb-i Sultani students visited the Committee of Union and Progress Club and were well received by the club's members.⁶¹

58 Naci, "En Büyük İhtiyacımız Ma'ariftir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 252, 9 Şubat 1326 (22 February 1911), p. 1.

59 "İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Yeni Bir Teşebbüsü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 263, 19 Mart 1327 (1 April 1911), p. 2.

60 "İttihad-ı Osmanîyi Temsil Eden Bir Ziyafet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 271, 16 Nisan 1327 (29 April 1911), p. 2.

61 "Mekteb-i Sultani Efendilerinin İttihat Kulübü'nü Ziyaretleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 271, 16 Nisan 1327 (29 April 1911), p. 3.

One issue the Committee of Union and Progress focused on in general was the reform of the madrasas, the repercussions of which were felt in Trabzon as well. In the 272nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, an article mentioned the madrasas, saying that they had served their purpose well since the establishment of the empire but had started to decline due to a lack of interest in recent times. Despite this, the author argued that there was still a need for madrasa graduates and the schools needed funding so that they could become beneficial institutions once again.⁶² In the following issue, another article talked about the poor conditions of the madrasas and how they needed to be reformed.⁶³

An article in the 281st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* brought up the Committee of Union and Progress's efforts to promote the education of girls, discussing the importance of educating women so that a civilized society could be brought into being. The author stated that plans were underway to open a school by the name of *Mekteb-i Sultani-i İnas*. The Adile Sultan Palace in Kandilli, Istanbul had been set aside for that purpose and repairs were underway.⁶⁴ In an editorial in the following issue of the same newspaper, it was stated that the new school in Kandilli marked an important step towards progress, and the important role and contributions of the school were stressed.⁶⁵

The 285th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the Union and Progress School in Trabzon was to have a graduation ceremony and that parents, Committee members, and education enthusiasts were invited.⁶⁶ In the 307th issue, an article noted that twenty-three students were enrolled in the new academic year at the Union and Progress School, only nine of which paid tuition while the rest were on scholarships. Youth who wanted to apply were required to bring their official identity cards (*tezkiye-i Osmaniye*) and vaccination reports to the committee.⁶⁷

An article in the 302nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that *Mekteb-i Sultani* required two lira for registration and that it was quite difficult to be approved for an exemption. The author lamented that this meant many children

62 Naci, "Medarisin Hayatı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 272, 20 Nisan 1327 (3 May 1911), p. 1.

63 Naci, "Medarisin Islahı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 273, 23 Nisan 1327 (6 May 1911), p. 1.

64 "Mekteb-i Sultani-i İnas", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 281, 21 Mayıs 1327 (3 June 1911), p. 2; for further info, see: Nicole A. N. M van Os., "Kandilli Sultânî-i İnas: Bir Devlet Adamının Teşebbüs-i Şâhsisi Nasıl Sonuçlandı?", *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol. 28, no:163, July 1997, pp. 26-34, 28-29.

65 Naci, "Terakki Adımları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 282, 25 Mayıs 1327 (7 June 1911), p. 1.

66 "Pazarertesi İttihad ve Terakki Mektebi'nde Tevzi'-i Mükâfat" *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 285, 4 Haziran 1327 (17 June 1911), p. 2.

67 "İttihad Mektebi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 307, 20 Ağustos 1327 (2 Sept 1911), p. 2.

whose parents who did not qualify could not register and that if they did not continue their education after primary school, the problem of illiteracy could not be eliminated. The author reminded readers that children from families facing financial problems could enrol at the military junior high school free of charge and advised parents to register their children as soon as possible.⁶⁸

In the 358th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that students at Aya Filibo Primary School, who was financially supported by boatmen, were to recite patriotic poems at the Union and Progress Club and that those interested were welcome to attend.⁶⁹ An article in the 365th issue announced that Union and Progress School students delighted audiences with a play at the Union and Progress Club. Since both the downstairs and upstairs halls were packed, the students had to repeat their poems and performances in both halls.⁷⁰ The 414th issue of the same newspaper announced that the Union and Progress School was going to open at the beginning of September for the new academic year and had started registration. It was added that they were to admit a total of twenty-seven students, twelve of whom would register for free. Those students had to prove that they were needy (*fakr-u zaruret içinde*) with a document they could obtain from their local administration and apply to the committee via the club branches in order to qualify for free registration. Those who could pay the registration fee had to apply to the school administration by 15 September with their identity card and vaccination report.⁷¹

A report dated 18 October 1910 which was prepared by the British consulate in Trabzon stated that there were not any British schools or charities in Trabzon. The consul noted that they had decided to open a British school but because of official procedures the project was not yet realized.⁷²

In 1912, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey was appointed as the governor of Trabzon, and in his memoir he narrated various anecdotes about educational life in the city. He mentioned Hatuniyye Madrasa, which had been restored and saved from collapse. The madrasa had been built by Yavuz Sultan Selim's mother, Gülbahar Hatun, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey was also involved with revising the curriculum at the madrasas in an attempt

68 "Evladlarını Okutmak İsteyen Ebeveyne", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 302, 3 Ağustos 1327 (16 August 1911), p. 2.

69 "İttihad Kulübün'de", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 358, 22 Şubat 1327 (6 March 1912), p. 2.

70 "İttihad Mektebi Talebeleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 365, 17 Mart 1328 (30 March 1912), p. 3.

71 "İttihad ve Terakki Mektebi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 414, 8 Eylül 1328 (21 September 1912), p. 3.

72 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 18 October 1910, p. 93.

to reform them. In addition, he reported that he opened new primary schools and expanded the industrial vocational school.⁷³

In his memoir, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey mentioned an interesting incident that occurred during one of his trips around Trabzon. As he was carrying out an inspection of the town of Şiran in Gümüşhane, he noticed a suspicious man and had his bag searched. Propaganda brochures were found in the bag, inviting Muslims to become Christian. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey wrote that this person was going around Turkish villages trying to convert people to Christianity and was in fact successful with several of them.⁷⁴ He chalked up the missionary's success to the ignorance of the Muslim population so he opened more than fifty primary schools, many of them in Maçka, in order to eliminate illiteracy among the new generations during his tenure as the governor of Trabzon.⁷⁵

The majority of Ottoman statesmen were quite concerned about the problem of illiteracy. Since there were no schools in remote mountain villages, the Muslim population, who learned about their own religion via hearsay, were seen as being susceptible to the propaganda of Christian missionaries. For that reason, apostasy drew the attention of state officials in relation to illiteracy.

Statesmen considered counter-measures that could be put into place to counter the efforts of some countries to proselytize in Ottoman territories under the pretence of protecting minority rights as well as missionary activities which were seen as corrupting the social fabric and leading to social unrest. As a result of these queries, it was decided that spreading education to the remotest corners of the country was of utmost importance for the future of the state.

Some documents in the Ottoman archives made mention of an exceptional incident that transpired in the Trabzon Armenian community during Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey's tenure as governor. According to these documents, a dispute between some teachers in an Armenian school and the principal became even more complicated when some students also got involved. When the teachers, the principal, the Armenian representative (*murabhas*), and a priest started to send telegrams to the Armenian Patriarchate, the Ministry of the Interior asked the governorship of Trabzon for further information. Governor Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey sent a detailed report to the Ministry of the Interior, stating that the principal, a Russian subject, and some teachers had a fallout; one teacher took advantage of the situation to be appointed as principal and incited the students to cause unrest, as a result of which several people were beaten. Those students attempted to hold a rally but were dissuaded from doing so. Later, they raided

73 Mehmet Ali Aynî, *Canlı Tarihler*, Ankara: Türkiye Yayınevi, p. 81.

74 Ibid., p. 82.

75 Ibid.

the Armenian *Murabhashane*, forcing the *murabhas* to resign. When the police met with the dignitaries of the Armenian community, the situation was taken under control. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey emphasized that it was in the state's best interest that the Armenian *Murabhas* continue with his job.⁷⁶

Another document about educational institutions in the Ottoman archives stated that permission was granted for a school lying in ruins in the courtyard of the Greek church in Kiraçhane Village to be rebuilt.⁷⁷ In another document it was said that immediately after the Ottoman Empire got involved in World War I, the governor of Trabzon, Cemal Azmi Bey, reported to the Ministry of the Interior that there were three foreign schools in Trabzon, two of which belonged to the French and the other to the Americans. Cemal Azmi Bey reported that the staff at those schools did not engage in any activities that were harmful to the state so he saw no need to expel them from Trabzon.⁷⁸

3.2. Cultural Life

3.2.1. The Press

3.2.1.1. Newspapers

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, there was a press boom in Trabzon, just like in the rest of the country. Between 1908 and 1913, thirty Turkish, eight Greek and thirteen Armenian newspapers and magazines were licensed for publication.⁷⁹ In addition, the newspaper *İntikam* (*Revenge*) was licenced to be published in Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Armenian, French, Hebrew,

76 BOA., DH. İD., 139-9, 1331. B. 28 (3 June 1913).

77 BOA., DH. İD., 214-11, 1332. C. 07 (3 May 1914).

78 BOA., DH. ŞFR., 448-11, 1330. Tn. 01 (14 November 1914).

79 **Turkish Newspapers:** *Feyz* (1908), *Posta* (1908), *Trabzon'da Meşveret* (1908), *İnkılab* (1908), *Pulathane* (1908), *Bahr-i Siyah* (1908), *Haber Anası* (1909), *Haber Babası* (1909), *Trabzon'da Ahbab* (1909), *Kehkeşan* (1909), *Leyla ile Mecnun* (1909), *İkbal* (1909), *Envar-ı Vicdan* (1909), *Temkin* (1909), *Lazım* (1909), *Şebab* (1909), *Tahsil* (1909), *Tahsilat* (1909), *Mehdi* (1909), *Radendaz* (1909), *Lazan* (1909), *Yeni Haber Anası* (1909), *Hekim* (1910), *Tarık* (1909), *Şebab* (1910), *Rençber* (1910), *Şark* (1910), *Afacan* (1911), *Cadaloz* (1911), *Tilki* (1912).

Greek Newspapers: *Faros Anatólis* (1908), *Anezartilos* (1908), *Omanyia* (1908), *Feniki* (1908), *Drasis* (1909), *Nogos Istraponda* (1909), *Bontikos* (1909), *Esengi Drasis* (1909).

Armenian Newspapers: *Harish* (1908), *Paylak* (1908), *Gegçug* (1908), *Kharissky* (1909), *Keghtochoug* (1909), *Pontos* (1910), *Modzag* (1910), *Charjou* (1910), *Bondoss* (1910), *Petak* (1910), *Bidzag* (1911), *Pejichg* (1911), *Jamantağ* (1911).

Multilingual Newspapers: *İntikam* (1909). For further information, see: Hüseyin Albayrak, *Dünden Bugüne Trabzon Basını*, Ankara: Trabzon İli ve İlçeleri Eğitim, Kültür ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı Yayınları, 2010.

and Syriac in 1909.⁸⁰ The fact that a newspaper would be published in so many languages is suspicious on the grounds that it could be used as a tool for propaganda during the boycotts in those years. Despite being licensed, however, it either was never published or it was closed down after publishing a few issues. Because of the widespread looting that occurred during the Russian invasion in 1916, very few of those newspapers and magazines are now available.⁸¹

The Turkish-language newspapers and magazines that are still available with a wide range of issues are *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, *Feyz*, *Tarık*, *Kehkeşan*, and *Envar-ı Vicdan*. Due to their availability in archives, those publications constitute the main sources used in this study. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was published twice a week and was licensed on the grounds that it would publish articles about politics, science, and literature. The owner of the newspaper was Salihzade Naci Efendi, who came to be known as Meşveretçi Naci.⁸² As has been noted earlier, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was the mouthpiece of the Unionists in Trabzon. On the one hand, it followed the social transformation of the Committee of Union and Progress, and on the other hand it served as the defender of the committee against opposition voices. Even though it has been claimed that it continued publishing until the 1916 Russian invasion, only issues 1 through 451 (until 1913) are currently available. Those issues are kept at the Press Museum in Çemberlitaş, Istanbul.

Feyz was also an influential newspaper in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period. The license granted to Silahdarzade Halil Efendi stated that the newspaper would report on politics, science, literature, and commercial and agricultural issues, and that it would be published three days a week.⁸³ The manager was Eyüpzade Osman Nuri, and *Feyz* followed a moderate policy. Even though the paper did support the proclamation of the constitution, it occasionally got into debates with *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. *Feyz* tried to be the voice of public opinion during its thirteen months of publication.

In the Second Constitutional Period, the newspaper *Tarık*, which was published by Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi, was the voice of dissent in Trabzon. It drew attention with its harsh criticisms of the Committee of Union and Progress and ultimately became the mouthpiece of the Freedom and Understanding Party in Trabzon. The paper's criticisms resulted in an adverse outcome: *Tarık*

80 Ibid., p. 72.

81 For further information, see: Hasan Duman, *Başlangıcından Harf Devrimine Kadar Osmanlı-Türk Süreli Yayınları ve Gazeteleri (1828-1928)*, Ankara: Enformasyon ve Dokümantasyon Hizmetleri Vakfı Yayınları, 2000.

82 BOA., DH. MKT., 1299-65, 1326. Ş. 25 (22 September 1908).

83 BOA., DH. MKT., 1289-26, 1326. Ş. 06 (3 September 1908).

was one of the first newspapers to be closed down in the provinces after the assassination of Sadrazam Mahmut Şevket Paşa in 1913, and Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi was one of the first dissidents to be arrested in Trabzon.⁸⁴

Another periodical to be published in Trabzon was the magazine *Envar-ı Vicdan*. Publication began in 1909 under the ownership and management of Zeynelabidin.⁸⁵ It was published weekly and featured articles on politics, social events, and literature. *Kehkeşan* was yet another publication in Trabzon, and it too was a product of the constitutional period. It had a run of twenty-four issues and was known as a literary magazine.⁸⁶ Halil Nihad Boztepe and İbrahim Alaaddin Gövsa wrote for *Kehkeşan*, among other serial publications. Another magazine was *Hekim*, which focused on medical issues. The first issue was published in 1910 and it ran uninterrupted for two years, during which time forty-eight issues were published.⁸⁷

The foremost minority publication in Trabzon was the Greek newspaper *Faros Anatolis*. It was published twice a week and included articles about local events, politics, commerce, and scientific developments. It was licensed under Dimitraki Serasi Efendi.⁸⁸ Publication began in 1908 and it continued to be published until 1923. Its stance was pro-government and at first it sided with the Unionists and then took the side of the Russians during the occupation; during the National Struggle, it supported the Ankara government. Because it generally supported whoever was in power, it managed to have a print run of 1,095 issues.⁸⁹ Other Greek publications either could not be put out for one reason or another despite having a license, or survived but briefly.

As far as Armenian publications are concerned, apart from *Harish*, the semi-official daily of Taşnaks, and *Bidzag*, the semi-official weekly humour magazine of Hınçaks, the others did not survive for long.⁹⁰

3.2.1.2. The Printing Presses

The printing press was introduced in Ottoman territories quite late and initially its dissemination occurred through state channels. A printing press became operational in the province of Trabzon in 1865, just as in many other provinces. The governor, the *naip*, the chief judge of the appeals court, the chief treasurer, and province letter writers ran the early printing press in Trabzon.

84 Birinci, *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

85 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 99.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 124

88 BOA., DH. MKT., 1283-10, 1326. B. 25 (23 August 1908).

89 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 583.

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 591-593.

Publication of the newspaper *Trabzon* began on 13 April 1869. They also printed *Trabzon Vilayet Salnameleri* from 1869 to 1904 and continued to print all official documents until 1916, closing down the printing house because of the Russian invasion, during which time the machinery was irreparably damaged.⁹¹

The second printing press in Trabzon was set up in 1881 by Sofuoğlu Mücellit İsmail Hakkı Efendi. It was located in Meydan-ı Şarkî, and it was the second printing press in the Ottoman Empire that could print documents in Turkish, Greek, and Armenian.⁹² The Serasi Printing Press was set up in 1888 in Meydan-ı Şarkî by a Greek named Dimitraki Serasi, and it could print in Turkish, Greek, and French.⁹³ İkbâl Printing Press was set up in 1901 by Eyüpzade Osman Nuri, and Mihailidi Printing Press was set up by Yorgi Mihailidi on an unknown date before the Second Constitutional Period; it was the biggest printing press of the time. It was not mentioned in the 1904 *Trabzon Vilayet Salnamesi*, which was the last of its kind, so it must have been set up sometime between 1904 and 1908.⁹⁴

In the Second Constitutional Period, Meşveret Printing Press, which was set up in 1908 by Naci Bey, played an important role in the cultural and political life of Trabzon. The other printing presses in the same period were Mirkoviç Printing Press, established in 1909 by an Armenian of the same name, and Üskünar Printing Press, about which little is known.⁹⁵

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the Trabzon press enjoyed its heyday, but the advent of World War I in 1914 and the reinstatement of censorship delivered a serious blow to publishing, which was brought to an end by the Russian invasion in 1916. The invasion led to the closing down of periodicals and the destruction of newspaper collections, which marked a major loss for the cultural history of Trabzon.

3.2.2. Theatre and Cinema

Theatre had an important place in Ottoman society. As of the middle of the nineteenth century, Ottoman theatre began to grow in popularity, especially in

91 Ahmet Gedikli, “İkinci Meşrutiyet (1908-1918) Döneminde Trabzon (Eğitim ve Kültür Hayatı)”, [Master’s Thesis, Trabzon: Karadeniz Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of History, 2002], pp. 37-41. Years of publication for *Salname*: 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1887, 1891, 1893, 1895, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904. See Gedikli, *ibid.*, p. 40.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

93 Ali Birinci, “Trabzon’da Matbuat ve Neşriyat Hayatı”, *Trabzon ’88-89*, Trabzonlular Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Yayınları, 1989, p. 175.

94 Gedikli, *ibid.*, p. 46.

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 48-49.

Istanbul, and during the constitutional period it enjoyed much more freedom. Many Istanbul theatre groups went on tour to introduce theatre to the people of Anatolian and popularize it. There was some interest in theatre in Trabzon before the constitutional period thanks to touring theatre groups from Istanbul and that interest increased after the proclamation of the Second Constitution.

Ottoman theatre troupes travelled to Trabzon and staged the plays *Hicran-ı Ebedi* (Eternal Sorrow) and *Çoban Kızı* (Shepherd Girl) at a theatre located in Tuzluçeşme.⁹⁶ The 259th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the Varyete Theatre Group was going to visit Trabzon,⁹⁷ and their performances garnered much attention in the months of March and April in 1911.⁹⁸ Another theatre group that visited Trabzon was the Ottoman Theatre, which was run by Mehmet Hilmi Efendi. They staged several different plays over the course of a month and entertained locals with the İnce Saz Takımı (Turkish Music Orchestra) on the off nights.⁹⁹ They also staged “Hernani” by Victor Hugo.¹⁰⁰

In addition to those Istanbul-based troupes, it is known that the young members of the societies and clubs in Trabzon also staged plays. Their performances aimed at strengthening social solidarity, appealing to national sentiment, and raising funds for the navy and the air force, as well as supporting educational institutions; they were not, however, so concerned with artistic productions. The 8th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentioned that some young people staged a performance of *Vatan* (Homeland) by Namık Kemal and donated the 120 lira in proceeds to the Naval Society.¹⁰¹

Members of the *Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü* (Science and Arts Youth Club) staged *Mesa'ib-i İstibdad* (Calamity of Despotism) and donated half of the proceeds to the victims of the Çırçır fire and the other half to the club. The play was warmly received and Trabzon Customs Director Mehmet Emin

96 Veysel Usta, “Balkan Harbi’nde Trabzon: Trabzon Gönüllüleri ve Yardımlar”, *Uluslararası Trabzon ve Çevresi Kültür ve Tarih Sempozyumu 16-18 May 2006*, (ed. Mithat Kerim Aslan-Hikmet Öksüz-Veysel Usta), Trabzon: Türk Ocakları Trabzon Şubesi Yayınları, 2011, vol. 1, p. 289.

97 “Varyete Tiyatro Kumpanyası Yarın Geliyor”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 259, 5 Mart 1327 (18 March 1911), p. 2.

98 “Varyete Kumpanyası”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 260, 9 Mart 1927 (22 March 1911), p. 3; “Varyete Kumpanyası”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 264, 23 Mart 1327 (5 April 1911), p. 4; “Varyete Kumpanyası: Yakında Romeo ve Jüliet”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 274, 28 Nisan 1327 (11 May 1911), p. 4; “Varyete Kumpanyası”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 275, 30 Nisan 1327 (13 May 1911), p. 3.

99 “Osmanlı Tiyatrosu”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 373, 14 Nisan 1328 (27 April 1912), p. 3.

100 “Osmanlı Tiyatrosu’nda Bu Gece Ernani Piyesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 378, 2 Mayıs 1328 (15 May 1912), p. 3.

101 “Vatan Tiyatrosu”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 8, 13 Eylül 1324 (26 September 1908), p. 3.

Bey went onstage to congratulate the youth who put it on. He gave a speech and stirred the emotions of the crowd even further by reciting some poems.¹⁰²

Ottoman society first became familiar with cinema at the turn of the twentieth century and it quickly grew in popularity, becoming much more popular than theatre. Most likely it first came to Trabzon in 1909.¹⁰³ An archival document indicates that a non-Muslim Ottoman citizen by the name of Pilosyan established the Ottoman Cinematography Company in 1909 but he faced financial challenges screening educational, moral, and historical movies. He complained that he could not make much money because of the difficulties he faced during the establishment of the company and because of the number and price of the tax stamps on tickets. He requested that the number of tax stamps be reduced¹⁰⁴ and officials decided that only *Darülaceze İanesi* stamps would be put on movie tickets.¹⁰⁵

An article in the 331st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the movie theatre had moved to a new building. The new Cinematography Building had been completed five days earlier near Freedom Square next to the Transit Depot and the equipment was also moved there. The article noted that after it had been decorated, the movie theatre would open its doors. It was held up as the work of a progressive entrepreneur because, as the only entertainment venue in Trabzon, it was built with state-of-the-art technology and in compliance with the Health Code.¹⁰⁶

The 375th issue of the same newspaper mentioned that a film, the screening of which had been previously announced, was to be shown that evening. The article said that the movie, which depicted military manoeuvres being held in the presence of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad, would demonstrate to the audience how developed the Ottoman Army had become.¹⁰⁷

In another issue, an announcement stated that for the next couple of days some movies were to be shown for the benefit of around eighty orphans and needy students from the Union and Progress School. After the movie, students were to recite poems about the homeland and Ottomanism and two students

102 "Millî Tiyatro ve Gençler Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrînisâni 1324 (24 November 1908), p. 3.

103 Enver Uzun, *Trabzon'da Sinema Kültürü*, Trabzon: Eser Ofset, 2006, p. 13.

104 Süleyman Beyoğlu, "Sinema Karadeniz'de (1909-1933)", *Toplumsal Tarih*, No: 92, August 2001, p. 48.

105 Ibid.

106 "Sinematograf Yeni Ebniyede", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 331, 16 Teşrînisâni 1327 (29 November 1911), p. 2.

107 "Bu Gece Sinematografda", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 375, 21 Nisan 1328 (4 Mayıs 1912), p. 2.

would stage a play about Tripoli under attack by the Italians. The people of Trabzon were invited to watch the show.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution on 24 July 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress took control of the government and started seeking out various solutions to the political and social problems facing the country. According to the Unionists, the political revolution that was introduced by the constitutional regime had to be supported with reforms in education and culture. The Unionists believed that the only way to elevate Ottoman society to a level equal to that of Europe was education, so they inaugurated major reforms in Anatolia.

These educational reforms had two main objectives. The first was the modernization of education and the second was making sure that schools were opened in the four corners of the empire. In the case of Trabzon, which was a major province, it is clear that much effort was put into realizing those projects. The Unionists tried to get schools to employ new methods (*usûl-i cedid*) to teach literacy so that students could learn how to read and write in one year instead of the three years it had taken in the past. Some newspapers and magazines supported the Unionists in promoting those new methods through articles.

It was argued that more graduates of *Darulmuallimin* (Teacher's Colleges) were needed to facilitate the spread of modern education. The Unionists decided that funding for the Trabzon *Darulmuallimin* would be increased and a few more teacher's colleges would be opened in the province of Trabzon. Providing better working conditions and better pay for teachers who graduated from teacher's colleges was also promoted by luminaries in Trabzon, as well as improving the quality of the facilities at those schools. The belief was that graduates from the teacher's program would use the new curriculum they had learned with their students, thereby helping the Ottoman educational system make significant progress. In the villages, students would study at the new schools instead of madrasas and the new teachers would secularize education.

One of the biggest problems regarding education in Trabzon during the constitutional period was making sure that it became more widespread. Most of the 2,000 villages in Trabzon did not have schools and those that did lacked qualified teachers. The Unionists prioritized village schools and tried to persuade peasants to pay for the construction of school buildings. In addition, they

108 "Yetimler Menfaatine Sinematograf", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 381, 12 Mayıs 1328 (25 May 1912), p. 3.

used propaganda to gain the support of peasants so that they would be willing to contribute to the salaries of the teachers at their schools.

Almost all Greek and Armenian villages had a school and a teacher, in contrast to the majority of Muslim Turkish villages. The Unionists sought to improve the living conditions of peasants on the one hand, and on the other they tried to protect ignorant Muslim peasants from Christian missionaries. For that reason, they tried to garner the support of locals as well as the state. Another project involving education was setting up programs so that top students could get the opportunity to study in Europe, and committees were set up to help those students who went to study abroad.

The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress held meetings with other clubs' committee representatives and city dignitaries so that they could identify shortcomings and problems with the education system and find solutions. Prompted by the Unionists, several vocational organizations also supported education. For example, under the leadership of the famous Unionist Yahya Kahya, boatmen paid for the Aya Filibo Primary School.

The Unionists organized evening classes for children and adults who otherwise could not get an education and indoctrinated them with Unionist ideology. At both the Union and Progress School and Şems-i Hürriyet School they made efforts to offer a modern education to both paying and non-paying students, and they advised poor parents to send their children to the military high school, which did not charge tuition.

The Unionists believed that education was key to modernization. They thought that by benefiting from European models of science the Ottomans could develop a modern civilization. However, because of political crises, economic difficulties, and wars, they were unable to attain their goals.

The press boom in Trabzon gave intellectuals a chance to freely express their opinions. Early on the Unionists grasped the importance and power of the press and used it to manipulate and transform Ottoman society, gain supporters, and keep the opposition under control. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* led the press in Trabzon with its Unionist ideas, especially during the Second Constitutional Period. A striking characteristic of that era was the ethnic diversity observable in publishing.

Theatre and cinema also had social rather than artistic objectives. The Unionists tried to propagate their ideas and collect donations through theatre and cinema; on the one hand, they offered entertainment through theatre and cinema, and on the other they tried to raise awareness about the concepts of homeland, nation, freedom, and Ottomanism.

The Committee of Union and Progress realized that radical reforms were necessary for the salvation of the state and part of that involved realizing educational projects. They efficiently used the press, theatre, and cinema to shape cultural life and engage in social engineering, but as can be seen in the example of Trabzon, their efforts yielded limited success.

Chapter IV

SOCIAL AND DAILY LIFE IN TRABZON

(1908-1914)

4.1. Clubs and Societies in Trabzon

One of the social aspects of the new order that was brought into being with the proclamation of the Second Constitution on 24 July 1908 was freedom of association. Through this new freedom, societies and clubs were established all around the country but they had to adhere to a law on organizations that was passed on 16 August 1909. Later, when Article 120 was amended to the Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*), freedom of association was protected as a constitutional right¹ and clubs and societies gradually started to appear in the public sphere.

Organizational freedom had an impact on Trabzon, just as it had elsewhere in the country, and clubs and societies with political, social, and economic objectives emerged in the city. These included the Union Club (*İttihad Kulübü*), Military Club (*Askeri Kulüp*), Science and Arts Youth Club (*Muhibb-i Fen ve Ma'rifet Gençler Kulübü*), Trabzon Progress and Elevation Club (*Trabzon Terakki ve Teali Kulübü*), Ottoman Club (*Osmanlı Kulübü*), Ottoman Merchants Club (*Osmanlı Tüccar Kulübü*), Ottoman Patriotic Society (*Osmanlı Vatanperveran Cemiyeti*), Society of Progress in Education and the Protection of Children (*Terakki-i Ma'arif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*), Trabzon Red Crescent Society (*Trabzon Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*), Trabzon Ottoman Navy Society (*Trabzon Donanma-i Osmanî Cemiyeti*), Trabzon Lawyers' Society (*Trabzon Dava Vekilleri Cemiyeti*), and the Greek Merchants and Employees Society (*Rum Müstahdemin-i Tüccar Cemiyeti*). The fact that all of these clubs and societies were established in a short period of time demonstrates that people were quite willing to participate in public life.

1 Zafer Toprak, "1909 Cemiyetler Kanunu", *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 205-206.

An article in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* took up the issue of clubs and societies, mentioning that European clubs were entrusted with the mission of developing the nation. Clubs in Trabzon had two goals: achieve unity and protect and spread freedom and determine the best approach to progress and march towards it.² The article mentioned here claimed that Ottomans primarily needed unity, and clubs and societies were a good way to achieve that. First, the Union Club was to be established, followed by science clubs as a means of developing and spreading education in the service of the empire.³ The aim of the article was to tell the people of Trabzon that clubs and societies were essential in the modernization of society. One of the main objectives of the Committee of Union and Progress was to mobilize Ottoman society in order to realize a paradigm of modernization. By reading between the lines of the article, it becomes clear that getting involved in the public sphere and adopting the modernization paradigm of the Unionists were paramount to achieving the right results.

4.1.1. The Union Club (*İttihat Kulübü*)

The Union Club was established as the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress. After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, it took time for the Unionists to become established in Trabzon. The Union Club officially opened on Friday, 27 November 1908 (14 Teşrinisânî 1324) in the neighbourhood of Zeytinlik with a ceremony which also marked the opening of a sister association, the Military Club. The governor, commander general, high ranking officials, merchants, members of the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, and military personnel were present at the ceremony, along with thousands of citizens and the military band.⁴ Customs Director Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey, the commander general, Captain İhsan Bey, Gregori Efendi, and Armenian representative (*murabhas*) Vestrak Efendi gave speeches. After the speeches and the military band's performance, members of the Committee of Union and Progress and the commander general passed out cigarettes and sherbet.⁵

The fact that the Union Club and the Military Club were officially launched together demonstrates how strong their ties were, as well as the influence that the military had on the Committee. Additionally, the fact that the Military

2 Tıbbiye-i Askeriyeden Sürmeneli Behram Na'ıl, "İttihad Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 6, 6 Eylül 1324 (19 September 1908), pp. 2-3.

3 Ibid.

4 "Şanlı ve Azimetli Bir Resm-i Küşad", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 26, 15 Teşrinisânî 1324 (28 November 1908), p. 1.

5 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 33, 18 Teşrinisânî 1324 (1 December 1908), p. 4.

Club was going to work under the auspices of the Union Club indicates that they sought to keep the military's activities under control. Also, since many merchants and citizens as well as state administrators were present at the opening ceremony, it becomes clear that the influence of the Committee of Union and Progress was increasing in Trabzon. Since the attendance of merchants and citizens was not required, it is an indication that people had started to gather around the Committee of Union and Progress as the new centre of power. The presence of Greek and Armenian representatives at the ceremony is a reflection of the policy of National Unification (*İttihat-ı Anâsır*) at the local scale in the early months of the constitutional period.

Before and after the official opening of the Union Club, a number of events were organized such as theatre plays, conferences, auctions, night classes, religious activities, and medical examinations of the poor. Before the official opening of the Union Club, thanks to the support of the Committee of Union and Progress some officers and youth staged Namık Kemal's play *Vatan (Homeland)* in Tuzluçeşme,⁶ the proceeds of which were to be given to the Navy Donation Fund. Before the play was staged, Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey gave a speech about Namık Kemal's concept of "homeland." The play was very well received and a total of 120 lira were donated to the fund.⁷ Through such social and cultural activities, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to penetrate the social fabric, and through charity events they attempted to strengthen solidarity and spread their ideas.

Another method the Unionists used to voice their opinions was the organisation of conferences at the club building. Newspapers reported on the fact that Ömer Naci Bey, an important orator from the Committee of Union and Progress, was going to give a conference at the Union Club when he passed through Trabzon on his way to Erzurum with Halil Yakup Hilmi Bey and Mustafa Necip Bey.⁸ The article noted that in his lengthy speech Ömer Naci Bey dealt with social issues, political events, and the current situation of the Iranian government when he visited the Union Club.⁹

The Committee of Union and Progress was well aware of the state of political unrest in Iran and through the conference, the Committee attempted to create a bloc of solidarity with the supporters of constitutionalism in neighbouring countries. The committee was sent to help Iranian constitutionalists fighting

6 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 25, 19 Teşrînîevvel 1324 (1 November 1908), p. 4.

7 "Vatan Tiyatrosu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 8, 13 Eylül 1324 (26 September 1908), p. 3.

8 "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Kulübünde Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 35, 17 Kanûnievvel 1324 (30 December 1908) p. 4.

9 Ibid.

against the absolutist regime of the Shah in Iran, which serves as a reminder that the Ottoman constitutionalist movement cannot be studied independently of developments in neighbouring countries.

Another activity the Union Club held was a gathering organized for the benefit of the navy. They held an auction for coffee and chairs and donated the proceeds, which amounted to 831 kuruş and 10 para, to the Naval Society,¹⁰ which again is indicative of the ways that the Unionists sought to demonstrate their staunch loyalty to the country.

The administrators of the Union Club invited Dr. Milaslı İsmail Hakkı, a general health inspector, to give a talk at the club building about “İşret” (excessive drinking).¹¹ The topic is notable, and raises questions about why such a talk was needed; how much alcohol was being consumed in Trabzon, and were people drinking more compared to previous periods? Perhaps they wanted to give the impression of being good, non-drinking Muslims. Surely drinking was more common among educated top-level members of the Committee of Union and Progress and this would be a way to show that they are “pious” Muslims. Unfortunately, there are no clear answers to those questions at present.

The Union Club also held night classes. As noted before, one of the major goals of the Committee of Union and Progress was to eliminate illiteracy, and night classes were offered to that end. The range of classes that were offered is notable: Trabzon Gendarmerie Regiment Commander *Kaymakam* Said Bey taught Turkish *Sarf* and *Nahiv* (syntax) on Saturday nights; İsmail Sefa Bey, a Mekteb-i Sultani teacher, taught Ottoman and general history on Wednesday nights; Parvant Efendi, principal of the Mekteb-i Sultani, taught general geography on Tuesday nights; Refet Bey, a Mekteb-i Sultani teacher, taught economics and law on Sunday nights; Arman Garun Efendi, a Mekteb-i Sultani teacher, taught accounting on Thursday nights; Teachers College Principal Hamdi Rasim Efendi taught fundamentals classes on Saturday and Sunday nights; Zühdi Efendi, a customs secretary, taught fundamentals classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights; and Müftüzade Sadi Efendi taught fundamentals classes on Friday nights.¹²

The night classes that were offered garnered much attention, as citizens who had been left out of the education system got a chance to receive a basic

10 “Zeytinlik İttihad ve Terakki Kulübü’nde Müsabaka-yı Hamiyet”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 167, 7 Nisan 1324 (20 April 1910), p. 2.

11 “İttihad Kulübü’nde Konferans”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 225, 30 Teşrinievvel 1326 (12 November 1910), p. 2.

12 “İttihad ve Terakki Kulübü’nde Gece Dersleri”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), pp. 2-3.

education as well as learn how to be a conscientious citizen. It is not clear whether the teachers volunteered to teach or were paid; however, it is remarkable that some of the teachers were non-Muslim citizens. For a short period, the night classes were suspended as the club building was set aside for the accommodation of some officers waiting to go to Yemen. An announcement in the 258th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that the night classes had resumed again, and that evening a French lesson was going to be given, so those who had registered were requested to be present at the club building.¹³ An article in another issue of the same newspaper reported that an auction was held in the Union Club, and again the proceeds were donated to the Naval Society.¹⁴

Newspapers reported on the conferences that were organized by the Union Club. An article titled "Conference" in the 251st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that on the previous night Servet Efendi, the local director of education, gave a talk on history and politics, and Haşim Bey, the doctor of the 7th Sharpshooter Battalion, talked about the dangers of tuberculosis.¹⁵ Tuberculosis was quite widespread at the turn of the century in Trabzon, and the doctor provided some basic information about it as well as methods of protection against the affliction. The 267th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that another conference was to be hosted by Servet Efendi and club members were requested to be present at the club building that evening.¹⁶ In the 273rd issue of the same newspaper, there was another article titled "Conference" which announced that Midhat Efendi, the treasury lawyer, was to give a talk on the history of Islam and its conquests, and that anyone interested was invited to attend.¹⁷ In another issue, it was announced that *Mevlid-i Şerif* was to be chanted on Prophet Muhammed's birthday.¹⁸ Such religious activities were likely organized to attract conservative citizens and deflect any negative perceptions of the Unionists as far as Islam was concerned.

Newspapers announced that Tahsin Bey, the customs chemist and a military doctor, would examine patients free of charge on Friday afternoons and Sunday mornings at the Union Club. The announcements thanked Tahsin

13 "İttihad Kulübü'nde Dersler Tekrar Başlıyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 258, 1 Mart 1327 (14 March 1911), p. 2.

14 "İttihad ve Terakki Kulübü'nde Müsabaka-yı Hamiyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), p. 2.

15 "Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 251, 5 Şubat 1326 (18 February 1911), p. 2.

16 "Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 267, 2 Nisan 1327 (15 April 1911), p. 1.

17 "Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 273, 23 Nisan 1327 (6 May 1911), p. 2.

18 "İttihad Kulübü'nde Mevlid-i Nebi Kırâatı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 258, 1 Mart 1327 (14 March 1911), p. 1.

Bey for this charitable event.¹⁹ Since the majority of the population made little money, such activities were likely intended to create a positive perception of the Unionists in society.

On the anniversary of Sultan Mehmet V Reşad's rise to the throne, Trabzon Mekteb-i Sultani students visited the Union Club, where they were well-received by club members.²⁰ The fact that the students visited the Union Club instead of the governor's office suggests that the students associated Sultan Mehmet V Reşad's reign with the Committee of Union and Progress. Other news items concerned the 10 July celebrations to be held on 24 July 1911, and detailed accounts of club members' roles at the ceremony were given.²¹

4.1.2. Science and Arts Youth Club

(*Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü*)

The 33rd issue of the newspaper *Feyz* newspaper announced the opening ceremony of the Science and Arts Youth Club (*Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü*).²² On Monday, 30 November 1908 (17 Teşrînisâni 1324), the intellectual youth of Trabzon got together to establish the Science and Arts Youth Club and at the ceremony, a band played marches and the club's president İhsan Efendi gave a speech, as did club member Baki Efendi and the Armenian representative. After the speeches, which were greeted with applause, coffee, sherbet, and cigarettes were passed out.²³

The objectives of the club were to help the development of the Ottoman State and promote education, culture, and intellectual activities in order to elevate Ottoman society, as indicated in an article in the 37th issue of *Feyz*:

“...Our youthful intellectual brothers thought things over and decided to start a club in order to get rid of all these plights, to elevate us to the level of contemporary civilizations, to learn about science, and to become familiar with European lifestyles.”²⁴

19 “İttihad Kulübü’nde Hastaları Muayene”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 282, No: 25 Mayıs 1327 (7 June 1911), p. 2.

20 “Mekteb-i Sultani Efendilerinin İttihad Kulübü’nü Ziyaretleri”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 271, 16 Nisan 1327 (29 April 1911), p. 3.

21 “İttihad ve Terakki İhvanı”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 295, 10 Temmuz 1327 (24 July 1911), p. 6.

22 “Trabzon”, *Feyz*, No: 33, 18 Teşrînisâni 1324 (1 December 1908), p. 4.

23 Ibid.

24 “... Gençlerimiz, münevver fikirli kardaşlarımız bu belaları def etmek, uğursuzluğumuzu gidermek, bize anasır-ı medeniye arasında yer kazandırmak, kıymet verdirmek için düşünüldüler, taşındılar. Hakaik-i fenniyyeyi bize anlatmaya, kavga-yı hayatın Avrupa’daki usulünü bize tanıttırmaya, bunun için de gençlere mahsus bir kulüp açmaya karar verdiler.”

Club president İhsan Bey made a speech at the opening ceremony of the club in which he talked about the problems in Ottoman society that were brought on by ignorance. According to İhsan Bey, the only way to be powerful was to constantly learn. He clarified that point by saying he meant the power of science and abilities and added that unity was also needed to be powerful, not in spoken or written words, but in action. That was why, he explained, they founded the club.²⁵

The Youth Club was involved in a variety of activities. An article titled “National Theatre and Youth Club” in the 16th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* reported that the club members staged a play titled “*Mesa’ib-i İstibdad*” (Calamity of Despotism). Half the proceeds were to be donated to the victims of the Çırçır fire in Istanbul and the other half was to go to the club. Poet Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey took to the stage before the play and thanked the club members, and then he recited some poetry to prepare the audience for the upcoming performance.²⁶ At another event held at the club building, Doctor İsmail Hakkı Bey, who was the customs chemist, gave a talk about eye problems.²⁷ At the club there was much interest in Turkish, French, and history classes.²⁸ Greek and Armenian were also taught, likely in an attempt to create good relations with the empire’s Greek and Armenian citizens, which was very much in line with the policy of National Unification (*İttihad-ı Anasır*).²⁹ In the 39th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, an article titled “What have we accomplished?” (“Ne Yaptık?”) claimed that when there was so much to accomplish following the proclamation of the Second Constitution, there were only two clubs that truly needed to be established. One of them was the Youth Club, which the article praised for its accomplishments, and the other was the Merchants Club.³⁰

Trabzon Garrison Commander Abuk Ahmet Paşa, Cabir Paşa, and Hacı Ahmet Efendi, a member of the City Council, visited the club one day in

Melek Öksüz, “II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Dernekçiliğe Taşradan Bir Örnek: Trabzon Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü”, *Uluslararası Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, No: 2, Spring 2007, p. 58.

25 Ibid., p. 60.

26 M. Sadık, “Millî Tiyatro ve Gençler Kulübü”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrinievvel 1324 (24 October 1908), p. 3.

27 “Gençler Kulübü’nde Konferans”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 29, 26 Teşrinisâni 1324 (9 December 1908), p. 3.

28 “Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 33, 10 Kanûnievvel 1324 (23 December 1908), p. 3.

29 Öksüz, *ibid.*, p. 62.

30 “Ne Yaptık?”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 39, 3 Kanûnisâni 1324 (16 January 1909), pp. 2-3.

order to congratulate its members on their work.³¹ During the visit, a choir led by Doctor İsmail Hakkı Bey gave a concert.³² Kethüdazade Halim, a visitor from Ordu, wrote a letter to *Trabzon'da Meşveret* which was published in the newspaper's 60th issue. He lavished praise on the musical performance and congratulated the club members.³³

An announcement was made stating that in addition to the ongoing classes offered at the Youth Club, Hacı İbrahim Cudi and Hafız Mesud Efendis from the Trabzon *ulema* would give talks every week on literature, morality, religion, and science. Also, the ground floor of the club was going to be rearranged so that the club's manager, Doctor İsmail Hakkı Bey, could start giving music lessons there.³⁴ Even though the Youth Club was not directly related to the Committee of Union and Progress, they worked in parallel with the Committee's program and objectives, the only difference being that they operated in the cultural milieu rather than the political one. The club contributed much to the cultural life of Trabzon, and local notables praised the club's cultural and educational activities, which they said were helping in the fight against illiteracy.

4.1.3. The Ottoman Merchants' Club (*Osmanlı Tüccar Kulübü*)

Another club that was established in Trabzon after the proclamation of the Second Constitution was the Ottoman Merchants Club. Merchants in Trabzon came together to establish the club in order to create a sense of solidarity. However, the club was not destined to last for long. In an anonymous article titled "What have we accomplished?" ("Ne Yapdık?") published in the 39th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the Ottoman Merchants Club was cited as being one of the two major projects that had been launched in Trabzon after the proclamation of the Second Constitution. However, the article stated that over time it became little more than a cafe where people got together at night to sit around and talk about what was being published in the Istanbul newspapers. It was argued that while the public may have had great expectations at first for the club, in the end it was a disappointment.³⁵

31 "Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 59, 18 Mart 1325 (31 March 1909), p. 2.

32 Ibid.

33 Kethüdazade Halim, "Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Kulübü Aza-yı Muhteremesine", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 60, 21 Mart 1325 (3 April 1909), p. 4.

34 "Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü", *Feyz*, No: 49, 13 Kanûnisâni 1324 (26 January 1908), p. 3.

35 "Ne Yapdık?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 39, 3 Kanûnisâni 1324 (16 January 1909), pp. 2-3.

An article in another issue of the same newspaper stated that the Ottoman Merchants Club had come to the brink of closing down because they could not even pay the wages of the waiters working at the club's canteen. The article called on the club's members, most of whom were notables and merchants in the city, to solve the problem and save the club.³⁶

4.1.4. The Ottoman Club (*Osmanlı Kulübü*)

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the Ottoman Club was founded in Trabzon as a way to help bring about national unity.³⁷ During its establishment, the club's members held an election to set up a board of directors. The results were as follows: Yanko Yuvanidi (63 votes), Kırzade Şevki Efendi (62 votes), Vilisaridi Lefteriki Efendi (43 votes), Education Department Accountant Ömer Lüfti Efendi (42 votes), İmamzade Mustafa Efendi (40 votes), Ofluzade Şevket Efendi (35 votes), Doctor Hekimyan Efendi (32 votes), Doctor Adil Bey (31 votes), and Fosturopulo Yorgi Efendi (31 votes).³⁸ The first order of business for the board of directors was to rent club member Ofluzade Şevket Bey's house on Uzun Sokak, as they planned on using it as the club's office, and furnish it.³⁹ A glance at the list of members serving on the board of directors is revealing as it reflects the idea of National Unification (*İttihad-ı Anasır*) put into practice; of the nine members on the board, three were Greek and one was Armenian, and a Greek member got the highest number of votes. The Committee of Union and Progress promoted the idea of National Unification (*İttihad-ı Anasır*) in their policy of Ottomanism following the constitutional regime, and, for a while at least, much of society embraced it, including the populace of Trabzon.

The Governor Commander Pasha, high ranking officials, and local notables attended the opening of the club, which was held on Friday, 16 October 1908 (3 Teşrinievvel 1324). Poet Mehmet Emin Bey gave a speech, which was followed by a concert put on by the military band.⁴⁰ The fact that city administrators and dignitaries were present at the opening ceremony would seem to indicate that the club was associated with the Committee of Union

36 "Osmanlı Tüccar Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 59, 18 Mart 1325 (31 March 1909), p. 3.

37 "Osmanlı Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 2, 23 Ağustos 1324 (5 September 1908), pp. 3-4.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 "Osmanlı Kulübü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 17, 15 Teşrinievvel 1324 (28 October 1908), p. 1.

and Progress, especially since Customs Director Mehmet Emin Bey was there, as he was a dedicated Unionist.

An article titled “Conference at the Ottoman Club” which was published in the 25th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* reported that Stelyo Çaloho, the owner of the Greek newspaper *Atnikon Vima*, visited Trabzon and was going to give a political talk in Greek the following day. The article mentioned that the talk was open to everyone who was interested in attending.⁴¹ This is a notable indication of the spirit of “brotherhood” that prevailed in the early days of the Second Constitutional Period. Again in the same issue, an article reported that after the opening of the Ottoman Club, it was decided that a new board of directors consisting of twenty-five people should be elected so that the club could better meet the needs of the people of Trabzon. The article informed readers that club members would convene the following Saturday at the club’s office to hold the election⁴² and an article in the following issue reminded readers of the upcoming election.⁴³

Like some of the other clubs, the Ottoman Club also tried to increase literacy levels and bolster a sense of culture among the people of Trabzon, in addition to offering solutions to society’s problems through talks and seminars. Necati Efendi gave a talk at the club in which he argued that building a railway connecting Trabzon, Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Mamuratülaziz, Samsun, and Sivas would be an invaluable investment for developing trade in Trabzon. He added that a committee had been established with the aim of raising the funds needed for such a project.⁴⁴ He argued that expanding trade in Trabzon, which was the gateway to eastern Anatolia and Iran through the Black Sea, was one of the important issues of the day. It is noteworthy that a fund-raising committee could come into being just as the result of an informative talk.

4.1.5. Society for Educational Progress and the Protection of Children (*Terakki-i Ma’arif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*)

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, education was seen as being one of the main problems in Trabzon, as was the case in the rest of the country. Numerous projects were launched in cities around the empire with the aim of improving education in general and providing education for orphans, and Trabzon was no exception. The result of one such project was the founding

41 “Osmanlı Kulübü’nde Konferans”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 25, 2 Teşrinisâni 1324 (25 November 1908), p. 4.

42 Ibid.

43 “Osmanlı Kulübü”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 26, 15 Teşrinisâni 1324 (28 November 1908), p. 4.

44 “Mühim Bir Teşebbüs”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 51, 18 Şubat 1324 (3 March 1909), p. 1.

of the Society for Educational Progress and the Protection of Children. The society was first mentioned in the 17th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* in an article titled “Ta’imim-i Ma’arif ve Sahabe-i Etfal Cemiyeti” which, as the content of the article reveals, was actually *Terakki-i Ma’arif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*. The article reported that a meeting had been held at the Zağnos School under the leadership of Governor Arifi Paşa with the aim of discussing ways to improve education at village primary schools and district schools in Trabzon. Speeches were given, a committee was formed, and around 800 lira were collected within the space of an hour.⁴⁵ An article titled “*Terakki-i Ma’arif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*” in the 24th issue of *Feyz* also reported on the event.⁴⁶

In the 18th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* there was a report titled “10 Temmuzdan Sonra Memleketimizde Şayan-ı İmtisal, Mühim ve Hayırlı Bir Teşebbüs” (An Exemplary, Significant and Auspicious Attempt in Our Province after 10th July) which provided detailed information about the Society for Educational Progress and the Protection of Children. Under the leadership of Müftü Efendi a 32-member society was founded called the Special Society (*Cemiyet-i Hususiye*). Since the Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) made primary education compulsory, the objective of the society was to broaden the scope of primary education in the districts and villages of Trabzon, as well as ensure that orphans and needy children were protected and received an education. Another society called the General Society (*Cemiyet-i Umumiye*) was established to help the aforementioned society, and it was led by Governor Arifi Pasha and city notables served as members.⁴⁷ The Special Society (*Cemiyet-i Hususiye*) was to convene six times at regular intervals. Under the leadership of Governor Arifi Pasha, a meeting was to be held at the Zağnos School where the society’s objectives were to be set.⁴⁸

At the meeting, Müftü Efendi and Hazım Bey, the principal of the junior high school, announced their decisions and asked the city notables present at the meeting for their help in realizing the society’s projects, whereupon the city notables vied with one another to make larger donations for the cause. Poet Mehmet Emin Bey praised their efforts in a speech and then the meeting was adjourned.⁴⁹ Some merchants volunteered for projects, while others donated money to support the society’s projects. At this point, it should be noted that

45 “Ta’imim-i Ma’arif ve Sahabe-i Etfal Cemiyeti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 17, 15 Teşrinievvel 1324 (28 October 1908), p. 1

46 “Terakki-i Ma’arif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti”, *Feyz*, No: 24, 12 Teşrinievvel 1324 (25 October 1908), pp. 3-4.

47 “10 Temmuz’dan Sonra Memleketimizde Şayan-ı İmtisal, Mühim ve Hayırlı Bir Teşebbüs”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 18, 18 Teşrinievvel 1324 (31 October 1908), p.1.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

since Trabzon Customs Director (and poet) Mehmet Emin Bey was involved in the project and praised the efforts of the society, the enterprise likely had Unionist roots.

In the 168th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, there was an article titled “*Darü'l-Mu'allimin Talebesi*” (Students of Teachers' Training School) which reported that the students at the Teacher's College were so eager to improve their knowledge and contribute to education that they wanted to work at the primary school in the city centre three days a week. Their request was met with approval by the Society for Educational Progress and the Protection of Children.⁵⁰

4.1.6. Trabzon Red Crescent Society

(*Trabzon Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*)

An article titled “*Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*” which was published in the 174th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Ottoman Red Crescent Society had been re-established under the leadership of the wife of Refet Pasha, who at the time was the Minister of the Interior. The article also noted that the mother of the Egyptian Khedive had donated 100 lira to an exhibition organized by the society.⁵¹ The 333rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* ran a story titled “The Red Crescent and the Establishment of Its Trabzon Branch” (“*Hilal-i Ahmer ve Trabzon Şu'besi Te'sisi*”) which provided a historical account of charity organizations around the world and discussed the Geneva Convention as well as the establishment and activities of the Ottoman Red Crescent. The article emphasized that Trabzon needed a branch of its own and reported that a meeting had been held at the governor's office under the leadership of Hacıdervişağazade Eşref Efendi for the purpose of appointing a committee.⁵²

The 108th issue of *Envar-ı Vicdan* included an article titled “Red Crescent” (“*Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*”) which stated that an election had been held using secret ballots, in line with the society's policies, to determine who the board members would be. The results of the vote were as follows: Hacı Dervişağazade Eşref Efendi (51 votes), Mayor Hacı Ahmed Efendi (44 votes), Health Inspector Abdülkerim (40 votes), Doctor Efremidi Efendi (39 votes), lawyer Midhat Efendi (30 votes), Arif Efendi (28 votes), Nemlizade Cemal Efendi

50 “*Darü'l-mu'allimin Talebesi*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 168, 10 Nisan 1326 (23 April 1910), p. 2.

51 “*Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 174, 1 Mayıs 1326 (14 May 1910), p. 2.

52 “*Hilal-i Ahmer ve Trabzon Şu'besi Te'sisi*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 333, 26 Teşrînisâni 1327 (9 December 1911), pp. 3-4.

(25 votes), Hacı Tevfik Efendi (24 votes), Şatırzade Hasan Bey (22 votes), Baki Efendi (22 votes), and Şatırzade Mehmet Bey (21 votes).⁵³

4.1.7. The Trabzon Lawyers' Society

(Trabzon Dava Vekilleri Cemiyeti)

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, lawyers in major cities in the Ottoman Empire got together to establish bar assemblies. Following the example of cities like Istanbul, Izmir and Salonika, lawyers in other Ottoman cities established similar organizations as well, and Trabzon was no exception. Lawyers in Trabzon sent a document to local newspapers announcing the establishment of their society and the members of their board of directors.⁵⁴ In the announcement, they stated that the Trabzon Lawyers' Society had been established in order to monitor the conduct of lawyers and ensure they benefitted from the rights and benefits guaranteed by regulations enacted on 8 May 1912 (25 Nisan 1328). The board members of the society were as follows: Midhat Efendi, president (*Reis-i evvel*); Lazari Efendi, vice president (*reis-i sani*); Sokrati Efendi, member; Nikolaki Efendi, member; Ömer Fevzi Efendi, clerk; and Hüseyin Avni Efendi, member.⁵⁵ The fact that professional organizations of this type proliferated after the proclamation of the Second Constitution demonstrates that a spirit of solidarity had been revived in the more open atmosphere that had been made possible.

4.1.8. The Ottoman Patriotic Society

(Osmanlı Vatanperveran Cemiyeti)

Little is known about this society except what can be gleaned from an article that was published in the 2nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.⁵⁶ The article stated that a meeting had been held at the municipality in order to determine the committee members of a society through a secret vote. A special committee consisting of twelve members was established which included six Muslims, three Greeks, two Armenians and one Catholic. The goal of the society was to work for the public good of Trabzon. The committee eventually became the Ottoman Patriotic Society and, once established, they started to recruit members. In the end, 175 people were recruited and a nine-person board of directors was

53 "Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 108, 6 Kanûnievvel 1327 (19 December 1911), inside cover.

54 "Trabzon Dava Vekilleri Cemiyeti'nden", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 377, 28 Nisan 1328 (11 May 1912), p. 2, "Trabzon Dava Vekilleri Cemiyeti'nden", *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 129, 1 Mayıs 1328 (14 May 1328), inside cover.

55 Ibid.

56 "Osmanlı Vatanperveran Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 2, 23 Ağustos 1324 (5 September 1908), p. 3.

elected. They rented and furnished a club building to serve as their office. It was announced that the by-laws of the society would be written according to the conventions and customs of Trabzon.⁵⁷ Based on the fact that the original meeting to found the society was held at the municipality, it could be argued that it was a top-down organization and not a response to a particular social demand. Still, it is notable that six Muslims and six non-Muslims served on the board of directors.

4.1.9. Trabzon Naval Society (*Trabzon Donanma Cemiyeti*)

Another noteworthy society that was established in the Second Constitutional Period was the Naval Society. It was founded with the purpose of raising funds in order to bolster the Ottoman Navy. Established on 19 July 1909, it was shut down on 2 April 1919 by the Occupation Forces, but when it existed, Ottoman society took note of its activities and it was a popular society.⁵⁸ The Naval Society began carrying out activities in the city centre and its environs following the approval of its by-laws on 4 November 1909.⁵⁹ The Committee of Union and Progress was a firm supporter of the Naval Society, and that is a reflection of how the Committee tried to spread its ideology across the nation through societies and clubs. In some places, Committee of Union and Progress branches were directly set up and collected donations in the name of the Naval Society.⁶⁰

The Trabzon branch was one of the Naval Society's most important. While it is unclear exactly when it was established, a telegram from the Governorship of Trabzon to the Ministry of the Interior dated 8 January 1910 (26 Kanûniyyel 1325) noted that in line with the by-laws of the society, the society's *Meclis-i Umumi* and *Meclis-i İdare* were founded and presided over by the deputy governor.⁶¹ Newspapers often published the amount of donations the society received, along with the names of the donors. The society also held auctions to raise funds. At one of those auctions, a ship was auctioned off by

57 Ibid.

58 Nurşen Gök, "Donanma Cemiyeti'nin Anadolu'da Örgütlenmesine İlişkin Gözlemler", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil, Tarih, Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, No: 43, March 2008, p. 78.

59 Ibid., p. 79.

60 Ibid., p. 81.

61 "Dahiliye Nezareti Celilesine, Fi 26 Kanun-i Evvel 325. Donanma-yi Osmani İ'ane Cem'iyet-i Milliyesi nizamnamesine tevfikân Meclis-i Umumi ve Meclis-i İdare'nin teşkil kılındığı ve komiserliğini de derdest bulunduğum ma'ruzdur. Fi 26 Kanun-i evvel 325. Trabzon Valisi namına Defterdar Kadri."

BOA., DH. MUİ. 7.4-17, 29. Z. 1327 (11 January 1910)

the inhabitants of the district of Faros for 450 kuruş to Kahveci Hüsnü Ağa and the proceeds were sent directly to the Naval Society.⁶²

An article in the 264th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that a few days earlier an election had been held at the governor's office to fill the empty seats on the board of directors of the Trabzon Naval Society. Kabazade Tefvîk Efendi, Hacı Hafızade Mustafa Efendi, Velisaridi Kosti Efendi, and Arslan-yan Haçik Efendi were appointed, and Fosturopulo Yorgi, Grama Dikopulo Paşikoh, Tehreciyan Mihran, Minasyan Arsin, and Ariyan Karabet Efendis maintained their posts.⁶³ Having had to resign for administrative reasons, Hacı Hami Efendi, Hacı Hafız Rüştü Efendi, and Osman Efendi were thanked for their hard work during their year on the board of directors. It is notable that the absentee members of the board of directors were all Greeks and Armenians.⁶⁴ The article makes it clear that five non-Muslim members (two of them Greeks and three of them Armenians) on the board of directors of the Trabzon Naval Society blocked decision-making procedures by not attending meetings. In order to circumvent the problem, three Muslim members resigned from the board of directors but when the absentee members did not resign, the board of directors still could not be annulled. The only option at that point was to elect new members to fill the empty seats.

One newspaper article discussed the issue of possible corruption carried out in the name of the Naval Society. In order to avert such abuse in fundraising activities, the Naval Society had to be notified of events in advance and charity tickets had to be stamped by the society.⁶⁵ Archival documents indicate that committees and officials from Istanbul travelled to Trabzon to invite people to make donations. In one of those documents, sent from the Ministry of the Interior to the governorship of Trabzon, it was announced that Ali Şükrü Bey, one of the members of the board of directors in the Ottoman Naval Society, was going to visit Trabzon to inform the public about the society and the system of donations, and the governorship of Trabzon was asked to provide him with assistance.⁶⁶

62 "Trabzon Donanma-yi Osmaniye Cemiyeti'nden", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 260, 9 Mart 1327 (22 March 1911), p. 2.

63 "Trabzon Donanma-yi Osmaniye Mu'avenet-i Milliye Cemiyeti Azaları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 264, 23 Mart 1327 (5 April 1911), p. 3.

64 Ibid.

65 "Donanma Cemiyeti'nden", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 315, 21 Eylül 1327 (4 October 1911), p. 3.

66 BOA., DH. KMS. 14-8, 1332.Ra. 8 (4 February 1914).

4.1.10. Trabzon Province Progress and Elevation Club

(*Trabzon Vilayeti Terakki ve Teali Kulübü*)

While little detailed information is available about this club, it is mentioned in two newspaper articles, both of which make mention of the club's by-laws.⁶⁷ One of them dealt mainly with the opening ceremony of a club,⁶⁸ but the club in question was the *İttihad Kulübü* and its affiliate the Military Club.⁶⁹ The fact that the club's by-laws were published in Istanbul suggests that preparations to establish such a club were underway but were never brought to fruition,⁷⁰ and since no other information about the club could be located, that was likely the case.

4.1.11. Society for Greek Merchants and Employees in Trabzon

(*Trabzon'da Rum Müstahdemin-i Tüccar Cemiyeti*)

Records indicate that efforts were made to establish a society for Greek merchants in Trabzon but it seems that bureaucratic obstacles prevented it from ever coming into being. The governor's office requested directives on the issue from the Ministry of the Interior, stating that some Greeks had founded an organization called the Society for Greek Merchants and Employees and applied to the governorship of Trabzon seeking approval for their by-laws.

Since Article 4 of the Societies and Organizations Act forbade the establishment of organizations based on ethnicity or gender, the governor's office consulted the Ministry of the Interior because of the ambiguity surrounding the society's objectives. The Ministry of the Interior replied to the governorship of Trabzon, saying that there were no legal obstacles for the establishment of such a society.

After some time, the governorship of Trabzon sent another telegram to the Ministry of the Interior stating that the founders of the society had changed its name to "The Society for Merchants and Employees in Trabzon" and that they made their official application under that name.⁷¹

The Unionists claimed that striving to live in unity with all minorities while employing ethnic categories would prove problematic in the establishment or

67 Mesut Çapa, "Trabzon Vilayeti Terakki ve Teali Kulübü", *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol.: 19, No: 113, May 1993, p. 47-49 and Kudret Emiroğlu, "Trabzon'da Jön Türkler: Trabzon Vilayeti Terakki ve Teali Kulübü-Trabzon ve Havalisi Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti", *Trabzon*, No: 3, 1989, pp. 55-64.

68 Çapa, *ibid.*, p. 47.

69 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 33, 18 Teşrînîsânî 1324 (1 December 1908), p. 4.

70 *Trabzon Vilayeti Terakki ve Teali Kulübü Nizamnamesi*, Dersaadet: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1324.

71 BOA., DH. İD., 126-46, 1331. Ca. 21 (28 April 1913).

perpetuation of a society. In this case, it is noteworthy that the members of the society voluntarily changed its name and then applied for a license to operate. Aside from the information provided above, no other documentation could be found for this society.

4.2. Donation Campaigns

The tradition of collecting donations encompassed a vast range of practices and was based on volunteer work in Ottoman society, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. The collection of donations included fund-raising activities ranging from charity work for the needy and disaster victims to donation campaigns for public services. This tradition continued as a major public activity in the Second Constitutional Period.⁷² In particular the Committee of Union and Progress used the tradition of collecting donations to fund state work as well as meet the needs of disaster victims. As time went on, donations became one of the means by which the Committee of Union and Progress mobilized social awareness.

Donation campaigns were organized either by local charters of the Committee of Union and Progress or its affiliates. Unionist newspapers also had an important role to play in donation campaigns, as charity events of all kinds appeared in newspaper announcements along with the names of donors and the amount of their donations. In this way, they tried to encourage communities to participate in donation campaigns which included auctions, concerts, theatre plays, popular entertainment, and fairs. Regulations on the Collection of Donations (*Cem-i İânât Kanunnamesi*) were compiled to avoid disorganization and misappropriation, and as a whole to ensure that fund raising activities functioned properly within a legal framework.

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, numerous donation campaigns were carried out in Trabzon. The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress led such donation campaigns and publicized them through its mouthpiece *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which announced donation campaigns, called on the public to participate, and tried to encourage people to take part by publishing the names of donors.

Among the most prominent donation campaigns in Trabzon were fund-raising events that supported the Naval Society. An article in the 43rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* titled “Zırhlı İanesine İştirak” (Joining the Donation for the Battleship) announced that every Friday a fund-raising event would be held by a society led by Müftü Hafız Mahir Efendi which included members such

72 Gök, *ibid.*, p. 78, fn. 2.

as Attar Edhem, Kadızade Temel and others, just as in Izmir.⁷³ Through the announcement, the establishment of the Trabzon Naval Society was also proclaimed. In the 153rd issue of the same newspaper, it was reported that students from the Trabzon Junior High School collected 3 lira among themselves and sent the money to the office of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* newspaper to be delivered to the Naval Society. Likewise some high school students raised 272 kuruş out of a sense of patriotism and sent their donation to the Naval Society via their teacher Cemal Efendi.⁷⁴ Such news reports served to demonstrate the social awareness and responsibility of students who contributed to campaigns by donating part of their already meagre finances to good causes, and in doing so such reports were a means of encouraging adult citizens to make contributions too. In the following issue of the newspaper, the names of people who had donated to the Navy as well as the amounts of their donations were published, which came to a total of 86,670 kuruş.⁷⁵

To cite some other examples, a group of senior students at Trabzon Junior High School raised 130 kuruş and sent it to the office of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* to be given to the Naval Society.⁷⁶ A “patriotic” benefit auction for the Naval Society which was held at Osman Efendi’s cafe in Zağnos drew many people. Kalcızade Mahmut Bey bought a cup of tea and a cup of coffee 6 kuruş 10 para, and Captain Tursun Efendi bought a cup of coffee for 2.5 kuruş. As part of the event, Tufanpaşazade Faik Bey bought the chair he was sitting on for 70 kuruş. Captain Murat Efendi drank a cup of coffee for 20 kuruş, and Zühtü Efendi drank a cup of tea and smoked a hookah for 34.5 kuruş. Together with the contributions of other participants, 486 kuruş in total were raised and delivered to the Naval Society.⁷⁷

In the same issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* there was an article titled “Kadınlar Piyango Sergisinde Piyango” (Lottery in the Women’s Lottery Exhibition) which reported that the women of Trabzon came together to organize an exhibition, lottery, and auction to support the Naval Society. This event demonstrates one way that women started to appear more in the public sphere in Trabzon. In the exhibition, a painting depicting Crete and Anatolia was bought by the

73 “Zırhlı İ'anesine İştirak”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 43, 21 Kanûnisâni 1324 (3 February 1909), p. 4.

74 “Donanma İ'anesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 153, 13 Şubat 1325 (26 February 1910), p. 1.

75 “Donanma İ'anesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 154, 20 Şubat 1325 (5 March 1910), p. 3.

76 “Donanma-yı Osmanî”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 155, 24 Şubat 1325 (9 March 1910), p. 2.

77 “Zağnos Bahçesi'nde Müzayede”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 155, 24 Şubat 1325 (9 March 1910), p. 2.

governor for 1,000 kuruş.⁷⁸ The fact that a nationalistic painting was sold for such a high price is significant because the Crete issue was so important for the Ottoman public in those days. An article in the 156th issue of the same newspaper noted that the week-long auctions being held at the cafes of Trabzon were well-attended. It was also reported that a few people donated 273 kuruş at an auction being held at the house of Hacıhafızade Eşref Efendi, and the author expressed hope that people from other provinces would be inspired by the patriotic efforts of the people of Trabzon.⁷⁹

The 159th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Trabzon Naval Society sent its headquarters 1,000 Ottoman lira,⁸⁰ and in the same issue an article announced that in the second round of fund-raising carried out under the auspices of the Ottoman Women's Naval Donation Exhibition 10,166 kuruş had been sent to the Naval Society; 8,128 kuruş had come from furniture sales, 1,978 kuruş from lottery proceeds, and 570 kuruş from direct donations.⁸¹ It was also reported that boatmen donated 400 kuruş to the Trabzon Naval Society as their February instalment.⁸²

The 162nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* ran an article which reported that after a talk held at the Youth Club, the Commander Pasha bought a plate at auction for 400 kuruş, which was then donated to the Naval Society.⁸³ In the same issue, a piece titled "Ottoman Women's Naval Donation Exhibition" listed donors from the neighbourhood of Hacı Kasım.⁸⁴ In the 164th issue, an article stated that Niyazi Efendi, the owner of Lazistan Hotel, bought some auctioned oranges for 2,002 kuruş and that the proceeds were sent to the Naval Society.⁸⁵ In the following issue, it was reported that Hafız Ali Şevket Efendi, an employee from the Ottoman Debt Administration (*Düyun-u Umumiye*

78 "Kadınlar Piyango Sergisinde Piyango", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 155, 24 Şubat 1325 (9 March 1910), p. 3.

79 "Müzayede Yükseliyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 156, 27 Şubat 1325 (12 March 1910), p. 1.

80 "Donanma İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 159, 10 Mart 1326 (23 March 1910), p. 1.

81 "Osmanlı Kadınları İ'ane-yi Bahriye Sergisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 159, 10 Mart 1326 (23 March 1910), p. 1.

82 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 159, 10 Mart 1326 (23 March 1910), p. 2.

83 "Müzayede-yi Vatanperverane", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 162, 20 Mart 1326 (2 April 1910), p. 1.

84 "Osmanlı Kadınları İ'ane-yi Bahriye Sergisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 162, 20 Mart 1326 (2 April 1910), p. 3.

85 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 164, 27 Mart 1326 (9 April 1910), p. 1.

İdaresi), donated an amount equal to one month's salary to the Naval Society, which he declared in an announcement to his supervisors.⁸⁶

In the 166th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that 293 kuruş 10 para was collected at an auction in Maçka and subsequently sent to the newspaper's office by Nahiye Müdürü Emmanuel Efendi.⁸⁷ Three issues later, an article noted that boatmen had donated 400 kuruş to the Naval Society as their March instalment.⁸⁸ In the following issue, it was reported that villagers from Çekanay in Maçka donated 2 *paras* per kilogram of their hazelnut yield to the Naval Society.⁸⁹ A piece in the 179th issue reported that teachers from the Trabzon Gendarmerie School donated part of their salaries to the Naval Society.⁹⁰ An announcement in the 274th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that the Trabzon Naval Society sent 700 Ottoman lira to the Dersaadet Naval Society.⁹¹ In the 299th issue, an article reported that an auction was held in Golozade Rıza Bey's cafe in the neighbourhood of Kavak Meydan where a hookah was sold for 217 kuruş, which was then sent to the Naval Society.⁹² In the following issue, it was reported that the Trabzon Naval Society sent 17,496 kuruş to its headquarters in Dersaadet.⁹³ An article in the 311th issue reported that the Trabzon charter sent 5,631 kuruş to Dersaadet on 8 August 1327 (21 August 1911), followed by 17,800 kuruş more.⁹⁴ In the 152nd, 153rd and 157th issues of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, a list of goods that were sold at the Ottoman Women's Naval Donation Exhibition in the neighbourhood of Boztepe and the amount of the proceeds were published.⁹⁵ The 156th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* ran a rather odd story about an illegal "rally" that was held during the Ottoman Women's Naval Donation Exhibition. At the event, Abdullah and

86 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi ve Asâr-ı Hamiyyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 165, 31 Mart 1326 (13 April 1910), p. 1.

87 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 166, 3 Nisan 1326 (16 April 1910), pp. 1-2.

88 "Donanma İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 169, 14 Nisan 1326 (27 April 1910), p. 4.

89 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 170, 17 Nisan 1326 (30 April 1910), p. 2.

90 "Donanma-yı Osmanî İ'anesi ve Jandarma Efrâd-ı Cedide Mektebi Birinci Bölük Efradı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 179, 19 Mayıs 1326 (1 June 1910), p. 1.

91 "Donanma İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 274, 28 Nisan 1327 (10 May 1911), p. 2.

92 "Donanma Cemiyeti'nden", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 299, 23 Temmuz 1327 (5 August 1911), p. 2.

93 "Donanma İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 300, 27 Temmuz 1327 (9 August 1911), p. 2.

94 "Donanma İ'anesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 311, 3 Eylül 1327 (16 September 1911), p. 1.

95 "Osmanlı Kadınları İ'âne-yi Bahriye Sergisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 152, 13 Şubat 1325 (26 February 1910), pp. 3-4; "Osmanlı Kadınları İ'âne-yi Bahriye Sergisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 153, 17 Şubat 1325 (2 March 1910), p. 4; "Osmanlı Kadınları İ'âne-yi Bahriye Sergisi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 157, 3 Mart 1326 (16 March 1910), pp. 3-4.

Halid Efendis shot their guns into the air and were arrested. When they were arraigned, they were fined 5 kuruş each.⁹⁶

Another striking piece of news in the Trabzon press was about the *Tayyare İ'ânesi* (Donation for Airplanes). The newspaper *Envar-ı Vicdan* published a declaration made by the Trabzon Naval Society which stated that it would now be taking donations for airplanes, as they were needed to strengthen the Ottoman military, and that donations were to be delivered to the Naval Society.⁹⁷ An article in the 125th issue of the same newspaper stated that in March the employees of the Ministry of Finance had donated an amount equal to one day of their wages to the campaign. The airplane purchased with their donation was to be called “*Maliye*” (Finance).⁹⁸

In the 127th issue of *Envar-ı Vicdan*, it was announced that 3,000 kuruş in proceeds had been collected thanks to a concert organized by Hafız Mehmet Efendi, the owner of Bahçeli Cafe in Ortahisar, and the money had been donated to the campaign for airplanes.⁹⁹ In the 130th issue, an article mentioned that two state-of-the-art airplanes had been ordered from the Bristol Factory in Britain at a cost of 1,300 lira each with the money collected from the Donation for Airplanes campaign. The article also noted that six officers and five technicians from the Industrial School had been sent to the factory for flight training.¹⁰⁰ In the 369th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the names of people who had donated to the airplane campaign were listed along with the total amount of donations, which was 1,454 kuruş.¹⁰¹

There was news of a different sort concerning donations in the 255th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. An article reported that consul wives led by the French consul's wife, as well as the wives of high ranking Ottoman officials, launched a campaign to raise funds for the poor in Trabzon and distributed the proceeds to the needy. The Trabzon Municipality gave the women a certificate of commendation.¹⁰² In the 381st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was announced that a film screening was to be held and the proceeds from the ticket sales were

96 “Mahkemenin Kararı”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 156, 27 Şubat 1325 (12 March 1910), pp. 1-2.

97 “Tayyare Filosu”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 122, 13 Mart 1328 (26 March 1912), inside cover.

98 “Tayyare İ'ânesi”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 125, 3 Nisan 1328 (16 April 1912), inside cover.

99 “Konser: Tayyare İ'ânesi”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 127, 17 Nisan 1328 (30 April 1912), inside cover.

100 “Tayyare Siparişi”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 130, 8 Mayıs 1328 (21 May 1912), inside cover.

101 “Tayyare İ'ânesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 369, 31 Mart 1328 (13 April 1912), p. 2.

102 “...”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 255, 19 Şubat 1326 (4 March 1911), p. 2.

to be sent to around eighty orphans and students in need at the Union and Progress School.¹⁰³

An article in the 71st issue of *Tarık* newspaper reported that Ali Çavuş, the owner of Union Cafe in the neighbourhood of Tabakhane, placed a collection box in his cafe to help Kulaksızoğlu Hüseyin, a reserve army soldier from Hus stationed in northern Albania. The article mentioned that every Friday evening the cafe owner would place his earnings from the night into the box.¹⁰⁴

When the Balkan Wars broke out, it was decided that a volunteer brigade would be assembled, so the people of Trabzon mobilized to help equip the brigade. Women held a campaign to collect underwear, shirts, and socks for the volunteer soldiers,¹⁰⁵ and cobblers donated fifty-two pairs of shoes.¹⁰⁶ Also, under the leadership of the *Müftü* of Trabzon a committee was established to procure winter clothes for the soldiers serving in Rumeli and women started to collect warm underwear to be sent to the troops. Newspapers were used to disseminate news about these campaigns, likely in order to encourage others to contribute as well.¹⁰⁷

In the 424th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* there were two pieces of striking news. In the first, an announcement was made which stated that the headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress sent a directive to all its charters instructing them to create committees which would be responsible for ensuring that the needs of soldiers' families were met, and they were told how to run those committees.¹⁰⁸ In the second, it was announced that a committee had been established for the collection of donations to the Red Crescent in Trabzon.¹⁰⁹

Such donation campaigns were crucial for the Unionists as a means of mobilizing society. By holding auctions at cafes and tea gardens, they sought to reach out to people from different walks of life. At these events, token objects

103 "Yetimler Menfaatine Sinematograf", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 381, 12 Mayıs 1328 (25 May 1912), p. 3.

104 "Şayan-ı Takdir Bir Vazife-i Siyanetkarane", *Tarık*, No: 71, 28 Temmuz 1327 (10 August 1911), p. 4.

105 "Hanımlarımızın Muaveneti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 3.

106 "Çapulacı Esnafının Himmeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 421, 3 Teşrinievvel 1328 (16 October 1912), p. 3.

107 "Kahraman Askerlerimize Elbise-i Şita'ıye Tedarik Edelim", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 423, 10 Teşrinievvel 1328 (23 October 1912), p. 2; "Hanımlarımızın Askerlere Muaveneti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 423, 10 Teşrinievvel 1328 (23 October 1912), p. 3.

108 "Ahval-i Hazıra Münasebetiyle İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Bütün Merâkizine Tebligatı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 2.

109 "Hilal-i Ahmer İ'ânesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 424, 13 Teşrinievvel 1328 (26 October 1912), p. 3.

were purchased at high prices by people ranging from high ranking officials to the lowest ranking employees and from dignitaries to ordinary citizens. As such, it would not be wrong to say that the Unionists succeeded in attaining their goal. Moreover, artisans such as cobblers and boatmen organized campaigns themselves and made donations to the Naval Society in monthly instalments, while some peasants donated part of the proceeds from their annual yields. Women also got involved, taking part in and organizing fund-raising events.

It is also notable that government employees donated portions of their salaries to the Naval Society and the Donation for Airplanes campaigns. All the same, at a time when the economy was deteriorating rapidly and salaries were not paid regularly, making such donations may not, in fact, have been very voluntary. Employees may have been directed to do so, or they may have donated a salary which they knew they would not receive anyways. Still, the mobilization of the people of Trabzon during the Balkan Wars is indicative of the influence of Unionist propaganda as well as the patriotism of the people of the city. Moreover, it is noteworthy that consuls' wives and the wives of merchants worked together in charity organizations. Donation campaigns for military families were focused on helping those families but at the same time they motivated the soldiers at the front because they would not have to worry about their loved ones. In short, all of these donation campaigns were part of a process of enabling social mobilization in Trabzon.

4.3. Health Issues

Epidemics were another major issue that was high on the public agenda in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period. Such contagious diseases often originated in Russia and spread to Trabzon via merchants, passengers, and ships. In that period of time, disease was a common topic in the local press, especially cholera, followed by the plague and smallpox. The British consul also wrote a report on cholera and quarantine procedures in and around Trabzon, and sent it to the consulate in Istanbul.

For the period of study here, the first news article about cholera appeared in the 24th issue of *Feyz*. The article reported that four rowboats had been allocated for disease control and the governor of Trabzon had dispatched a member of the gendarmerie, a police officer, and a warden to inform people living between Trabzon and Rize about the disease.¹¹⁰ After this article appeared in October 1908, no other news reports were made about cholera until July 1910. In the 190th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* there was a piece titled “Afât-ı Arziyye:

110 “Şayan-ı Memnuniyet Bir Tedbir”, *Feyz*, No: 24, 12 Teşrînîevvel 1324 (25 October 1908), p. 4.

Kolera” (Disaster: Cholera) which reported that medical personnel were to be appointed to prevent the spread of cholera which had reportedly originated in Russia. The article also provided information about preventive measures.¹¹¹ In the 200th issue of the same newspaper, another article discussed preventive measures,¹¹² and a few issues later the same newspaper announced that cholera had spread to Erzurum, where authorities stated a 48-hour quarantine had been declared for the province and its environs. The article also reported that a quarantine centre was to be set up near the border of Bayburt in the province of Trabzon and that cholera had spread to Erzurum via a few illegal travellers, resulting in a number of casualties.¹¹³ An article in the following issue reported that the cholera epidemic had spread to several districts of Erzurum.¹¹⁴ In the 210th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, it was reported that cholera had spread to Trabzon as well; on the previous day, a woman exhibited symptoms of cholera in the neighbourhood of Kavak Meydanı, along with four women in the neighbourhood of Çömlekçi, and three of them passed away. Moreover, the article noted that on the day the newspaper was published, two more people had possibly been infected, so their houses were quarantined, but doctors could not yet conclusively diagnose it as cholera.¹¹⁵

When cholera spread to Trabzon, Naci Bey, the owner of *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, wrote about the issue in an editorial. He provided details about the disease along with some preventive measures.¹¹⁶ In the following issue, an article reported that between 16 and 20 September 1910, the epidemic had spread among soldiers, civilians, and prisoners in several neighbourhoods with thirty-three people infected, seventeen of whom passed away.¹¹⁷

By mid-September 1910, the epidemic had worsened in Trabzon. On a daily basis newspapers published lists of patients and the dead. In the 213th issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, it was reported that from 24 September to the evening of 27 September, 111 people had been infected with cholera, including prisoners, soldiers, and civilians, and fifty-three of them succumbed to the disease.¹¹⁸ The author observed that the cholera epidemic had a strongly negative effect on the commercial life of Trabzon, as people were afraid of getting infected and left

111 “Afât-ı Araziye: Kolera”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 190, 26 Haziran 1326 (9 July 1910), p. 3.

112 “Kolera”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 200, 31 Temmuz 1326 (13 August 1910), pp. 1-2.

113 “Kolera”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 204, 14 Ağustos 1326 (27 August 1910), p. 2.

114 “Kolera”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 205, 18 Ağustos 1326 (31 August 1910), p. 1.

115 “Şüpheli Hastalık”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 210, 4 Eylül 1326 (17 September 1910), p. 3.

116 Naci, “Hastalık”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 211, 8 Eylül 1326 (21 September 1910), p. 1.

117 “Trabzon’da Bulunan Etibba Tarafından Verilen Rapor”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 212, 11 Eylül 1326 (24 September 1910), p. 3.

118 “Kolera”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 213, 15 Eylül 1326 (28 September 1910), p. 2.

the city to go to villages. As a result, a number of shops in the city shuttered their doors. Publications called for increased preventive measures and efforts to revive commercial life in the city,¹¹⁹ and a donation campaign was held for the victims of cholera which yielded 1492 kuruş 30 para.¹²⁰

Issues 215 and 234 of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reveal that in approximately 80 days, 246 people were infected with cholera and 107 of them died.¹²¹ During this period of time, several attempts were made to contain the disease. Doctor İsmail Hakkı Bey from Milas gave a talk at the Union and Progress Club on Uzun Sokak and the following day the municipality convened the local councils to establish neighbourhood health committees.¹²² The 234th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the cholera epidemic was starting to subside and there hadn't been any more casualties.¹²³ British consul Longworth sent reports to the consulate in Istanbul, in which he mentioned the devastation that the disease had inflicted upon the city.¹²⁴ In another report, he wrote that reserve army soldiers had not been deployed because of the cholera epidemic¹²⁵ and he noted that he could not carry out the directives sent to him via telegram as ships could not dock in Trabzon as the result of the ongoing quarantine.¹²⁶

In the 235th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, plague and smallpox were also mentioned. It was reported that ships coming from Batum were to be examined for plague at quarantine centres in Sürmene, Sinop, or Manastırağzı.¹²⁷ Other articles reported that a smallpox epidemic broke out in İplaksa in Maçka and vaccination officer Rauf Efendi was deployed to the region so he could take any precautions needed.¹²⁸ The cholera epidemic which had prevailed for the most part of 1910, started to reappear in Trabzon in August 1911.¹²⁹

119 Naci, "Şehrimizde Buhran-ı Ticaret", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 214, 18 Eylül 1324 (1 October 1910), p. 1.

120 "İntizar-ı Hamiyet: Kolera Münasebetiyle Muhtacine Mu'avenet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 214, 18 Eylül 1324 (1 October 1910), p. 1.

121 "Trabzon'da Kolera", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 215, 22 Eylül 1326 (5 October 1910), p. 2; "Kolera", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), p. 2.

122 "İttihad ve Terakki Kulübü'nde Konferans ve Netayici", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 224, 27 Teşrinievvel 1326 (9 November 1910), pp. 2-3.

123 "Kolera", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), p. 2.

124 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 19 September 1910, p. 85.

125 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 24 September 1910, p. 88.

126 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 25 September 1910, p. 89.

127 "Veba Hakkında Tedabir-i Sıhhiye", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 235, 11 Kanûnievvel 1326 (24 December 1910), p. 2.

128 "Çiçek Hastalığı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 235, 11 Kanûnievvel 1326 (24 December 1910), p. 3.

129 "Kolera", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:303, 6 Ağustos 1327 (19 August 1911), p. 2.

In light of the news reports discussed above, it can be seen that the cholera, plague, and smallpox epidemics had a major impact on life in Trabzon. While its spread from Russia could not be contained, a lot of work went into ensuring it did not spread in Ottoman territories. Nonetheless, casualties were unavoidable and even though quarantine centres were set up, people were insufficiently informed about protective measures and methods of treatment, which increased the number of casualties.

4.4. Natural Disasters

A number of natural phenomena appeared in articles published in the newspapers of Trabzon, including earthquakes and fires.

4.4.1. Earthquakes

In the 54th issue of *Feyz*, an article titled “*Hareket-i Arz*” (Earthquake) reported that on Tuesday, 9 February 1909 (27 Kanûnisânî 1324) at around 08:30 local time four strong tremors lasting for a few seconds hit the city, moving from west to east. On the same day at 11:45 local time, a new wave of quakes hit the city. Two days later, on Thursday at 4:55 local time, another strong tremor struck but no casualties or damage to property occurred.¹³⁰

The earthquake that occurred on 9 February 1909 was described slightly differently in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which reported the quakes as happening between 8:30 and 11:45 and the article noted that there were two shockwaves, not four. The earthquakes were described as lasting for two seconds and having been felt in the environs of Giresun, Tirebolu and Rize but did not result in casualties or damage.¹³¹ *Trabzon'da Meşveret* did not mention the earthquake on 11 February. Another article about earthquakes was published in the 177th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, which reported that a very light tremor had hit the city at around 6:00 in the evening two days earlier.¹³² Apart from these earthquakes, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* published in its 240th issue a story about a large earthquake that struck Turkistan. The earthquake was described as being devastating, razing numerous villages to the ground and damaging roads. The article noted that telegraph lines were down, so there was little information getting out, but telegrams from Tashkent indicated that there was a high number of casualties.¹³³

130 “*Hareket-i Arz*”, *Feyz*, No: 54, 30 Kanûnisânî 1324 (12 February 1909), p. 4.

131 “*Hareket-i Arz*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 45, 28 Kanûnisânî 1324 (10 February 1909), p. 4.

132 “*Hareket-i Arz*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 177, 12 Mayıs 1326 (25 May 1910), p. 2.

133 “*Hareket-i Arz*”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 240, 29 Kanûnievvel 1326 (11 January 1911), p. 3.

The 246th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* described the Turkistan earthquake in detail. In the Yedisu region, where Turks were in the majority, a series of earthquakes hit, as a result of which hundreds of buildings collapsed. It was reported that thousands of Muslims were trapped under rubble and that an aid campaign for the victims was started in Russia. The article said that a similar campaign was underway in Ottoman lands to help the Turkish and Muslim victims.¹³⁴ At the end of the campaign, a cheque for 108,000 kuruş was sent to the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg.¹³⁵ The success of the aid campaign demonstrates that the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress to mobilize Ottoman society were rather effective.

4.4.2. Fires

Fires were another type of disaster that appeared in the pages of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, in particular the Great Fire of Istanbul, which was covered in detail. The fire razed a large part of the city and left thousands of people homeless, so when news of the disaster reached Trabzon, philanthropists established a committee led by the governor and started to collect donations.¹³⁶ Initially 7,775 kuruş was collected as a result of the work of the committee. The names of the donors appeared on the front page in the 298th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*,¹³⁷ which was clearly an attempt to motivate others to contribute to the campaign. In the 299th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* there was an article titled “İttihat ve Terakki'nin Mu'aveneti” which mentioned that the committee was organizing events to help the fire victims. One day before that piece was published, a charity committee established under the auspices of the Committee of Union and Progress in Istanbul visited the Union and Progress Girls School, Süleymaniye Club, Yenikapı Armenian School in the neighbourhood of Atik Ali Pasha, Karagözyan Efendi House in the neighbourhood of Kâtip Kasım and Vefa and its environs. They distributed candles, soap, rolling papers, and matches to the victims of the fire, and gave money to those who were in need. In addition, they provided blankets and clothes to people whose belongings were destroyed in the fire.¹³⁸ The charity work of the Istanbul members of the Committee of Union and Progress was reported about in detail in the newspapers of Trabzon. In this way, the Committee of Union and Progress sought

134 “Hareket-i Arz”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 246, 19 Kanûnisâni 1326 (1 February 1911), p. 3.

135 “Türkistan İ'anesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 275, 30 Nisan 1327 (13 May 1911), p. 2.

136 “Komisyon Teşkili”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 298, 20 Temmuz 1327 (2 August 1911), p. 2.

137 “İstanbul Harikzedegânına Mu'avenet”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 298, 20 Temmuz 1327 (2 August 1911), p. 1.

138 “İttihat ve Terakki'nin Mu'aveneti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 299, 23 Temmuz 1327 (5 August 1911), p. 3.

to carry out propaganda and mobilize the people of Trabzon to join the aid campaign, and public opinion was shaped in Trabzon as a result of these publications. A substantial amount of money was collected in Trabzon and sent to Istanbul; the 302nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* published a list of donors and reported that 36,882 kuruş had been collected.¹³⁹ In the next issue, again a list of donors' names was published along with an announcement stating that 39,004 kuruş had been collected.¹⁴⁰ According to a document found among the reports prepared by the British consul in Trabzon, a fire broke out in a building that belonged to the British Embassy in Tarabya, Istanbul. Trabzon Mayor Barutçuzade Hacı Ahmet Bey promptly sent a telegram to the British Embassy, offering his condolences on behalf of the people of Trabzon.¹⁴¹

4.5. Minorities and Foreigners

At the time of the Second Constitution, the majority of the population of Trabzon was Muslim, along with a sizable Greek community and smaller Armenian community. There was also an Iranian community of merchants which had a few thousand members, and aside from consular officials, there were some Europeans living in the city as well.

According to the 1904 Trabzon Yearbook (*Salname*), there were 29,068 Muslims living in Trabzon along with 13,190 Greeks, 7,121 Armenians, 1,443 Armenian Catholics, and 94 Protestants.¹⁴² According to the 1914 census, there were 64,726 Muslims, 23,806 Greeks, 14,846 Armenians, 1,345 Armenian Catholics, 127 Protestants, and 8 Jews.¹⁴³

While it may seem extraordinary that the population of Trabzon doubled in a decade, it is possible that in the 1904 Trabzon Yearbook only the population of the city itself was counted, excluding *nahiyes* and villages, whereas the 1914 census may have included the environs of Trabzon in the count.

4.5.1. Greeks (*Rum*)

In Trabzon, Greeks constituted the second largest community after Muslims. The majority of the Greeks in the city became wealthy through international trade, but they also made noteworthy cultural developments. As of

139 "İstanbul Harikzedegânına Mu'avenet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 302, 3 Ağustos 1327 (16 August 1911), p. 1.

140 "İstanbul Harikzedegânına Mu'avenet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 303, 6 Ağustos 1327 (19 August 1911), p. 1.

141 PRO., F.O., 195/2386, 15 February 1911, pp. 111-112.

142 Kudret Emiroğlu, (ed.), *Trabzon Vilayeti Salnamesi 1904*, vol 22, Ankara: Trabzon İli ve İlçeleri Eğitim, Kültür ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı Yayınları, 2009.

143 Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu 1830-1914*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010, p. 376.

the mid-nineteenth century, one of the nationalist ideas that caught on with local Greeks was the ideology of Pontus, the ultimate goal of which was to establish a Pontic state. All the same, it would be wrong to assume that this idea was embraced by all Greeks in the region. The Greeks in Trabzon, who had also lived under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, rejoiced when they heard about the proclamation of the Second Constitution. Moreover, soon after that historical event, Matiev Kofidi, a citizen of Greek descent, was elected as a Trabzon representative in the Ottoman Parliament.¹⁴⁴ In the committee that tried to quell the upheaval that occurred during the 31 March Incident, there were Greeks as well, including Metropolit Constantin and an editor by the name of Ieroclis.¹⁴⁵ The political changes that took place in the wake of the incident pleased the Greeks just as much as the other inhabitants of Trabzon at the time. During the celebrations that were held, the Greek *murahhashane* was decorated with flags.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, Fosturopolu Yorgi and Velisaridi Kosti served on the committee that was established to provide aid to the families of the people who were killed during the incident.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Greek Metropolit organized a liturgy marking the political changes that took place.¹⁴⁸

While the libertarian atmosphere that accompanied the proclamation of the Second Constitution led the Greeks to contribute to the societal changes that followed, there were some separationist ideologies as well. An article that appeared in the 77th issue of *Feyz* mentioned that some Greek officers had founded an illegal organization with the aim of inciting unrest in Ottoman territories. The same article urged Greeks to avoid becoming involved with such people and to immediately inform the Ottoman authorities if they heard anything.¹⁴⁹

Some Greeks initially supported the Freedom and Understanding Party (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*) that had been established. Indeed, people who wanted to become a member of the party were advised to apply to the Serasi printing house owned by Dimitraki Serasi.¹⁵⁰ When former Finance Minister Cavit Bey visited Trabzon, the Greek Metropolit was also included in the committee that greeted him and accompanied him during his visit.¹⁵¹

144 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 2 December 1908, pp. 281-282.

145 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 30 April 1909, pp. 50-51.

146 “Üç Gün, Üç Gece”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 68, 18 Nisan 1325 (1 May 1909), p. 3.

147 “Şüheda-yı Hürriyete Hediye”, *Feyz*, No: 72, 18 Mayıs 1325 (31 May 1909), inside cover.

148 BOA., DH. MKT., 2833-34, 1327. Ca. 17 (6 June 1909).

149 “İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumi’si’nden Neşr Olunan Beyannamedir”, *Feyz*, No: 77, 22 Haziran 1325 (5 July 1909), inside cover.

150 “Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Trabzon Şubesi Riyasetinden”, *Envar-ı Vicdan*, No: 111, 27 Kanûnievvel 1327 (9 January 1912), inside cover.

151 “Cavid ve Naci Beyler Şerefine Ziyafet”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 295, 10 Temmuz 1327 (23 July 1911), p. 5.

The fact that the Turks, Greeks, and Armenians living in Trabzon independently campaigned for the 1912 elections was criticized by Nikolaki Urfanidi, a Greek lawyer who proposed a joint campaign, which he thought would better benefit Trabzon.¹⁵² In the elections, even though most of the Greeks in Trabzon supported the Freedom and Understanding Party, Matiev Kofidi was able to be re-elected under the banner of the Committee of Union and Progress. While the Committee of Union and Progress won with a landslide victory in almost all of the districts of Trabzon, the Freedom and Dissent Party received the majority of votes only in the 3rd District, where the Greek population outnumbered all others.¹⁵³

With the advent of the Balkan Wars, the losses that the Ottoman Army incurred and the horrific events that transpired were made public by the Trabzon press, which in turn led to a palpable sense of unease in the city. Afterwards, separatist activities and social segregation continued to mar society until the population exchange of 1924.

4.5.2. Armenians

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution, a new era began in the lives of Armenians living in Trabzon. Armenians joined the celebrations and launched a number of initiatives to protect their people and have a say in social and political life, even though they were outnumbered by the other communities in the city. A report written by the British consul dated 11 September 1908 mentions one such venture. According to the report, the Armenians in the city gathered at a church under the auspices of the Armenian Bishop to discuss the current political situation.¹⁵⁴ Having made the opening speech for the meeting, the Bishop left the church in order to meet with Turkish authorities. Setrak Efendi, an Armenian from Trabzon who worked for the Régie Company, made a speech in which he mentioned that members of the new parliament were going to be elected soon and he gave a detailed explanation of the election system. Emphasizing the fact that the number of Armenians in Trabzon was relatively low, Setrak Efendi said that it was crucial for them to act in unison. Moreover, he stressed the fact that in order for the Armenian candidates to beat

152 Nikolaki Urfanidi, “İttihatla Çalışmak İcab Eder”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 11, 24 Eylül 1324 (7 October 1908), p. 3.

153 “Hürriyet ve İtilaf’ın İlk ve Son Muvaffakiyeti”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 364, 14 Mart 1328 (27 March 1912), p. 2; “İttihad ve Terakki’nin Namzedleri Kazanıyor”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 364, 14 Mart 1328 (27 March 1912), p. 1; “İttihad ve Terakki’nin Namzedleri Kazanıyor”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 365, 17 Mart 1328 (30 March 1912), p. 3.

154 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 11 September 1908, p. 195.

their Greek counterparts in the elections, they needed to be fluent in Turkish.¹⁵⁵ Zuhul Efendi, a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement, spoke next, describing how the new parliament would work and then he moved on to criticize the new national educational scheme. Maral Efendi spoke next, discussing the history of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement. At the end of his speech, he mentioned Şehrikyan Efendi, an Armenian lawyer who had once lived in Trabzon and had fled to Russia because of political matters. Maral Efendi suggested that Şehrikyan Efendi be elected by the Armenians to represent them in parliament.¹⁵⁶ The Armenian community in Trabzon joined the celebrations marking the opening of parliament even though no Armenian representatives were elected, and students from the Armenian School sang the Freedom March in front of City Hall, which undoubtedly made a good impression on the Muslim population. The spirit of the times became a means for the two communities to come together.¹⁵⁷ In spite of the affinity between the two communities, the Taşnaksutyun Committee of Trabzon distributed, for the first time ever, a Turkish proclamation claiming fraud in the past election. Even though this created discomfort in the city because none of the other communities brought up a similar claim, the situation remained restrained. After the city's community leaders met at the Ottoman Club to assess the situation, they announced their unconditional support to the elected representatives of the city.¹⁵⁸ After hearsay started spreading that the Armenians were going to incite a riot in the city, the Armenian Representative's Office and Taşnaksutyun Committee published declarations saying it was untrue and that the Armenians were loyal to the cause of Ottoman unity, which eased tensions.¹⁵⁹ The call for autonomy that appeared on leaflets written in Turkish and distributed by an organization called the "Socialist Youth", which had been established within the Armenian community, was also dismissed by prominent Armenians.¹⁶⁰

Another report written by the British consulate mentioned that the three officers who had been assigned to reorganize the Trabzon Gendarmerie Battalion, namely Hamdi Pasha, General von Alten, and Captain Mezza, had been removed from their assignment. Non-Muslims in Trabzon, especially Armenians, closely followed the reorganization of the Gendarmerie Battalion and

155 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 11 September 1908, p. 196.

156 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 11 September 1908, p. 197.

157 Salim, "Ermeni Vatandaşlarımız", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 37, 17 Kanûnievvel 1324 (30 December 1908), p. 2.

158 "Trabzon", *Feyz*, No: 43, 23 Kanûnievvel 1324 (5 January 1909), pp. 2-3.

159 "Ermeni Vatandaşlarımız ve Teskin-i Heyecan", *Feyz*, No: 62, 27 Şubat 1324 (12 March 1909), p. 1-2.

160 BOA., DH. MKT., 2850-66, 1327. C. 1 (20 June 1909).

the number of recruits that would be taken in. Armenians preferred serving in the gendarmerie over regular military service because the former offered better conditions and included a monthly salary of two pounds.¹⁶¹

A number of archival documents indicate that there was restlessness within the Armenian community itself. For example, Trabzon Armenian representative Emmanuel Balyan Efendi resigned, complaining that the Taşnaksutyun Committee had been meddling in his official and religious affairs. Having applied to the Ottoman authorities for a new official post, Emmanuel Balyan Efendi was assigned to be the Maçka District Manager.¹⁶² In another case of unrest, when a clash arose between an Armenian School Headmaster and some teachers and then quickly spiralled out of control, turning into a brawl when some students got involved, the police had to be called in to resolve the situation. The governor of Trabzon, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey, sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior explaining that the current headmaster was a citizen of Russia and that the teachers demanded that the former headmaster replace the current one. The governor added that Armenian youth supporting the Taşnaksutyun Committee had been putting pressure on Armenian representative Serdin Efendi to resign.¹⁶³

To cite another example, when the Armenian youth heeded the invitation that had been extended to them and joined the Trabzon Reserve Force Garrison, news of their acceptance was warmly received. The claim was made that this move would prove to be a further catalyst for Turkish and Armenian communities to have better relations in the future.¹⁶⁴

In response to hearsay that non-Muslim minorities were mistreated in the military, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* published a letter purportedly written by an Armenian soldier named Pırvanat Papuççıyan. The letter claimed that such rumours were far off the mark and that there was absolutely no discrimination among soldiers in the military.¹⁶⁵ Another article claimed that a ceremony which was held just before a group of Armenian soldiers was sent to Erzurum for their basic military training represented yet another example of how there was not an "Armenian problem" in Trabzon.¹⁶⁶

161 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 28 October 1909, p. 116.

162 BOA., DH. EUM. THR., 95-37, 5. Ra. 1328 (17 March 1910).

163 BOA., DH. İD., 139-9, 1331. B. 28 (3 July 1913).

164 "Ermeni Gönüllüleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 210, 4 Eylül 1326 (17 September 1910), p. 2.

165 "Efrad-ı Gayrı-Müslime Askerlikden Memnun Değil Mi?", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 243, 8 Kanûnîşâni 1326 (21 January 1326), p. 3.

166 Nazım Nazmi, "Samimi Te'essürler: Ermeni Vatandaşlarıma", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 252, 9 Şubat 1326 (22 February 1911), pp. 1-2.

Documents concerning the various communities' daily lives in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period are predominantly about the Greeks. In a document from the Ottoman archives, the governor of Trabzon informed the Ministry of the Interior that the Trabzon Greek Metropolit held a ceremony marking the coronation of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Moreover, the governor asked how he should return that well-received gesture.¹⁶⁷ In response, the Ministry of the Interior stated that the Sultan would bestow gifts upon the Trabzon Metropolit as well as those that participated in the ceremony.¹⁶⁸ The ceremony may be seen as the result of the concept of National Unification (*İttihad-ı Anasır*) that was deeply engrained in the state after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, demonstrating how the Greek minority in Trabzon perceived the state.

Another archival document stated that an Armenian man's intention to marry a 14-year old Greek girl caused unrest between the two communities. The religious leaders of the two communities were unable to settle the situation peacefully and so the girl had been in the custody of the government since the date of the letter.¹⁶⁹ This event demonstrates the strains that could occur in the relationship between the two non-Muslim communities and the determination of the state to stay neutral in such situations.

4.5.3. Foreigners

News about foreigners in Trabzon is remarkable in many ways. In a telegram sent to the Ministry of the Interior by Trabzon Governor Samih Rifat Bey, the governor said that he had been introduced to a certain British person who worked as a teacher for the British School in Athens. Apparently, the teacher who went by the name of R. N. Dafki was brought to the attention of the governor by the British Consulate in Trabzon. Furthermore, that person had declared that his mission was to research the Greek dialects of Trabzon and for that reason he wanted to visit the Monastery at Sümela, Sürmene, Of, Santakurum, and Gümüşhane. It is apparent in the document that the British Consulate wanted to get permission from the governor for the teacher to visit the aforementioned districts.¹⁷⁰

In yet another archival document, a telegram was sent by the Ministry of the Interior to both Trabzon and Erzurum stating that a famous American artist by the name of John Findley, who was supported by the American Ministry of

167 BOA., DH. MKT., 2833-34, 1327. Ca. 17 (6 June 1909).

168 Ibid.

169 BOA., DH. MKT., 2770-66, 25. S. 1327 (18 March 1909).

170 BOA., DH. EUM. EMN., 116-15, 1332. Ş. 15 (9 July 1914).

Foreign Affairs, was planning to travel to Erzurum via Trabzon. The telegram ordered that permission be given and the artist be provided with assistance throughout his visit.¹⁷¹

A report dated 29 January 1910 which was sent by the British consulate in Trabzon to the British Embassy in Istanbul mentioned “an orphan girl” by the name of Erini Rosina Micropulos. The British consul, H. Z. Longworth, noted that the woman had been working for the manager of Ottoman Bank, Henry Simmons, and that they would like to register her as a citizen of the United Kingdom. The report noted that all of her documents had been burned in a fire in Istanbul and that she only had a birth certificate from the Notary of West Battersea. The consul added that the woman claimed that her parents, both of whom were British, were now deceased and that while she looked British, she had a Greek name.¹⁷² The consul asked the embassy how to proceed concerning getting her registered as a British citizen.

In a report dated 20 May 1910, the consul discussed how news of the death of Edward, the King of England, was received in Trabzon. According to the report, news got around by word of mouth and an air of sombreness prevailed. It was reported that Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Iranians, and Europeans living in the city felt a communal sense of sadness and the flags in the city were hung at half-mast. The consul wrote that people from all walks of life went to the consulate in Trabzon to convey their condolences, and the Protestant Church Committee in the city arranged a funeral in absentia. During the ceremony, bells rang, flags hung at half-mast, some stores were closed, and a gendarmerie squadron paid their respects to the deceased king. Even though attendance was voluntary, people from all backgrounds attended the funeral, including civil servants, military personnel, and authorities from other embassies. American missionaries, Muslim clerics, the Armenian Bishop and the Greek *Metropolit* were also present at the ceremony, where prayers were recited in Turkish, English, Greek, and Armenian, and hymns were chanted. At the end of the ceremony, the consul, H. Z. Longworth, gave a speech of appreciation.¹⁷³ It is worthy of note that the death of the King of England would resonate so much in Trabzon but it could be a reflection of the fact that the city was an important port for international trade and the residents were aware of what was happening in the rest of the world.

A report dated 8 April 1911 which was sent by the British consul in Trabzon to the British Embassy in Istanbul provided information about British citizens

171 BOA., DH. MTV., 24-23, 14. C. 1329 (12 June 1911).

172 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 29 January 1910, pp. 5-8.

173 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 20 May 1910, pp. 34-35.

living in Trabzon, stating that there were twenty-two British nationals residing in the city at the time.¹⁷⁴

In a report dated 23 June 1911, it was noted that a reception and a garden party had been held in Trabzon to mark the first anniversary of the coronation of the new King of England. The report noted that the event had been attended by prominent figures from the city and concluded with chants of “God save the King!”¹⁷⁵

A document located in the Ottoman archives reported that a missive had been sent by the British Ambassador in Russia to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The missive expressed appreciation for the respectful tact shown by the Trabzon Governor, Commander Pasha, and military personnel concerning the death of H. Z. Longworth, the British consul, who passed away while on duty.¹⁷⁶ This correspondence suggests that the British consul, who worked for many years in Trabzon, was well-liked and appreciated in the city.

The three to four thousand Iranians who lived in Trabzon generally conducted business related to trade between Trabzon and Iran. There was an Iranian consulate and an Iranian school in the city. While the Iranian population in Trabzon closely followed the political events of the Ottoman Empire, they also wanted (and supported) their own country in the shift from an authoritarian state to a constitutional monarchy. An Iranian named Seyyid Aka Tabatabai wrote an article that was published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret* which discussed the authoritarian state in Iran and the struggle that was being carried out there to bring about change. The same article complained about the Iranian consul in Trabzon, saying that it had somehow not noticed the positive developments that had occurred in Ottoman society after the defeat of authoritarianism and still supported the authoritarian regime in Iran.¹⁷⁷ Another article about Iranians in Trabzon appeared in the 42nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. Upon hearing that the Iranian Shah would obtain a loan from European financiers to arm his military against the supporters of constitutional monarchy, the Iranian supporters of independence in Trabzon sent proclamations to the governor of Trabzon and the consulates of other countries protesting the Shah's plans. The article mentioned that Iranians held a meeting in Trabzon protesting the Shah and that in their proclamations, the Iranians in Trabzon stated that under no condition would the people of Iran be held responsible for the debt agreement

174 PRO., F.O., 195/2386, 8 April 1911, pp. 13-15.

175 PRO., F.O., 195/2386, 23 June 1911, pp. 41-42.

176 BOA., DH. MTV., 10-34, 06. Ra. 1330 (24 February 1912).

177 Seyyid Aka Tabatabai, “Devr-i Meşrutiyette İstibdad”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:14, 4 Teşrînîevvel 1324 (17 October 1908), pp. 3-4.

or accept responsibility for such a loan.¹⁷⁸ This issue had also been mentioned in a report written by Francis Jones, the new British consul appointed to Trabzon. In his report, the consul mentioned that Iranians had been protesting the prospective debt agreement and that he had been sent a sealed letter in French written by some Iranians living in Trabzon which had been signed “Encümen-i Nasırı İraniyân-ı Trabzon” (The Committee for Iranians Living in Trabzon).¹⁷⁹

In the Ottoman Empire, Muslims and non-Muslims lived together under a certain code. The relationships between the communities started to break down in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One explanation for that breakdown traces it back to the intervention of western capital (and the Great Powers) in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The same author also points to incendiary Ottoman politics that were intended to provide broader political rights during that transitional period.¹⁸⁰ The Committee of Union and Progress, which came to power after 1908, decided to employ a strategy of centralization that was intended to hold the empire together. However, the strategy backfired and actually fuelled further separatist movements.¹⁸¹ Trabzon, a city with a significant minority population, was affected by these separatist movements after the proclamation of the Second Constitution. The loss of Bosnia, the independence of Bulgaria, the Crete problem, the Balkan Wars which ended in the defeat of the Ottoman Army, large scale immigration from Rumelia as refugees fled the war, and armed separatist movements carried out by segments of the Greek and Armenian communities disrupted social life in Trabzon. As a result of those troubled times, some non-Muslims left Trabzon voluntarily and some were forced to leave the city, leading to a homogenization of what had once been a heterogeneous city.

4.6. Other Daily Events

The newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* is a rich resource for examining the daily events that transpired in Trabzon after the proclamation of the Second Constitution. An article in its 47th issue reported that another Trabzon daily, *Bahr-i Siyah*, had asked about a donation campaign that had allegedly been launched by *Trabzon'da Meşveret* in order to construct a column in Freedom Square to commemorate the new freedoms ushered in by constitutionalism. The author of the article in *Bahr-i Siyah* asked about the amount of money that

178 “İran Şahını Protesto”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 42, 17 Kanûnisâni 1324 (30 January 1909), p. 3.

179 PRO., F.O., 195/2334, 3 February 1909, pp. 15-17.

180 Donald Quataert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1700-1922*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p. 250

181 Ibid., p. 272.

had been raised during the campaign and the names of the donors. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* responded to those allegations by saying that no such campaign had been launched but that a theatre play was staged, the proceeds of which would go to the construction of the column and that the proceeds were deposited in an account at Ottoman Bank. The article added that if anyone collected donations on their own, it was up to *Bahr-i Siyah* to account for the situation.¹⁸²

An article in the 63rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that since the customs tariff on flour had been removed, the unit kilogram price of bread should have been 68 para, whereas bakers still sold bread for 70 para.¹⁸³ In the 67th issue of the same newspaper, an announcement was made stating that there would be a theatre play staged in Freedom Square on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday evenings.¹⁸⁴

In the 175th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that the name of the thief who stole two silver bracelets from Franko, an American missionary residing in Boztepe, was Sürmeneli Hasan. Furthermore, the article said that it was Sergeant Hafız Hüseyin Efendi and policeman Hasan Zahir Efendi, both from the Çömlekçi Police Station, who caught the thief and handed him over to the Boztepe Police Station. The police officers were thanked at the end of the article.¹⁸⁵

An article in the 279th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the sailors who transported goods from Trabzon to Russia as well as to a number of local ports were fined by the port administration even when they were just two days late because of bad weather or quarantine. The article said that the boatmen were displeased with the situation and wanted the authorities to correct the problem.¹⁸⁶ The 304th issue of the same newspaper reported that not just the alleys but even the main streets of the city were disorderly and unkempt and that the situation had been brought to the attention of City Hall.¹⁸⁷ In the 335th issue, an article announced that Garun Efendi, a French teacher from *Mekteb-i Sultani*, was going to give a seminar on the topic of “raising children.”¹⁸⁸

182 “Sütun Meselesi”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 47, 4 Şubat 1324 (17 February 1909), p. 2.

183 “Belediye Mi Anlatamıyor, Fırıncılar Mı Dinlemiyor”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 63, 1 Nisan 1325 (14 April 1325), p. 3.

184 “Hürriyet Meydanında Tiyatro”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 67, 15 Nisan 1325 (28 April 1909), p. 4.

185 “Me'murin-i Zabitanın Vazifeperverliği ve Hüsn-ü Niyet Saikasıyla Muvaffakiyeti”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 175, 5 Mayıs 1326 (18 May 1910), p. 3.

186 “Kayıkçılar Sızlanıyor”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 279, 14 Mayıs 1327 (27 May 1911), p. 2.

187 “Şehrin Caddeleri”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 304, 10 Ağustos 1327 (23 August 1911), p. 2.

188 “Konferans”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 335, 3 Kanûnievvel 1327 (16 December 1911), p. 2.

There are two reports that were written by the British consulate during the Second Constitutional Period that touch on the issue of daily life in Trabzon. The first report stated that Muslim women were barred from purchasing items from stores in the city and were only allowed to buy from street vendors. The report noted that such a situation was to the detriment of merchants who wanted to sell goods especially for women and that the prohibition had been introduced by the central government.¹⁸⁹ The second report clarified that the aforementioned prohibition had in fact been introduced by the local government, not the central government. Notably, the author of the report added that there was no dissatisfaction among those merchants who, according to the earlier report, had allegedly vowed to protest the prohibition by temporarily closing down their shops.¹⁹⁰

Another report prepared by the British consulate in Trabzon stated that three respected religious elders, Hacı İslam Efendi, Hacı Tevfik Efendi and Hacı Ali Rıza Efendi, visited the consulate on the third day of the Muslim religious holiday to pay their respects to the King of England. They thanked the British Government for supporting the Ottoman constitutional monarchy. On the same day, five others visited the consulate to express similar sentiments including Muhammed Hamdi Bey, a junior high school teacher; Nuri Bey, a civil servant; Sadık Bey, a customs officer; Remzi Efendi, an archive clerk; and Mustafa Celadettin Efendi, a merchant. The British consul added that those visits followed his own visits to prominent figures in the city, including a visit to the Committee of Union and Progress representative on the first day of the Muslim holiday.¹⁹¹ It is worthy of note that such prominent figures paid their respects and thanked England for its support for the Ottoman constitutional monarchy. No matter how much the consulate stressed that the visits were paid out of mutual respect, it is striking that those prominent Ottoman citizens thought England had supported the Ottoman constitutional monarchy.

Conclusion

The Second Constitutional Period is without a doubt one of the most vibrant and volatile periods in the history of the Ottoman Empire in terms of daily life. Through the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress, the Constitution was reinstated and social life was transformed in Ottoman society. With the proclamation of the Second Constitution, Ottoman citizens tried to savour the new freedoms they enjoyed but often there was confusion about what

189 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 3 October 1908, pp. 222-223.

190 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 6 October 1908, pp. 224-225.

191 PRO., F.O., 195/2303, 31 October 1908, pp. 259-260-261.

those freedoms actually entailed. Aware of the fact that a political revolution cannot be successful without a social revolution to reinforce it, the Committee of Union and Progress started the most rapid and most comprehensive process of transformation in Ottoman history. Thinking that they could only overcome the challenges facing the Ottoman Empire by winning the support of the people, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to speed up the process of modernization by mobilizing the people first. The Committee of Union and Progress strove to integrate the empire's citizens into social life and help them attain a certain level of social consciousness. Such efforts were not only made in the centre but also in the provinces, where local branches of the party attempted to achieve those goals. In the case of Trabzon, after the Second Constitution was proclaimed a large number of associations and clubs were established, which was made possible by the newfound right to found associations. The Committee of Union and Progress took advantage of such associations as a way to drive forward its own policies. Seen in this way, the clubs and associations that were founded mainly by people who subscribed to the ideology of the Committee of Union and Progress not only were used to attain the societal goals that the party had set forth but also fulfil the financial and/or immaterial needs of the populace. Having succeeded to a certain extent in steering society by way of such associations, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to correct the state's military, political, and economic shortcomings by joining forces with Ottoman society. On the one hand, the state found another source of funding for its warships and warplanes through donation campaigns, and on the other hand territorial losses brought on by crises in foreign policy could be fended off via boycotts, which were made possible through increased social awareness. Just as in other parts of the country, the efficacy of donation campaigns in Trabzon was a clear sign of success for Committee of Union and Progress policies. In addition, along with the freedoms made possible by the Constitution, the fact that citizens were able to hold outdoor gatherings to express their thoughts and feelings is remarkable, just as was the fact that Iranians in Trabzon were able to publically protest their Shah. All of this was made possible by the strength of the notion of freedom and the way that the Committee of Union and Progress planted the seeds of social mobilization.

All of these developments yield important clues about how a province like Trabzon, which, although far from the capital, was connected to the rest of the world through trade routes and how important it was due to its strategic location. All the same, Trabzon was open to the impacts of the ongoing political, economic, and social transformations sweeping through the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, Trabzon was one of the centres where the Committee of Union and Progress was able to attain its aims through the implementation of its

policies. In other words, the transformation that Trabzon experienced in daily and social life on the micro-level reflects the extent to which the Committee of Union and Progress was able to succeed in reaching its goals on the macro-level.

CONCLUSION

In the most general terms, this study examines the events that transpired in Trabzon, which was a major center in the Ottoman territories, taking as its timeframe the period between the proclamation of the constitution in 1908 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914. As a result of the rebellion in Rumelia against Sultan Abdülhamid II, the Committee of Union and Progress was able to secure the reinstatement of the constitution and the reopening of the Ottoman Parliament. While they were unable to dethrone Sultan Abdülhamid II, who they despised, they were able to start playing a considerable role in the administration of the central government, which in turn paved the way for the Committee to start taking control in the provinces as well.

Before the proclamation of the constitution, there was an opposition movement in Trabzon, although it was rather weak, and it appears that the local nobles were not overly eager to make their positions clear until it became obvious who was going to come out on top in the struggle between Sultan Abdülhamid II and the Committee. After the Committee achieved its goal of reinstating the constitution, all of the dignitaries in the city sided with the opposition in an attempt to maintain their social standing. Such an approach was also reflected in the elections; the nobles of Trabzon used their power in the elections and managed to win seats. The fact that it wasn't Committee members, who made a great effort to win, but local nobles who became members of parliament is indicative of how the local nobles were able to open up a space for themselves in politics by maintaining their strength and position.

The people of Trabzon, who were initially not overly enthusiastic about the proclamation of the constitution, slowly started to take action as the result of the propaganda efforts of the Unionists. A decision was made to intervene in bureaucratic operations by holding celebrations in honor of the new freedoms that had been obtained and request that previously appointed civil servants, who were disliked by the population, resign from their positions. It is notable that in the early days of the Second Constitutional Era, little changed for ordinary citizens except for the speeches and fanfare, and most everyone tried to show that they themselves were supporters of the Committee, as people who weren't members of the Committee of Union and Progress were deemed to be traitors.

The newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was put out by Naci Bey, who was a great supporter of the Committee. The newspaper became the mouthpiece of the Committee through the articles it published and as it tried to get the people of Trabzon to adopt a particular understanding of the Unionist regime, it also attempted to sway them in the direction of Unionist policies. In their propaganda efforts, the members of the Committee and *Trabzon'da Meşveret* emphasized the need to carry out work hand in hand to strengthen the homeland and nation, which was depicted as being the home of all Ottomans, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. This was presented as having been made possible by the pathway hewn by the Committee of Union and Progress, which in turn was presented as the champion of freedom. The results of this propaganda and the social mobilization efforts launched by the Committee materialized quickly, as evidenced by the enthusiastic celebrations held in honor of the opening of the Ottoman Parliament. After the opening, the Committee started directing the complaints of the people, which had previously been directed to them, to parliament and make it clear that parliament, which was dominated by Committee members, was going to solve all of the nation's problems. Reactions to the Press Law, which had been drafted with the aim of taking control of the press, was the work of supporters of constitutionalism. As a result of these efforts, a gathering was held in which the participants, consisting of Turks, Greeks and Armenians, all spoke their mother languages. This gathering is indicative of the desire of the people of Trabzon to protect the gains they had acquired through constitutionalism. The events that transpired in the city regarding the 31st of March Incident are one of the most important signs of the fact that Unionists had established a strong organization and were successful in their efforts to shape public opinion in line with their goals. In the same vein, the violent reaction to those counterrevolutionary efforts is further proof of just how effective Unionist propaganda had been in the city.

The Unionists had originally been established in opposition to the authoritarian regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II on the basis of the slogan "Equality, Justice, Brotherhood and Liberty!" with the aim of creating a system of administration based on freedom. Over time, however, an opposition movement arose, and the Committee opted to suppress it in turn. The most salient example of this shift away from freedom were the elections of 1912, which today we would call in Turkey "elections with the stick." In order to protect their positions against the opposition which had risen up against them, Unionists resorted to suppressive measures in taking control of the elections. At the end of the elections, which were marked sporadically by major bouts of violence, the Committee achieved its ends. Just as in the rest of the country, in Trabzon the results of the elections of 1912 were contentious and questionable, and while the opposition claimed

that the election had been rigged and tried to call the results into question, their efforts were in vain. Their efforts weren't forgotten by the Committee members; after Mahmut Şevket Pasha was assassinated on the 11th of June in 1913 and an empire-wide witch hunt began, the Committee took advantage of the situation to persecute the local opposition. Hasan Hicabi Bey, the leader of the opposition in Trabzon, was exiled to Sinop, and the opposition newspaper *Tarık* was closed down. With matters as they stood, the Committee, which had critiqued Sultan Abdülhamid II for ruling the country with an iron fist, was now adopting the very same technique. However, it should be borne in mind that an administration that had just taken over from an authoritarian ruler was likely to become authoritarian itself in the process of establishing an administration based on freedom, equality and justice.

Between 1908 and 1914, what could be called the first half of the Second Constitutional Period, Ottoman society experienced a major trauma as the empire faced an increasing number of problems including wars and waves of Muslim refugees fleeing lost territories to Anatolia. The fact that Europe remained silent about the difficulties the empire was facing only served to pour salt on the wound, paving the way for that trauma to be transformed into a powerful sense of nationalism among Muslim Ottoman subjects.

As this study demonstrates in detail, that trauma and the cresting wave of nationalism that resulted from it had a significant impact on Trabzon, which in those times was a very multicultural city. In particular, the negative atmosphere created by the Ottoman defeats in the Balkan wars started slowly eating away at the sense of social peace in the city. The tensions that began developing between the Muslims living in the city and its Greek and Armenian population were a harbinger of the fact that in the next ten years, those tensions would only escalate, leading to even greater problems. In the first half of the Second Constitutional Period, social life in the multicultural city of Trabzon broke down within a matter of ten years as a result of the events that transpired there.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Trabzon grew in importance because of its strategic position and developments in international trade. As both Muslim and non-Muslim merchants grew wealthy thanks to the expanding trade network that ran through the city, the opening of consulates, foreign companies, banks and insurance firms further contributed to the string of positive developments that were occurring.

The railway and port projects drawn up after the proclamation of the constitution were intended to increase the trade capacity of the city, but they never came to fruition despite public support because of the political and economic problems the state was facing in the international arena. Trabzon was one of

the places where the boycotts organized by the Unionists to protest the political crises were the most effective, but it must be noted that the boycotts, which were bolstered by increasingly strong nationalist sentiment, had a negative impact on the city's economy. As the developments which led to the boycotts in Trabzon were negatively affecting social and economic life in the city, the foundations were being laid for the national economic policy that the Unionists were trying to implement.

Following the political revolution, the Committee started major reforms across the empire in the field of education with the aim of bringing Ottoman society up to the level of modern civilization. The primary goal was to modernize the education system and the second aim was to increase the number of educational institutions in all regions, and the effects were felt in Trabzon as well. The main problem that the city's notables were trying to solve was the lack of teachers capable of providing an education steeped in modern methods and insufficient resources. It was thought that religious bigotry in education could be eliminated by replacing the instructors who had been trained in religious schools with those who had graduated from teacher training schools.

The fact that there weren't enough school buildings was another critical problem in the field of education in Trabzon. While all of the Greek and Armenian villages in the outlying areas of Trabzon had schools and churches, most of the Muslim villages lacked schools, and that prompted state officials to take swift action. One of the issues raised in this study is the effect of the propaganda activities carried out with the aim of securing public support in terms of finances to cover the costs of constructing school buildings, paying for their upkeep and ensuring that the teachers received suitable salaries. Another reason why there was so much concern about increasing the level of education in poor villages was that it was thought that by doing so, they could counter the efforts of Christian missionaries secretly working in the region.

Another issue raised in this study is the night classes that Unionists organized for people who couldn't attend the courses offered during the day because they had to work. While the aim was to teach attendees how to read and write as well as provide a basic education, the classes were also used to indoctrinate them with the ideas of the Committee of Union and Progress.

After the proclamation of the constitution, the city of Trabzon, which was already multicultural, became even more culturally dynamic, and this cultural variety had an impact on the local press. Plays and film screenings that brought to the fore public concerns were an important means of spreading Unionist ideas and encouraging people to take part in charity projects.

The dynamism created by the Unionists in the social arena was also effective in Trabzon. Associations and clubs were established by the Unionists as a way to fill in the gaps of state services, and the charity campaigns they launched offered support to those in need and lent a helping hand to people beyond the reach of the state. All of these issues are taken up in this study as a reflection of the impacts that the Second Constitutional Period had on the city of Trabzon.

In conclusion, the projects that the Unionists set into motion after the proclamation of the constitution to bring about transformation and change affected the entire empire, but their effects were strongly felt in Trabzon. Ultimately however, Trabzon, which was devastated politically, economically, culturally and socially as the result of wars, lost its multicultural character.

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SAMENVATTING

De incidenten besproken in deze studie vonden plaats in Trabzon, een grote havenstad in het noordoosten van Turkije. Als havenstad is Trabzon van oudsher al een plaats geweest voor verschillende politieke machtswisselingen en is onder de heerschappij geweest van de Perzen, Alexander de Grote, het Koninkrijk Pontus en het Romeinse Rijk. Na de splitsing van het Romeinse Rijk viel de stad onder Byzantijs bewind. Alexios Komnemos maakte, nadat hij Istanbul ontvluchtte tijdens het beruchte beleg en val van de stad in het jaar 1204, Trabzon de centrum van het Keizerrijk Trebizonde. Vlak na de Ottomaanse verovering van Trabzon door Sultan Mehmed II in 1461 ontwikkelde de stad zich als een befaamd Islamitische centrum. Sultan Selim I was de gouverneur van de stad voor vierentwintig jaar voordat hij sultan werd en het is de geboortestad van Sultan Suleiman I.

Ten tijde van de Ottomaanse Rijke had Trabzon een sleutelpositie op de handelsroute die zich uitrekte tussen Europa en de Perzische gebieden naar het oosten. Hierdoor werd Trabzon, dat als een havenstad diende voor steden als Erzurum, Gümüşhane, Bayburt, Van, Muş en Ağrı, nog belangrijker als handelsknooppunt, ook dankzij de technologische ontwikkelingen in de scheepvaart industrie en de vooruitgang die daarop volgde. De welvaart van niet-Moslim handelaren groeide vanwege de handel met Europese steden, zo ook die van de islamitische handelaren die een actievare rol begonnen te spelen in het politieke, economische en culturele leven van de stad. Trabzon was een belangrijke indicator van de veranderingen die plaatsvonden in het rijk ten tijde van de Ottomaanse modernisatie, die een versnelde werking kreeg door het Edict van Gülhane in 1839. Aan het begin van de 20ste was de stad nog steeds een grote centrum in de regio vanwege zijn sociale dynamisme.

De morgen van 24 juli 1908 begon met een schok voor de gouverneur van Trabzon toen hij een officiële telegram ontving van de hoofdstad Istanbul. De schok werd gedeeld door alle gouverneurs en iedere burger die nietsvermoedend de krant oppakte en de korte officiële verklaring las gepubliceerd op de voorpagina. De verklaring markeerde het einde van een tijdperk. Sultan Abdülhamid II had de constitutie hersteld en het heropenen van het parlement in werking gezet. Dit was een revolutionaire doorbraak want het betekende het einde van een bijna dertigjarige durende autocratische bewind van Sultan

Abdülhamid. Het land zou voortaan bestuurd worden door de Sultan samen met de verkozen volksvertegenwoordigers. De tweede Constitutionele Periode was nu officieel begonnen.

In het huidige Turkije is de periode van Sultan Abdülhamid de meest controversionele periode van de Ottomaanse geschiedenis. Het eerste punt op zijn agenda, toen hij de troon besteege op 31 augustus 1876, was het invoeren van een constitutie. Na de verkiezingen die werden gehouden tussen december 1876 en januari 1877 nam het Ottomaanse parlement zijn intrede op 19 maart 1877. Echter, de intrede was van korte duur. De Ottomanen werden verslagen in de Russisch-Turkse Oorlog van 1877-1878 en het Russische leger marcheerde naar de poorten van Istanbul waarna Sultan Abdülhamid II, op 14 februari 1878, het parlement voor onbepaalde tijd ontbond.

Zo begon een ruim dertigjarige periode van autocratische heerschappij onder Sultan Abdülhamid II, beschreven door de oppositie als een “tijdperk van tirannie.” Ondanks dat hij het land door het vormen van een sterk centraal platform eigenhandig probeerde te besturen, bestendigde Abdülhamid II alsnog de hervormingen die in het begin van de negentiende eeuw geleidelijk waren geïntroduceerd. Op deze manier werden de Tanzimat hervormingen geleidelijk ingevoerd onder zijn bewind, maar slechts onder bepaalde voorwaarden; politieke rechten en vrijheden werden ingeperkt en Sultan Abdülhamid II ging tot het uiterste om enige en alle oppositie tegen zijn persoonlijke bewind te onderdrukken en neer te slaan.

Echter, ondanks zijn maatregelen doken verspreid over het hele land verschillende illegale organisaties op die tegen het autocratische bestuursstelsel waren. De eerste van die organisaties was het genootschap “Ottomaanse Eenheid” (*İttihad-ı Osmani*), opgericht door militaire medische studenten in Istanbul in 1889. Vrij snel na de oprichting kwamen de activiteiten van de groep aan de dag, waarna sommige leden werden gearresteerd en anderen het land uit moesten vluchten. Onder leiding van Ahmet Rıza Bey uitte de oppositie in Parijs zijn ongenoegen met het bewind van Sultan Abdülhamid II middels verschillende kranten en journaals, met als meest bekende de krant *Meşveret*. Andere oppositieleiden kwamen bijeen in steden als Geneve en Cairo waar ook zij de pers gebruikten om hun ongenoegen te uiten.

Een nieuwe organisatie, het Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) werd opgericht door de voornaamste oppositiebeweging. Hoewel ook deze gebruik maakte van de pers om hun ontevredenheid te uiten over de heersende regime van Sultan Abdülhamid II, was dit niet effectief. Echter, een nieuwe ontwikkeling in 1907 bracht nieuw leven in het verzetspartij. In 1906, legden enkele civiele bureaucraten in Thessaloniki en militairen van

het 3^e Leger die ook ontevreden waren over de manier waarop het Ottomaanse rijk geleid werd en die in Macedonië het Ottomaanse Vrijheidscomité (*Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti*) hadden opgericht, contact met de oppositie in Parijs en stelden een samenwerking voor. Na enkele geheime vergaderingen tussen leden van de organisaties werd uiteindelijk besloten om een nieuwe organisatie op te richten en dat zij voortaan verder zouden gaan onder de naam Ottomaanse Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang (*Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). Dit Comité was opgericht in oktober 1907. Onder de slogan “eenheid van de (ethnische) elementen” (*İttihad-ı Anasır*) streefden zij naar de herinvoering van de constitutie en het opnieuw vestigen van het parlement. In een korte periode wisten zij op een eenvoudige manier meer leden te werven, dit waren voornamelijk soldaten van het 3^e leger in Macedonië en civiele bureaucraten.

Vanwege de stijgende economische en sociale problemen waarmee de Ottomaanse Rijk te maken kreeg, werd het werven van supporters, met name hoger opgeleiden, voor de Ottomaanse Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang steeds eenvoudiger. Ook buitenlandse ontwikkelingen droegen hieraan bij. Een opstand ontstond toen bepaalde officieren, die loyaal waren aan de Ottomaanse Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang, samen met vrijwilligersmilities de bergen introkken. Nadat bleek dat deze opstand niet neer te slaan was, ging Sultan Abdülhamid II akkoord met de eis om de constitutie en parlement volledig te herstellen. Op de ochtend van 24 juli 1908 werd hiervoor een officiële verklaring uitgebracht dat de constitutie en parlement zouden worden hersteld.

Ondanks het feit dat het Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang Sultan Abdülhamid II aanvankelijk niet afzette, was het begin van de Tweede Constitutionele Periode op 24 juli 1908 een van de meest belangrijke veranderingen in de Ottomaanse geschiedenis. Hierna vonden politieke, economische, culturele en sociale veranderingen plaats op een ongeziene schaal.

Deze studie richt zich op het bestuderen van de politieke, economische, culturele en sociale gebeurtenissen in Trabzon, een belangrijke provinciale stad met een multiculturele bevolking van Turken, Grieken, Armenen en een klein aantal Perzen. De tijdsframe van de studie is de eerste zes jaar (1908-1914) van de Tweede Constitutionele Periode, een tijd waarin transformaties in een hoog tempo plaatsvonden in het Ottomaanse Rijk. Het onderwerp van deze studie zijn de ontwikkelingen in Trabzon, in die tijd het provinciale centrum van het gebied dat vandaag de dag bestaat uit de provincies Samsun, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane en Bayburt.

In deze studie wordt een groot aantal kwesties besproken in het licht van de veranderingen ten tijde van het Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang, waaronder de activiteiten van het Comité, de relatie tussen het centrum en de

periferie, hoe lokale notablen de Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang en zijn politiek beschouwden en omgekeerd, en in welke mate de politieke, culturele, economische en sociale beleid van het Comité de lokale bevolking beïnvloedde. Kortom, het doel van deze studie is het in beeld brengen van de politieke, economische, culturele en sociale transformaties die plaatsvonden in Trabzon ten tijde van het bewind van het Comité tussen 1908 en 1914. De uitbraak van de Eerste Wereldoorlog en de Russische verovering van Trabzon een jaar later luidden een heel andere periode in, die in deze studie niet wordt meegenomen.

De studie bestaat uit een inleiding, vier hoofdstukken en een conclusie. Het eerste hoofdstuk behandelt het politieke leven in Trabzon in de jaren 1908-1914. Na het schetsen van een historische overzicht van de politieke situatie in de Ottomaanse Rijk tijdens de negentiende en twintigste eeuw, worden de ontwikkelingen besproken die plaatsvonden in Trabzon voor 24 juli 1908, toen de Tweede Constitutionele Periode begon. Verder biedt dit hoofdstuk een discussie aan over de percepties van het constitutionalisme in Trabzon, het effect op de stad van het openen van het eerste parlement en de reacties op de perswet. Vervolgens biedt het een kijk op de gevolgen van het 31 maart incident, de contrarevolutie die een groot omslagpunt was in de Ottomaanse geschiedenis. Daarnaast worden de Comitéleden, de oppositie, de verkiezingen en het bezoek van de ex-minister van Financiën Cavit Bey aan Trabzon behandeld. Het hoofdstuk bespreekt daarna de gevolgen van de Italiaans-Turkse en de Balkan oorlogen op de lokale publieke opinie. Andere kwesties die in dit hoofdstuk worden besproken zijn de viering van het jubileum van het uitroepen van de constitutie, de gouverneurs van die tijdperk en rol van de consulaten in de stad.

Het tweede hoofdstuk gaat over het economische leven in Trabzon tussen 1908 en 1914 en begint met een historisch overzicht van de Ottomaanse economie. Na de economische situatie van Trabzon te hebben besproken voor het uitroepen van de constitutie, worden kwesties als spoorweg- en havenprojecten, douane, landbouw en particuliere ondernemingen besproken. Verder worden verschillende kwesties aangaande de handel in de stad bestudeerd en er wordt in detail gekeken naar de boycot van producten uit Oostenrijk-Hongarije, Bulgarije en Griekenland en de gevolgen hiervan op het economisch leven in de stad gedurende de periode in kwestie.

Het derde hoofdstuk behandelt het culturele leven en het onderwijs in Trabzon in de jaren 1908-1914. Eerst worden de ontwikkelingen in het onderwijs voor en na het uitroepen van de constitutie besproken, daarna volgt een discussie over de minderheids- en buitenlandse scholen in de stad. Tevens kijkt dit deel naar het culturele leven in Trabzon, zowel de pers en publicaties worden besproken als ook de theaters en de bioscopen.

Het vierde hoofdstuk bevat een analyse van het sociale en dagelijkse leven in Trabzon. De verenigingen en clubs, hulp campagnes, de medische problemen, natuurrampen, buitenlanders en leden van minderheidsgroepen die leefden in de stad worden in detail besproken.

Samenvattend: in dit onderzoek worden de lokale effecten besproken van het beleid van het Comité voor Eenheid en Vooruitgang tussen de constitutionele revolutie en het uitbreken van de Eerste Wereldoorlog.. Door de focus te richten op de gebeurtenissen in Trabzon in de jaren 1908-1914 komt een hiervoor weinig onderzochte en onbekende periode van Trabzons geschiedenis in het licht. Tegelijk maakt het het mogelijk te zien hoe het beleid uitpakte buiten de hoofdstad Istanbul en het revoutionaire centrum Thessaloniki.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Selim Ahmetoğlu was born in Trabzon in 1979. He graduated from the Department of History, Boğaziçi University in 2003. Then he got M.A. degree, again, from the Department of History, Boğaziçi University with the thesis *From the Unionist Actualité to the Mass Popularity: Şehbal Magazine (1909-1914)*, which was supervised by Yavuz Selim Karakışla, in 2007. He started his Ph. D. education in the Department of Turkish Studies in Leiden University in September 2008 under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Erik Jan Zürcher.

PROPOSITIONS

1. Trabzon was one of the most influential provincial cities in the Second Constitutional Period. Through the efforts of the Unionists, within a short amount of time it became a critical ideological stronghold. The fact that the majority of people in Trabzon adopted the ideas of the Unionists made it easy to disable the opposition, small as it may have been.
2. The defeat in the Balkan Wars influenced the social life in Trabzon. The multicultural character of the city was started to break down after the defeat in the Balkan Wars.
3. If the railway line between Trabzon and Erzurum could be done before the World War I, the results of the battles in the Caucasus front would be different. And that would affect the result of the war.
4. Unionists from Trabzon continued to be dedicated to Enver Pasha, one of the most important Unionists leaders, despite the fact that the Ottomans lost World War I; it is for this reason that they were opposed to Mustafa Kemal Pasha. He did not visit Trabzon until the end of İzmir Assassination Attempt Trials in 1926. He went to Trabzon after the remained Unionists and supporters of Enver Pasha had neutralized.
5. Even though nearly a hundred years have passed, the spirit of the Unionists still reigns on the streets of Trabzon.
6. Sultan Abdülhamid II was neither the “Red Sultan” nor a “Supreme Ruler.” During his reign, he did his utmost to protect the interests of the empire as well as his throne, which, over time, led him to adopt authoritarian modes of rule. Despite that authoritarianism, however, reforms continued. Neither the authoritarian rule of the Sultan Abdülhamid II, nor his reforms did not help to save the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire lost Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, half of Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, Kars, Ardahan and Batumi during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Also, Sultan had to accept to establishment of the Public Dept Administration which threatened the economic independence of the Empire.
7. During the Second Constitutional Period, which was brought about through the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress, the Ottoman Empire underwent transformations and changes at an unprecedented rate.

Through the reforms they implemented, Unionists sought an answer to the question, “How can our empire be saved?” Despite all their goodwill, the Unionists were too inexperienced to direct or save the Empire. Their inexperience, together with the external factors, fastened the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

8. The reforms that the Unionists planned and partially implemented in the Second Constitutional Period were never quite successful first because of the Balkan Wars, then World War I and lastly the War of Independence. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, however, the Kemalists worked to put many of them into practice. There was a continuity between the Unionists and the Kemalists.
9. In the Second Constitutional Period, the press was a crucial source of power. The Committee, which made good use of that power, was able to guide society towards its aims through press-based propaganda.
10. Now more than ever the world needs the slogan “Liberté, égalité, fraternité, justice” to be put into practice.

