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# 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,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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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; Hacibilaloğlu Osman Efendi; Hamamcıoğlu İhsan Bey; and Tuzcuzade Rifat Efendi, who was based in Rize. Also, the list indicates that Mayor Nemlizade Cemal Bey and Hacibilaloğlu 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> Naci Efendi, who was the seventh member of the Committee in the city, was court-martialled and condemned to death.<sup>7</sup> The Paris headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress sent money to Naci Efendi’s family to help them get by.<sup>8</sup> The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress stated that Naci Bey carried out the assassination under the Committee’s orders.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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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.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.

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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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup> The Sublime Porte agreed and appointed Arifi Paşa as the new governor of Trabzon.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>26</sup> During this time, Ahmet Faik Hurşit (Günday) Bey was

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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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

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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 a 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](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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup> Server Bey then went to Rize for propaganda purposes.<sup>35</sup> 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

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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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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,<sup>38</sup> and in turn Süleyman Paşa was replaced by Ahmet Abuk Paşa.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

### 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.<sup>41</sup>

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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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup> 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

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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.<sup>45</sup>

An article written by Ş. Asım in the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

An article published in the 39<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup>

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

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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 Kanûnisâni 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.<sup>49</sup>

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.<sup>50</sup> 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

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49 “Şüphesizdir ki bugün bütün akvâm-ı mevcûde-yi cihân dâima insâniyete, insâniyette 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 sûreile anâsır-ı Osmaniye arasından vifâk ve ittihâdın teyid ve tahkîmi kuvve-i icrâiyenin ‘adaletle ifâ-yı ‘umûr etmesine vâbeste olduğu kadar da fazla ve udebâ-yı ümmetin mücâhede-yi kalemiyede bulunmasına muhtâc ve müftekindir. ... Mâdem ki hep terakkî diye feryâd ediyoruz. İşte ilk vazife hükümet ile berâber milletin fıkren terakkîsi 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

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.<sup>53</sup> 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*.<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

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 ümidlerimizden 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.<sup>56</sup> 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

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*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 meş'ûd 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 terakkîsine, 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup>

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.<sup>59</sup>

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.

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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 olunmakta 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 mebâlîğin nizamnâme hilâfında neşriyâtda 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 tahdid 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 esir eyleyecek kanûnlar, nizamlar, ey hür Osmanlılar!!! Düşününüz ki bu vatani, bu vatana istikbâlini 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, vasıta-i neşr-i eskârı, müdâfi’i ve muhafız-ı hukûk-ı hürriyeti deñil midir? Çünkü matbu’at hâdim-i hürriyet olduğu 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 yakışıır. Daba beş aylık hâkimiyet-i milliyemiz hükûmete kıran mı gelmeğe başladı? Otuz 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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>

### 1.6. The Impacts of the Incident of March 31<sup>st</sup> on Trabzon<sup>63</sup>

The Committee of Union and Progress may have lost some influence in Istanbul due to the Incident of March 31<sup>st</sup> (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.<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup> 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!"<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

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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 İllâveler", *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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup>

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.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup>

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.<sup>73</sup>

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

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

70 PRO., E.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, Tevfik 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.<sup>74</sup>

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.<sup>75</sup>

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.<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile, the press in Trabzon ran articles condemning the revolt. In an article published in the 65<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup> 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

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74 İ. Hami Danişmend, *Sadrazam Tevfik Paşa'nın Dosyasındaki Resmî ve Hususî 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.<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup> In its 67<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup>

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 67<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> and its consequences. In the 67<sup>th</sup> 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").<sup>84</sup> 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

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80 "Fırka-i Siyasilere 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 Sadareten 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.<sup>85</sup> 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.<sup>86</sup> In the same issue, an article noted that after Sultan Abdülhamid II was dethroned, numerous insults were hurled at statesmen at Yıldız Palace.<sup>87</sup>

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.<sup>88</sup>

In the 68<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup>

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.<sup>90</sup>

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'iyân mürevec efkârı, ey menfa'ât-ı şahsiyesine bu mukaddes vatânı, bu mu'azzez millet-i fedâ etmekden çekinmeyen yıldız zehirleri, ey haris-i mâ'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.<sup>91</sup> 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 Metropolitan 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.<sup>92</sup>

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 31<sup>st</sup> had fled to provincial areas for propaganda purposes and that care needed to be taken to watch out for them.<sup>93</sup> The newspaper *Haber Anası* reported that a rebel had been caught in Rize and sent to Trabzon after his arrest.<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup> 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.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup>

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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.<sup>98</sup> A committee was formed in Trabzon to raise funds to help the families of the people who had been killed during the Incident March 31<sup>st</sup>. 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.<sup>99</sup> After a long while, an article published in the 278<sup>th</sup> 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 *Serbesti* 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 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>100</sup>

The impacts of the Incident of March 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup>. 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

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98 "Hür Padişahımızın Kılınç 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 31<sup>st</sup>. 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 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **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 Hurşit 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.<sup>101</sup> The British reports, however, mention Major Safvet Bey as the leader of the Unionists in Trabzon.<sup>102</sup> *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

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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.<sup>103</sup>

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.<sup>104</sup>

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.<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup> 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.<sup>107</sup> The Unionists in Tirebolu followed suit and started a similar boycott in their

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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.<sup>108</sup> 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.<sup>109</sup> 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.<sup>110</sup>

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.<sup>111</sup>

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.<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup> 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.<sup>114</sup>

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

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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.<sup>115</sup>

The 152<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the Committee had acquired official status after it applied for recognition as a “Socially Beneficial Organization.”<sup>116</sup> In the 159<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup> In the 161<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>118</sup> In the 178<sup>th</sup> and 179<sup>th</sup> issues, it was announced

115 “*Rum vatandaşlarımıza,*

*Bu memleketde yaşayan bütün insanların hangi cinsden, hangi mezhebden olur ise olsun yekdiğeriyle kardeş gibi yaşaması ve herkesin yaşadığı yerleri Osmanlı toprağı olarak tanıyıp ona göre fikir ve emel beslemesi İttihad ve Terakkî Cemiyetinin en büyük, en ciddi maksadından birini teşkil eyler. Bu toprakda yaşayan insanlar biri birine vatan kardeşi mu’amelesi ederlerse şühbesiz aralarında bir emniyet-i mütekâbele hâsıl olur. Ve bu emniyet kendi istirahatlarıyla beraber istirahat-ı ‘umûmiyeyi 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 ahâliye 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 menfa’atlerini, kendi boş fikirlerini getirmek için sizin hayatınızı ma’sûm ve bi-günah ‘ailelerinizi ateş içine atmakdan çekinmezler. Böyle ha’inlerin sözlerine uymak mu’azzez vatanımızda ha’inlerin 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 Terakkî Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisi’nden Neşr Olunan Beynamedir”, Feyz, No: 77, 22 Haziran 1325 (5 July 1909), inside cover.

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

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

118 “İttihad ve Terakkî 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.<sup>119</sup>

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.<sup>120</sup> 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.<sup>121</sup>

*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.<sup>122</sup> 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.<sup>123</sup>

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.<sup>124</sup> 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

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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.<sup>125</sup> In the 270<sup>th</sup> issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* it was announced that Trabzon Committee representative Ali Rıza Bey had arrived from Samsun two days earlier.<sup>126</sup> 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.<sup>127</sup>

A movement called the Hizb-i Cedit (New Party) arose in the parliamentary faction of the Committee and made ripples in political life.<sup>128</sup> 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.<sup>129</sup> 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.<sup>130</sup> The article seemed to be referring to Hizb-i Cedit, as Colonel Sadık was based in Manastır.

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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.<sup>131</sup> 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*, Hacıalihafizzade 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!)<sup>132</sup>

In its 287<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup>

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.<sup>134</sup> 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.<sup>135</sup>

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

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131 For more information, see Erik Jan Zürcher, "Sultan Reşad'ın Haziran 1911'deki Makedonya Seyahati", *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.<sup>136</sup>

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*.<sup>137</sup> In the following issue, it was announced that Arnavut Ahmet Efendi had been expelled for the same reason.<sup>138</sup> 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.<sup>139</sup>

News about the Halaskar Zâbitan Cemiyeti (Saviour Officers' Society) was published in *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.<sup>140</sup> 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.<sup>141</sup> In the following issue, arguing against the allegations made in some Istanbul newspapers

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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, 29<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2014, p. 158; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiyede Siyasal Partiler-I: II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011.

141 "İdare-i Örfiyyenin İlgası 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.<sup>142</sup>

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.<sup>143</sup> However, the article also stressed that they would continue to work in Anatolia if operating in Istanbul was no longer an option.<sup>144</sup>

*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.<sup>145</sup>

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*.<sup>146</sup>

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

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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 dolaşığı ticârethânelerde intihâbâtta İttihâd ve Terakki Cem'iyetine rey' verilir ve cem'iyet ekseriyeti ihrâz eder ise vatanın menkûz ve müzmahil olacağını, Avrupa devletlerinin bizi taksîm eyleyeceğini gâyet 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.<sup>147</sup> 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.<sup>148</sup>

### **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.<sup>149</sup> 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.<sup>150</sup> 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.<sup>151</sup>

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

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

148 “Osmanlı İttihad 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.<sup>152</sup>

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.<sup>153</sup> 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*).<sup>154</sup>

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.<sup>155</sup> 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.<sup>156</sup> 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.<sup>157</sup> 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.<sup>158</sup> 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.

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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.<sup>159</sup> 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 achievement<sup>160</sup> 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.<sup>161</sup> 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.<sup>162</sup> 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

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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.<sup>163</sup>

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.<sup>164</sup> *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.<sup>165</sup> 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.<sup>166</sup> *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.<sup>167</sup>

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.<sup>168</sup>

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

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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 ahâli-yi muhtermeden 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.<sup>169</sup>

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 Babiâli 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.<sup>170</sup> 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.<sup>171</sup> 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.<sup>172</sup> 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

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169 "Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Merkez-i Umumisi'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, Eskiiler", *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.<sup>173</sup> The newspaper *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was thus aiming to notify the public about the upcoming trip.<sup>174</sup>

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.<sup>175</sup> 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.<sup>176</sup> 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.<sup>177</sup> *Trabzon'da Meşveret* covered the journey in great detail and praised Cavit Bey and his companions.<sup>178</sup>

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.<sup>179</sup>

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

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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 Nazım, "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.<sup>180</sup> 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.<sup>181</sup>

*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.<sup>182</sup> 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*.<sup>183</sup>

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.<sup>184</sup> 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.<sup>185</sup> 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.<sup>186</sup> The article also reminded readers that when Cavit Bey was the Minister of Finance, he did nothing more than send

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180 Ibid., p. 54.

181 "Cavid ve Naci Beylerin vürûdundan mukaddem muhâlif gazetelerden Târık ahâlinin helecânını ve teheyycününü soğutmak için insanı uyutacak derecede mânasız neşriyâtda bulunmuş ve pâyitaht cerâ'id-i muhâlefesinde görüle görüle bıkkılan 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.<sup>187</sup>

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.<sup>188</sup> *Tarık* reported that the consuls did not attend the dinner at the City Hall since Cavit Bey was not in office while there,<sup>189</sup> 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

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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.<sup>190</sup>

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*.<sup>191</sup> 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.<sup>192</sup> *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.<sup>193</sup> 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 Teşrînsâni 1327) by one vote.<sup>194</sup> 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

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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”.<sup>195</sup> The 1914 elections proved to be a “rose garden” for the Unionists and parliament stayed in power until the end of World War I.<sup>196</sup>

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,<sup>197</sup> 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.<sup>198</sup> 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.<sup>199</sup> *Feyz* called for people who thought they had the necessary qualifications to nominate and introduce themselves in the paper.<sup>200</sup>

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.<sup>201</sup> In an article signed by Ahmet Namık that was published in

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195 Abdullah İslamoğlu, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Siyasal Muhalefet:1908-1913*, İstanbul: Gökkuşbuca 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 Fırıldaklar 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.<sup>202</sup>

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 11<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>203</sup>

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

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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 islahat ister, bunların bir kısmı az zamanda vücûda gelebilir 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'î 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 islâh olunmak. Kuvve-i berriyede Almanya orduları gibi bölükler, taburlar, alaylar, livalar, fırkalar her esbâb-ı amâde oldud- dan sonra her taburunu birer kal'a-i abenin haline getirmek. Kuvve-i bahriyede Barbaros zamanında denizlerde –o zamanın kuvvetiyle- liva-yı Osmanî nasıl temevvücünümâ-yı sûtûn olmuşa şimdi de "şimdiki kuvvetle" sûtûn-ı 'aliyyeyi ihya eylemek. Hariciyede devletin şanına milletin haysiyetine dokunmadıkça ufak büyük bilcümle hükümet 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.<sup>204</sup>

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.<sup>205</sup>

204 “Trabzon’da icrâ olunmakta olan müntehib-i sâni intihâbatında Türkler, Rumlar, Ermeniler arasında birlikde çalışmak fikri görülmemesi sükût ile geçiştirilemeyecek 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 gerçî 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 mş’ûdiyetine 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 tēâlisi sefâ’in-i seyr-u seferine sâlih nehirlerin tathiri ve imlâsı mesela Çarşamba ve Terme nehirlerinin muhtâc olduğu amelîyât ile sıbhat-ı ‘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 himâyesi, kuvve-i berriye ve bahriyenin tensik ve tedric ile derece-i kemâle getirilmesi, medâris-i İslâmiyenin islâhı, usûl-u tedrisin bir kanûna rabtı. ... Biraz da mesâ’il-i hâriciye hakkındaki hissiyâtımdan bahsetmek isterim. Bütün devletlerle hüsn-ü münâsebet muhafaza etmek tarîkini ihtiyâr emeliyiz. 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 emeliyiz.”

“Meclis-i Mebusan Azalığına Namzedliğini Vazi’ Eden Midhat Efendi Tarafından Mersul Programdır”, *Trabzon’da Meşveret*, No: 13, 1 Teşrînivevvel 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.<sup>206</sup>

*Feyz* published an article which noted that the male population in Trabzon was 59,839, meaning that seven representatives could be elected.<sup>207</sup> 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.<sup>208</sup>

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.<sup>209</sup> 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

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206 "Meb'ûsluğa intihâb olunduğum takdirde ta'kib edeceğim meslek İttihad ve Terakkî 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 Teşrinievvel 1324 (18 October 1908), pp. 2-3.

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

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

209 "Trabzon Sancağının Mebusları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 23, 5 Teşrinisâni 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.<sup>210</sup>

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 Lütfi Paşa and Hayri Efendi, and Hakkâri representative Taha Efendi also boarded the same ship to go to Istanbul.<sup>211</sup> Trabzon representative Ali Naki Efendi sent a letter of thanks from Istanbul to the public via *Trabzon'da Meşveret*.<sup>212</sup>

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.<sup>213</sup>

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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 Teşrinisâni 1324 (1 December 1908), p. 4; "Mebuslarımızın Azimeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 27, 19 Teşrinisâni 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.<sup>214</sup> Unionist candidate Kalcızade Mahmut Bey received 139 votes, winning with 115 votes more than his closest rival.<sup>215</sup> Ali Naki Bey from Trabzon presided over parliament as the oldest representative and Hazinedarzade 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.<sup>216</sup> 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.<sup>217</sup> 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.<sup>218</sup>

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 menfâ'ât ve hiss-i 'azâm ile Osmanlı vahdet-i ictimâ'îye ve uhuvvet-i diniyyesini ihlâlâle sebep olacak münâkaşat ve ta'rızatın 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 te'min, kavânin ve nizâmatın kabûl ve tasdîki husûsundaki çalışmalarını, ihtilaf ve münâferatı mücib her türlü amâl-i hasiseden meccaniyet etmelerini bekliyor. Binâ'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.<sup>219</sup> 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.<sup>220</sup>

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.<sup>221</sup> 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.<sup>222</sup> 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.<sup>223</sup> 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.<sup>224</sup>

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*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 — Vükelâ ile hey'et-i meb'ûsân arasında ihtilâf olunan maddelerden birinin kabûlünde vükelâ tarafından isrâr olunub da meb'ûsân cânibinden ekseriyet-i ârâ ile tafsilen esbâb-ı mucibe beyânıyla kat'iyyen ve mükerreren redd edildiği halde vükelânın 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.<sup>225</sup> 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.<sup>226</sup> 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 Trabzon<sup>227</sup> 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.<sup>228</sup> 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.<sup>229</sup> 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.<sup>230</sup> 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.<sup>231</sup> Other similar articles appeared in *Tarık* which tried to blacken

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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 Kanûnisânî 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'lâmı mercûdur. Bolaman Kôzmağarasu 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.<sup>232</sup> When the election committee got to work in Trabzon, the city was divided into seven electoral districts.<sup>233</sup> Again, as stipulated by a directive from the Ministry, mayors and city council members were forbidden from running in the election.<sup>234</sup> *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 (*Kayıklılar 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.<sup>235</sup>

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

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*Dâhil bulunduğum İttihad ve Terakkî Cem'iyeti'nden istifâ ederek bâ'demâ hiçbir alâkamız olamayacağımın mu'teber ceridenizle i'lânını ricâ eyleyiz. Ordu'nun Bucak Mahallesiinden 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.<sup>236</sup>

*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.<sup>237</sup> 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.<sup>238</sup>

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 candidates<sup>239</sup> 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.<sup>240</sup>

In the 110<sup>th</sup> 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

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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.<sup>241</sup> 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.<sup>242</sup> 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.<sup>243</sup>

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.<sup>244</sup>

*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.<sup>245</sup> 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.

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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 Mütecavizleri", *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.<sup>246</sup>

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 312<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>247</sup> 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.<sup>248</sup> A declaration issued by the Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress about the occupation was published in the newspaper's 316<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>249</sup>

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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 yuvarlanıp giden vatan-ı 'azizimizin hayat-ı mukaddesi Cenâb-ı Hakk'ın 'inâyetiyle tablîs edilmiştir. Dört senelik bu nevzâd-ı meşrû'-u meşrûtiyet yıllarının ağûş-u terakkî ve te'âlisinde serafraz 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.<sup>250</sup> 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.<sup>251</sup> An article in the 318<sup>th</sup> issue noted that the Committee had attempted to obtain external support from Europe after Italy attacked Tripoli.<sup>252</sup> As the fighting

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*muhafazada sebât edemeyerek i'lân-ı 'adâvete yüz tutdular. Bu cümleden olmak üzere Malisör ve Karadağ meş'ele-yi zâ'ilesinde açıktan açığa vukû' bulan agva'at ve ilka'ât-ı müfessidât-kârânesine mukâbil eline bir şey geçiremeyen İtalya hükümeti mülkümüzün bir kısım-ı mühimmi bulunan ve belki Afrika kıtasındaki mevcûdiyet-i Osmaniyeyi temsil eden Trablusgarb kıta-i vâsi'asına hukûk-u düveliye ve insâniyeyi paymâl edercesine nagihâni bir tecâvüzde bulunmuşdur 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 kıtalarında mesûn üç yüz milyon Müslümanın kiblegâh ve tahtgâh-ı hilâfetlerini seîre-i ihtirâmında taşımakla fahri'ül-enâm olan memleketimizin velev bir cüzüne 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 şerefın vares-i müfahharetî olan bu milleti necîbenin bir ferdine varıncaya kadar hukûk-u insâniyeti şeref ve nâmûs-ı vatani 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 tel'isini 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 herbâlikâra karşı kalbleri bizimle berâber darbân ederek bir vifâk-ı tâm içinde Osmanlı kitle-yi mu'azzamasının hükümet-i meşrûtamızın emrine amâde bulunduğu sırası geldiği zaman 'âlem nazarında tebeyyün edecekdir.”*

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,<sup>253</sup> and such clashes at a time when national unity was needed most were criticized.<sup>254</sup>

In another issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* the Committee of Union and Progress called on local citizens to continue to unite against Italy.<sup>255</sup> 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.<sup>256</sup>

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*.<sup>257</sup>

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.<sup>258</sup> 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.<sup>259</sup>

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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 Beyanname", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 323, 19 Teşrinievvel 1327 (1 November 1911), p. 1.

256 "Selânik İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkez-i Umumisî'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 dahî sâdık kalacaklarından ve bunu da Türkleri târik-i terakkilerinde mazhâr-ı mu'âvenet etmeleriyle isbât edeceklerinden eminiz. Trabzon Matbu'âtı: Hekim, Envar-ı Vicdân, 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.<sup>260</sup> 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.<sup>261</sup>

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.<sup>262</sup>

In the 403<sup>rd</sup> 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.<sup>263</sup>

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

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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.<sup>264</sup>

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 Babıâli Coup to overthrow the government. Taking advantage

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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.<sup>265</sup>

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 Babıâli Coup are available whereas the issues following the Coup no longer exist.

An article in the 418<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>266</sup> 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.<sup>267</sup> 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.<sup>268</sup> 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.

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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.<sup>269</sup> 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.<sup>270</sup> 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.<sup>271</sup> 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.<sup>272</sup> 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.<sup>273</sup>

An editorial in the 422<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* argued that permanent peace could only come about through war in the problematic Balkans.<sup>274</sup> 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 87<sup>th</sup> Regiment heading to the Balkans and the Trabzon volunteer brigade.<sup>275</sup> Another article thanked the women of Trabzon for their efforts in gathering winter clothes.<sup>276</sup> 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.<sup>277</sup>

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

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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.<sup>278</sup> In another article, it was reported that the youth would convene under the Trabzon volunteer brigade.<sup>279</sup> 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.<sup>280</sup>

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.<sup>281</sup> 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.<sup>282</sup> In the 427<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>283</sup> 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.<sup>284</sup> 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.<sup>285</sup> In the 429<sup>th</sup> issue,

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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 taraf taraf 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 Teşkilî", *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.<sup>286</sup>

*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.<sup>287</sup> 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.<sup>288</sup> 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.<sup>289</sup> In the 434<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>290</sup>

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.<sup>291</sup>

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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 harekatdan 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’iyesindedir. 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 Teşrinievvel 1328 (13 November 1912), p. 1.

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

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

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

290 “İki Şehid-i Sa’id”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 434, 21 Teşrinisâni 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 Unionists<sup>292</sup> and declarations made by the Committee and the new government were printed on the first page of the newspaper.<sup>293</sup>

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 87<sup>th</sup> Regiment, had nearly all been killed. From a brigade of 500, only two soldiers survived and returned to Trabzon.<sup>294</sup>

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

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*keşide edilen tebrik telgrafına verdiği cevâbda esbâb-ı mağubiyet olarak işâret buyurdukları "avâmil-i meçhûle" terkib-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 meçhûlâta 'atfetmeyerek doğrudan doğruya milletin cehâletine 'atf edeceğiz. Gerçi bu acı bir hakikattir. Fakat bu acı hakikati ne vakit takdir eder ve cehlimizin izâlesi için 'ilm ve ma'ârife ehemmiyet verir ve çocuklarımızı 'ilm silahları 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 i'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.<sup>295</sup> 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.<sup>296</sup>

### **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.<sup>297</sup> 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.<sup>298</sup>

The celebrations of 1910 included a range of activities. The 193<sup>rd</sup> 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.<sup>299</sup> In an article from the 194<sup>th</sup> issue of the same newspaper, it was noted that 10 July was a festival

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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, *Osmanlıyı 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.<sup>300</sup> 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.<sup>301</sup> In the same issue, telegrams from the Trabzon branch of the Committee to Sultan Mehmet V Reşad and other committee chapters were published.<sup>302</sup>

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 295<sup>th</sup> issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, the previous year's celebrations were recounted.<sup>303</sup> Again in the same issue, the full text of Cavit Bey's speech in Freedom Square was published.<sup>304</sup> 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

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300 M.S., "On Temmuzdan On Temmuz", *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 İyd-i Milli Münasebetiyle Hazret-i Hilafetpenahiye Keşide Edilen Tebrik Telgrafi 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 Temmuz", *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.<sup>305</sup> The magazine *Envar-ı Vicdan* also noted that the celebrations were quite lively.<sup>306</sup> An article from the 300<sup>th</sup> issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* offered a detailed analysis of the three years that had passed since the proclamation of constitutionalism.<sup>307</sup>

### 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.<sup>308</sup> 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.<sup>309</sup> 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.<sup>310</sup> In the 245<sup>th</sup> issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* dated 28 January 1911 (15 Kanûnisâni 1326), it was reported that the governor of Van, Bekir Sami Bey,<sup>311</sup> had been appointed as the governor of Trabzon and he arrived in the city from Istanbul on a German ship.<sup>312</sup> 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

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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](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bekir-sami-kunduk_un_-ozgecmisi.tr.mfa), access date: 25 April 2016).

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

*in situ* and see whether or not the system was working effectively.<sup>313</sup> Another article about Bekir Sami Bey appears in the 301<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>314</sup> In its 99<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>315</sup> Bekir Sami Bey issued a statement thanking the people of Trabzon and asked them to help further his efforts.<sup>316</sup> 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.<sup>317</sup> In some articles in the 308<sup>th</sup> issue of *Trabzon’da Meşveret* it was reported that Süleyman Nazif Bey arrived at Trabzon’s port on a German boat.<sup>318</sup> 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

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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 Kaçırдық”, *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”, *DIA, 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 112<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>319</sup> *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.<sup>320</sup> Rumours began to spread that Süleyman Nazif Bey might be removed from office and replaced by the former governor, Bekir Sami Bey.<sup>321</sup> In the 115<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>322</sup>

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.<sup>323</sup> Bekir Sami Bey, who was reappointed as governor, went to Trabzon on the ship *Gülcemal*.<sup>324</sup> 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

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319 "Meşrutiyet Panoramlarından: 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.<sup>325</sup>

The term of Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey<sup>326</sup> 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.<sup>327</sup> 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 Bey<sup>328</sup> was appointed to Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey’s post in June 1913.<sup>329</sup>

#### 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”, *Envar-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 Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkânı ve Ricali (1839-1922)*, *Prosopografik Rehber*, İstanbul: İsis 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.<sup>330</sup>

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.<sup>331</sup>

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*.<sup>332</sup> 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.<sup>333</sup>

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.<sup>334</sup>

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,

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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.<sup>335</sup>

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.<sup>336</sup> 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.<sup>337</sup>

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.<sup>338</sup>

## 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

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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.

