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Chapter III

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL LIFE IN TRABZON

(1908-1914)

3.1. Educational Life

3.1.1. Educational Life in Trabzon before the Second Constitutional Period

Trabzon was conquered by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461. After the conquest, mosques were set up in the city along with madrasas and elementary schools. According to the records of the 1898 *Trabzon Salnamesi* (Trabzon Yearbook), there were thirteen elementary schools in the city at that time providing an education to 752 pupils,¹ clearly indicating that not all of the children in the city were receiving an education. There were also junior high schools (*Rüştiye*) in the nineteenth century in Trabzon: Trabzon Mekteb-i Mülki Rüştiye, which was founded in 1858; Trabzon Mekteb-i Askeri Rüştiyesi, which was founded in 1879; and Trabzon İnas (Girls) Rüştiyesi, which was founded in 1891.² High schools (*İdadi*) were established in the city during Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign. Trabzon Hamidiye Mektebi was established in 1888 followed by Trabzon Mekteb-i İdadi-i Mülki, which today is Trabzon Lisesi.³ In addition to those schools, Trabzon Islahhane Mektebi was established in 1867,⁴ and in 1907 it would be replaced by the Sanayi Mektebi (Industrial Vocational School).⁵

1 Hüseyin Albayrak, *Trabzon Milli Eğitim Tarihi*, Trabzon: Trabzon Valiliği İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü Yayınları, vol.1, 2008, p. 29.

2 Ibid., pp. 36-46.

3 Albayrak, *ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

4 Ibid., p. 71.

5 Ibid., p. 99.

When word got out that an Industrial Vocational School was going to be established, members of the city council in Trabzon province sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior expressing their gratitude. They also asked about when construction would begin, how many classrooms it would have, how large the building would be, and whether the construction costs would be covered entirely by the government or not. The response stated that a 32-year-old abandoned building was going to be converted into the school with eight classrooms, three workshops, a kitchen, a dining hall, a garden, and some annexes. The telegram emphasized that the city had enough revenue to cover the cost of the current *Islahhane* for 120 lira annually, and that while the cost of the new school would also be paid by the municipality, they stated that they were continuing to look for other sources of revenue.⁶

In the 1890s as the number of elementary schools using new methods of education (*usûl-ı cedîd*) grew, there was an increased demand for teachers so in 1892 the Trabzon Darulmuallimini (Teachers College) was officially opened.⁷ In addition to these schools, there were also nine madrasas in Trabzon which provided various levels of religious education.⁸ The most well-known of these are Fatih Madrasa, which was founded right after the conquest, and Pazarkapı Madrasa, which was founded in the mid-nineteenth century. Some of the madrasas closed down over time. Also, there were four libraries owned by the madrasas in the city centre.⁹

3.1.2. Minority Schools

Before the Second Constitutional Period, there were several minority schools in Trabzon belonging to the Greeks and Armenians living in the area. While they were under state control, they set their own curricula. Greeks were the second major ethnic group in the city after Muslims and *Kemerkaya Rum Koleji* (Kemerkaya Greek College) was their most prominent school. It was founded in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and on the eve of the Second Constitutional Period it had 782 students, 358 of whom were in primary school, 298 of whom were in junior high, and 126 of whom were in high school.¹⁰

6 BOA., DH. MKT., 1200-15, 1325. Ş. 01, (9 September 1907).

7 Ibid., p. 73.

8 Ibid., p. 102 The madrasas in Trabzon city center and their dates of establishment are as follows: Fatih Medresesi (1462), Hatuniyye Medresesi (1514), İskender Paşa Medresesi (1529), Hamza Paşa Medresesi (1544), Zeytinlik Medresesi (1722), Müftü Camii Medresesi (1839), Çarşı Camii Medresesi (1839), Saraçzade Medresesi (1848), and Pazarkapı Medresesi (1849).

9 Ibid., pp. 125-135.

10 Ibid., p. 144.

The Greeks also had another school called the *Jimnasyum* (Gymnasium)¹¹ and in 1885 they set up a school for girls. In addition, there were two more schools administered by the Greek Metropolit's Office in Kemer kaya District.¹² A document from the Ottoman archives dated 10 November 1907 (28 Teşrinievvel 1323) states that the girls' school in Tuzluçeşme was in bad repair and the Greek Patriarchate was requesting permission to rebuild it. Once permission was granted, the lots around the school were connected to create an area of 1,666 square meters, upon which a new stone school building was constructed. The plan for the building was that it was going to be 33.65 meters long, 31.50 cm wide, and 17 meters high with three floors. The 3,528 Ottoman gold units needed for construction was to be paid from church funds.¹³

Demographically speaking, Armenians were the third largest group in the city and like the Greeks they were also dedicated to education. Some of them went to foreign schools in the city while others attended Armenian schools. Armenians were divided into three Christian denominations: Gregorians, Catholics, and Protestants, with Gregorians constituting the largest group, and their schools were better equipped than the others.¹⁴ In a *salname* dating from 1903, two Armenian schools are mentioned in the city centre along with numerous others, such as the Armenian Mikhitarist Girls School and the Armenian Language School, which belonged to the Catholic Armenian community.¹⁵

3.1.3. Mission Schools

Foreign schools were also opened in Trabzon, some of which were established by missionaries while others were founded by foreign missions. Among them, French schools were the most prominent. French missionaries established the French Primary School for Girls. In 1852, Lusie Fornie opened the school, which offered courses in languages, handcrafts, and music. Education lasted for a year, and one record indicated that at one point there were twelve students enrolled who were Italian, Ottoman, and Russian subjects.¹⁶ Another school established by French missionaries was the French School. In 1852, nuns from the St. Joseph convent in Marseille opened the school, which offered a five-year education which covered the primary and middle school levels. When it was

11 Musa Şaşmaz, "İngiliz Konsolosu Alfred Biliotti'nin 1885'teki Raporuna Göre Trabzon Vilayeti'ndeki Eğitim Durumu", *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 163, July 1997, p. 45.

12 Ibid., p. 45.

13 BOA., MF. MKT., 1039-38, 1326. M. 07 (10 February 1908).

14 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 153.

15 Ibid., p. 155.

16 Şamil Mutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları*, İstanbul: Kurtiş Matbaacılık, 2005, pp. 148-149.

closed down in 1914 because of the war, eight teachers were working there and there were 76 female students who were Ottoman, Italian, and Greek subjects.¹⁷ Another French school, Saint Greguar School, was established in 1875.¹⁸ Apart from these, the two other French missionary schools established in Trabzon were Pères de la Doctrine Chériennes Seminary School, which was founded in 1891, and the French Convent, which was established in 1904.¹⁹ All of these French schools were closed down in 1914 with the advent of World War I and all their assets were confiscated. According to records, some of the school buildings were converted into hospitals during the war.²⁰

Americans also established schools in Trabzon. In particular, the American Board of Missions set up a school in 1865 which offered seven years of education. The school was co-ed and catered especially to Armenians.²¹ The school was closed down in 1917, when the United States entered the war against the Ottoman Empire. Even though three more American schools were said to exist in Trabzon, there is scant information about them.²²

Records also indicate that there was an Iranian community living in Trabzon which consisted of a few thousand people. Mirza Mehmet Ağa set up a school to educate Iranian children in 1884.²³ The school had about thirty male students who studied Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. The costs of the school were covered by a levy of one kuruş per bundle carried by Iranian caravan merchants, and the 120 lira collected in this way were spent to meet the needs of the school.²⁴ The school was exempt from taxes as of 1895. The school later burnt down in a fire, and the Iranian consulate in Trabzon applied to the governorship office to rebuild the school. It was decided that the school building would be rebuilt on the same lot with the following dimensions: 13.30 meters in length, 17 meters wide, and 8 meters tall with two stories. The construction costs were to be covered by Iranians living in Trabzon.²⁵

17 Ibid., p. 233.

18 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 159; Gülbadi Alan, "Amerikan Board Misyonerlerinin Trabzon ve Çevresinde Yürüttükleri Faaliyetler Çerçevesinde Eğitim Alanındaki Çalışmalar," *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Prof. Dr. Bayram Kodaman'a Armağan Özel Sayısı, January 2010, p. 167.

19 Mutlu, *ibid.*, p. 161.

20 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 161; Alan, *ibid.*, p. 164.

21 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 169; Alan, *ibid.*, p. 164.

22 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 169.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

24 Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 52.

25 BOA., İ.AZN., 80-1326, 1326. Ş.22 (19 September 1908).

There were also three Italian schools in Trabzon according to some sources,²⁶ but little detailed information is available concerning them.

3.1.4. Education in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period

The Committee of Union and Progress planned to invest in education as a means of enabling social progress when they took power following the proclamation of the Second Constitution. Their two main objectives were to eliminate illiteracy, modernize the education system, and build schools in every part of the country. However, because of the outbreak of successive wars they were unable to realize those goals.

Education was a prime matter of concern in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period. The Unionists thought constitutionalism would help solve the problems of education. Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey, who was the Customs Director, said they would “sow textbooks like seeds.”²⁷ One of the biggest shortcomings of the city was a lack of schools, especially for Muslim children. Literacy rates were very low in Muslim Turkish villages, which stood in contrast to the high levels of literacy in Greek and Armenian villages, a fact which alarmed Muslim administrators and the intellectuals of the period.

An anonymous article titled “Village Schools” in the third issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* took up the matter of education. The article claimed that peasants needed the most help in Ottoman society and that there were no schools or skilled teachers in any of the villages in the province of Trabzon. The claim was made that while every village had an imam, they were not qualified to teach children. The article went on to say that the most important reason why there were no teachers in the villages was financial duress. Even though graduates of teacher's colleges were sent to some village schools, the enterprise ultimately failed as there wasn't enough money to pay their salaries. The article pointed out that even imams who graduated from madrasas in the district of Of were paid very little, and such meagre wages would not be enough for a teacher who graduated from a teacher's college. To overcome such problems, the author argued, the peasants themselves would have to at least make an effort to pay the teachers' salaries while the government would cover the other costs. The article also claimed that an education movement starting in the villages would help defeat illiteracy all around the country.²⁸

26 Mutlu, *ibid.*, p. 50.

27 Günday, *ibid.*, p. 17.

28 “Köy Mektepleri”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 3, 27 Ağustos 1324 (9 September 1908), pp. 2-3.

An article in the 15th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* also deals with the issue of education. It stated that since children could learn how to read and write within one year thanks to new educational methods, it was wrong to insist on using old methods which took three years to teach literacy. In addition, the article claimed that teachers who graduated from teacher's colleges were needed so that modern education could be offered, but the author lamented that the teacher's college in Trabzon had very few students. It was also noted that around two or three hundred teachers had graduated from the teacher's college in Trabzon in the previous twenty years but they were all employed at schools in the city centre. The article added that the Ministry of Education planned to open a school in every village in the province, meaning that over 2,000 teachers would be needed. Under the current circumstances, the author argued, the teacher's college in Trabzon could not train that many teachers even in a century.²⁹ As a solution, the author proposed that by appointing a few more teachers to teach at the Trabzon *Darulmuallimini*, the number of graduates could increase in a short time. He also said that teacher's colleges were also needed in the districts of Canik, Gümüşhane, and Of. He emphasized that instead of expecting the government to do everything, the Committee of Union and Progress should bring together local clubs with the people of Trabzon to come up with solutions. The article suggested that a committee consisting of respected figures in the city could be set up in order to start a fund-raising campaign and help cover the costs of education.³⁰

An organization called the *Tamim-i Maarif ve Himaye-i Etfal* was established for the purpose of providing an education to orphans. The members of the organization convened under the leadership of Vali Paşa at the Zağnos Mektebi and pooled their money, the amount of which was then recorded in a donation book (*iane defteri*).³¹

An article in the 20th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that Ottoman society had been liberated and made important reforms but strength in unity was needed to continue this development. Education was posited as being the key to mobilizing that strength in unity. The article emphasized that Ottoman

29 Hafız Zühdü, "Bir İhtar-ı Mühim Daha", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 15, 8 Teşrînievvel 1324 (21 October 1908), p. 1.

30 Hafız Zühdü, "Bir İhtar-ı Mühim Daha (ma'bad)", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrînievvel 1324 (24 October 1908), p. 1.

31 "Terakki-i Maarif ve Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti", *Feyz*, No: 24, 12 Teşrînievvel 1324 (25 October 1908), pp. 3-4; "Tamim-i Maarif ve Sahabe-i Etfal Cemiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 17, 15 Teşrînievvel 1324 (28 October 1908), p. 1.

society would march to a happy future under the guidance of a system of education strengthened by unity.³²

The newspaper *Feyz* ran an article about the general convention of the Committee of Union and Progress and the decisions that were made there, some of which were about education. Among the proposals were evening classes, conveniently located private schools, the appointment of competent teachers, and above all industrial vocational schools. In addition, they decided to publish books that the general populace could understand, books that would tell them about the efforts of the government and thus help gain public support for the party. They also decided to train specialists in every field and send deserving students to Europe on scholarships.³³ Another article in the same issue of the newspaper emphasized the importance of education for Ottoman society, saying there was a pressing need to ensure that education became more widespread in the country.³⁴

One of the more interesting incidents of the Constitutional Period occurred in Trabzon as ideas were put forward on the issue of education. It started with the transfer of Trabzon High School's principal, Hazım Efendi, to Bitlis. Before he departed, he appointed Hafız Mesud Efendi as the acting principal. The latter was well-loved by the students as he worked hard for the school. The students wrote a petition with 200 signatures in order to prevent the Ministry of Education from appointing another principal, as they wanted Hafız Mesud Efendi to be appointed. They submitted their petition to the Director of Education in Trabzon, who sent the students to the post office saying that while their request was legitimate, they had to directly apply to the Ministry of Education via telegram. After a while, the Ministry of Education appointed Celil Efendi as the school's new principal. When he showed up at the school to take up his new post, the students immediately marched to the Governor's Office and then to the Directorship of Education. After the protest, a student by the name of Nedimefendizade Badi Efendi tried to console the other students by saying that they had no right to object to a principal appointed by the Ministry of Education and eventually he managed to convince most of the students to return to the school. Some of the other students rushed to the post office to send a telegram to the Ministry of Education, but they were prevented from doing so. An investigation by the governorship ensued, whereby around thirty

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

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

34 Mustafa Vasfi, "Ma'arif", *Feyz*, No: 32, 14 Teşrînîsâni 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 3.

students out of approximately 500 stated that they refused to accept the new principal and wanted their own candidate to be the new principal.³⁵ It was thought that the Unionists played a part in this rather remarkable incident. Feyz held the Director of Education responsible for the event and called on the governor of Trabzon to have the director removed from his post, while *Trabzon'da Meşveret* sided with the students and vilified the new principal.³⁶

An article on perceptions of education was published in the 66th issue of *Feyz*. The article discussed the importance of education in the progress of society, concluding that Europe had once been in the throes of ignorance as well but by conquering Andalusia, it benefitted from the high level of education and science there and was thus able to attain a more civilized state. The article also noted that it was not enough to just save the day and that society had to work hard for the future by developing and spreading education.³⁷

In an article titled “Towards Progress” (“*Terakkiye Doğru*”), M. Sadık stated that great progress was needed in the sciences and that the government had a major responsibility in ensuring that such an aim was achieved. He said new schools needed to be opened, existing ones had to be repaired, and textbooks needed to be procured. However, he noted, nine months after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, no progress had been made.³⁸ Another article in the next issue of the same newspaper talked about the importance of schools as well as the importance of opening more and more schools, a duty that all citizens needed to support.³⁹

As the Unionists debated about how to regulate the education system after the declaration of the Second Constitution, Christian minority representatives applied to the Trabzon Education Directorship with a petition asking for financial support. The petition was signed by the Trabzon Greek Metropolitan, Armenian *Murahhası* (representative), and Armenian Catholic *Murahhası*. They expressed how proud they were to be Ottoman citizens, how it was their natural right to receive an education regardless of ethnicity or religion, and how bettering the education system would benefit the entire country. They also added that they never received a share of the education tax collected

35 “Mekteb-i İdadide”, *Feyz*, No:32, 14 Teşrinisâni 1324 (27 November 1908), p. 4; “Mekteb Meselesi ve Kabahat Kimde?”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 26, 15 Teşrinisâni 1324 (28 November 1908) pp. 2-3.

36 Kudret Emiroğlu, “1908'de Trabzon Lisesi'nde Boykot”, *Trabzon*, No: 4, December 1990, pp. 36-38.

37 “Maarifimiz Ne Halde?”, *Feyz*, No: 66, 7 Nisan 1325 (20 April 1909), pp. 29-30.

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

39 Emin, “Mektub”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 71, 29 Nisan 1325 (12 May 1909), p. 1.

from all Ottoman citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The Christian community representatives emphasized the principles of equality, justice, and fraternity guaranteed by the *Kanun-i Esasi* (Constitution). They demanded a share of the education budget in proportion to the size of the population of each minority group. The Trabzon Directorship of Education examined the application and responded by saying that the education budget was allocated to vocational schools and junior high and high schools according to the Education Regulations. He added that the establishment and administration of primary schools was left to minority groups according to the 3rd and 4th articles of the Education Regulations. Also, he noted that the vocational schools and high schools were not only open to Muslims, but to all Ottoman citizens, and that no applications had been made by non-Muslim communities to establish junior high or high schools. Therefore, he argued, the cost of primary schools belonged to the communities, whereas the cost of junior high, high school, and vocational schools for non-Muslim Ottoman citizens was paid for by the education budget. For that reason, he argued, it was out of line for community representatives to make such a request and a negative answer could be the only proper response. When the governorship of Trabzon was notified of the situation by the Directorship of Education, they notified the Ministry of the Interior and asked how to proceed. The Ministry of the Interior consulted the Ministry of Education and then sent a reply to the Governorship of Trabzon stating that primary education was compulsory for all Ottoman citizens.⁴⁰

Also of note was that almost all non-Muslim villages had schools and teachers. This state of affairs did not go unnoticed by the dignitaries of Trabzon as well as state officials, as indicated by a report dated 4 September 1909 (22 August 1325) which was prepared by state inspector Ali Seydi Bey. He reported that the biggest borough of Trabzon was Maçka, which had a population of 35,000 people and had many historical buildings and a large monastery. He added that the Greeks, who numbered more than 20,000, opened schools in all of the villages, and the priests freely conducted rituals and proselytized as they pleased. As a result, it was argued, the illiterate Muslim population, who was familiar with the Greek language, gradually were converting to Christianity but hid their conversion from the authorities by not changing their former (Muslim) names. Ali Seydi Bey said that the situation had been confirmed by the Trabzon deputies and needed to be rectified. He added that the state could not intervene in the freedom of religion and belief but the special situation of the Muslim population in Maçka required attention. He suggested Maçka become a *kaza* (town) instead of *nahiye* (borough) on account of its remoteness from

40 BOA., DH. MKT., 2867-6, 1327. C. 17 (6 July 1909).

the city centre and high population. In this way, he argued, there would be a *şer'ia* court and a junior high school in the town centre, and several primary schools would be opened in its boroughs. He claimed that it was important to appoint officials to the area considering its special circumstances in order to reduce illiteracy.⁴¹ By making such remarks, Ali Seydi Bey seemed to consider Muslims converting to Christianity to be worse than illiteracy. The Ministry of the Interior examined the report and agreed with his suggestions, and then turned to the Office of the Grand Vizier to ask for approval to take those steps.⁴²

In 1909, Ferit Bey was appointed as the Trabzon Director of Education. Local newspapers wrote about the work he was doing in his new post. In nine months, he made sure that school buildings were repaired and ready for classes; a teacher's college was opened; the İnas Rüştiyesi (junior high school for girls) in the city centre was reorganized and more teachers were hired; junior high schools in a nearby district were revamped; and, a plan was developed by which the cost of schools to be built in Lazistan was to be divided between the public and the Ministry of Education. In addition, he ensured that 275,000 kuruş would be allocated in the second half of the 1909 budget for various school expenditures in the province of Trabzon, and 55,000 kuruş of that was to be allocated to non-Muslim schools. He encouraged the public to cover half the costs of the schools to be built in Dalyan, Rize, Saçlıhoca and Tekfurçayırı. Ferit Bey also procured 50,000 kuruş from the Ministry of Education to pay for primary school teachers' salaries as well as for supplies and equipment. In addition, he took over the administration of the Industrial Vocational School and tried to make sure that all of its needs were met. It was also noted that in those days travelling preachers were appointed to villages to tell people about the importance of education. Moreover, eleven junior high schools and 220 primary schools were opened during this period.⁴³

An article in the 161st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* discussed the challenges that the Committee of Union and Progress was facing in its attempts to save the country from oppression and illiteracy as well as promote social progress. The article also made the claim that despite all the efforts of the Committee, out of a sense of envy some people published articles critiquing the Committee as a way to prevent it from achieving its goals.⁴⁴ The 168th issue of the same

41 BOA., DH. MUİ., 31.1-1, 1327.L.22 (6 November 1909).

42 BOA., DH. MUİ., 31.1-1, 1327.L.22 (6 November 1909).

43 "Ma'arif İdaresinin Dokuz Ay Zarfındaki Teşebbüsü ve Muvaffakiyeti", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 160, 13 Mart 1326 (26 March 1910), pp. 1-2.

44 "İttihad ve Terakki", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 161, 17 Mart 1326 (30 March 1910), p. 1.

newspaper announced that students at the *Darulmuallimin* (Teacher's College) were to do internships at primary schools in the city centre three days a week.⁴⁵

In an archival document dated 28 April 1909 (15 April 1325), it was reported that the French Embassy applied for a permit to build a new school in Trabzon on the lot where there had once been a French seminary known as Pères de la Doctrine Chrétiennes. The new school was to be 89 meters long, 10 meters wide, and 12 meters high, with two dormitories, six classrooms and a recreation area. Ultimately the application was approved.⁴⁶

An article in the 186th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentioned that there was going to be a graduation ceremony at the Armenian Catholic Muhtaryan Gymnasium School, which had been open for twenty years.⁴⁷ In the following issue, the editorial was devoted to Şems-i Hürriyet Primary School, which had been founded by the Committee of Union and Progress in the Muhittin neighbourhood four months before the news story came out. The article praised the achievements of the students and the progress they had made after just four months of education.⁴⁸

Naci Bey, the owner and chief writer of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, devoted his editorial to education in the newspaper's 188th issue. The article was titled "İstikbal Bizimdir" ("The Future is Ours"). He wrote about how schools and education are crucial for civilization, and added that they would not have been subjected to the previous absolutist regime for thirty-three years if they had not been deprived of education. Also, he said that just as the Committee of Union and Progress had saved the people from that regime, they would also save them from illiteracy by spreading education.⁴⁹ In his editorial in the following issue, Naci Bey talked about incentives for peasants.⁵⁰

In this period, educational activities included sending top students to Europe for higher education. A competition was held in order to select two such students in Trabzon. Two graduates from Trabzon High School, Safvet and

45 "Darulmuallimin Talebesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 168, 10 Nisan 1326 (23 April 1910), p. 2.

46 BOA., DH. İD., 117-26, 1329. Ra. 3 (29 March 1911).

47 "Muhtaryan Gimnazyum Mektebinin Tevzi'-i Mükâfati", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 186, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910), p. 3.

48 Naci, "Şems-i Hürriyet Mektebi ve Dört Aylık Bir Tahsil", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 187, 17 Haziran 1326 (30 June 1910), p. 1.

49 Naci, "İstikbal Bizimdir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 188, 19 Haziran 1326 (2 July 1910), p. 1-2.

50 Naci, "Köylüler Teşvik İster", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 189, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910), p. 1.

Mehmet, won the competition and were invited to Istanbul by the Ministry of Education to be sent to Europe.⁵¹

One of the decisions made at the Committee of Union and Progress convention was to organize evening classes at the Committee's Trabzon branch. They offered courses in Turkish history, geography, economics, law, French and math, as well as reading and writing to adults and children who were unable to get a formal education.⁵²

An article in the 237th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* suggests that the people of Trabzon appreciated the evening courses offered by the Committee of Union and Progress Club.⁵³ In the following issue, it was noted that the Committee of Union and Progress was involved in planning important educational activities which resulted in a daily increase in the number of schools in the region.⁵⁴

An archival document concerning educational institutions in Trabzon stated that permission was given for the construction of a school building on lots 20, 22 and 137 in the İskenderpaşa and Frenkhisar neighbourhoods which were registered in the name of St. Joseph nuns. The school was planned to be 17 meters long, 20 meters wide, and 18 meters high with a monastery on the premises. The document also mentioned that the construction had the Sultan's approval, which meant that the nuns would not be liable for any fees.⁵⁵ Another archival document states that Captain Mehmet Said Efendi, a teacher at the Trabzon Military Junior High School, set up a centre of Physical Education (*Terbiye-i Bedeniyye*) and that he deserved a medal for his efforts and work.⁵⁶

In the 251st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that on the previous night Education Inspector Servet Efendi had given a speech on history and politics at the Committee of Union and Progress Club. Following the speech, Dr. Haşim Bey from the 7th *Nişancı* (Sharpshooter) Battalion gave a talk on tuberculosis and how it is spread.⁵⁷ In an editorial in the next issue, it was reported that the new governor of Trabzon, Bekir Sami Bey, had asked city dignitaries about the needs of the province but only two people gave written replies. The

51 "Avrupaya Talebe İ'zamı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 217, 2 Teşrinievvel 1326 (15 July 1910), p. 3.

52 "İttihad ve Terakki Kulübünde Gece Dersleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 234, 8 Kanûnievvel 1326 (21 December 1910), pp. 2-3.

53 "Arz-ı Memnuniyet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No:237, 18 Kanûnievvel 1326 (31 December 1910), pp. 2-3.

54 "Cem'iyet-i Muhtereme ve Ma'arif", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 238, 22 Kanûnievvel 1326 (4 January 1911), p. 2.

55 BOA., DH. İD., 117-22, 1329.M. 17 (18 January 1911).

56 BOA., DH. MUİ., 95-2, 1328.Ca. 5 (15 May 1910).

57 "Konferans", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 251, 5 Şubat 1326 (18 February 1911), p. 2.

editorial also noted that the most pressing problem in Trabzon was education; while roads were important, the author pointed out, education should have priority. The author lamented that because of insufficient government funds primary schools did not get the money they needed and that there was not enough funding to open schools in every village, despite the fact that they were desperately needed. The article also mentioned that non-Muslims managed to open schools on their own. In order to solve these problems, it was argued, the government needed to train better teachers at teacher's colleges and appoint them to village schools through the efforts of the public, just like non-Muslims. The article mentioned that when Commander Abuk Paşa was the acting governor, he had set up a committee called the Muhafaza-yı Mekâtib-i İbtidaiye Hey'et-i Fahriyesi which chose one person from each district to oversee education and the committee tried to raise funds for schools in need. Given the current state of affairs, the author noted, the committee needed to be reactivated.⁵⁸

An article in the 263rd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* stated that many Ottoman students were getting an education in Europe to learn about the important fields of science and technology. The author claimed that some of those students needed help and could not be expected to provide quality services upon their return if they did not receive some form of aid. The article mentioned that the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters was trying to find a solution to this predicament. One idea was to establish a committee which would communicate with students in Europe on a regular basis and help needy students by providing them with funding. In this way, the author argued, those young active minds would be able to concentrate on their studies and work for the progress of the Ottoman Empire rather than struggle to make a living.⁵⁹

In the 271st issue of the same newspaper, it was reported that for the anniversary of Sultan Mehmet V Reşad's coronation, Mekteb-i Sultani students in Trabzon had prepared a banquet in the name of *İttihad-ı Osmaniye* together with students from other schools, and they had invited Greek and Armenian students as well.⁶⁰ An article in the same issue reported that again for the coronation of the Sultan, Mekteb-i Sultani students visited the Committee of Union and Progress Club and were well received by the club's members.⁶¹

58 Naci, "En Büyük İhtiyacımız Ma'arifdir", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 252, 9 Şubat 1326 (22 February 1911), p. 1.

59 "İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Yeni Bir Teşebbüsü", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 263, 19 Mart 1327 (1 April 1911), p. 2.

60 "İttihad-ı Osmanîyi Temsil Eden Bir Ziyafet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 271, 16 Nisan 1327 (29 April 1911), p. 2.

61 "Mekteb-i Sultani Efendilerinin İttihat Kulübü'nü Ziyaretleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 271, 16 Nisan 1327 (29 April 1911), p. 3.

One issue the Committee of Union and Progress focused on in general was the reform of the madrasas, the repercussions of which were felt in Trabzon as well. In the 272nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, an article mentioned the madrasas, saying that they had served their purpose well since the establishment of the empire but had started to decline due to a lack of interest in recent times. Despite this, the author argued that there was still a need for madrasa graduates and the schools needed funding so that they could become beneficial institutions once again.⁶² In the following issue, another article talked about the poor conditions of the madrasas and how they needed to be reformed.⁶³

An article in the 281st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* brought up the Committee of Union and Progress's efforts to promote the education of girls, discussing the importance of educating women so that a civilized society could be brought into being. The author stated that plans were underway to open a school by the name of *Mekteb-i Sultani-i İnas*. The Adile Sultan Palace in Kandilli, Istanbul had been set aside for that purpose and repairs were underway.⁶⁴ In an editorial in the following issue of the same newspaper, it was stated that the new school in Kandilli marked an important step towards progress, and the important role and contributions of the school were stressed.⁶⁵

The 285th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the Union and Progress School in Trabzon was to have a graduation ceremony and that parents, Committee members, and education enthusiasts were invited.⁶⁶ In the 307th issue, an article noted that twenty-three students were enrolled in the new academic year at the Union and Progress School, only nine of which paid tuition while the rest were on scholarships. Youth who wanted to apply were required to bring their official identity cards (*tezkire-i Osmaniye*) and vaccination reports to the committee.⁶⁷

An article in the 302nd issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that *Mekteb-i Sultani* required two lira for registration and that it was quite difficult to be approved for an exemption. The author lamented that this meant many children

62 Naci, "Medarisin Hayatı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 272, 20 Nisan 1327 (3 May 1911), p. 1.

63 Naci, "Medarisin Islahı", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 273, 23 Nisan 1327 (6 May 1911), p. 1.

64 "Mekteb-i Sultani-i İnas", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 281, 21 Mayıs 1327 (3 June 1911), p. 2; for further info, see: Nicole A. N. M van Os., "Kandilli Sultânî-i İnas: Bir Devlet Adamının Teşebbüs-i Şâhsisi Nasıl Sonuçlandı?", *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol. 28, no:163, July 1997, pp. 26-34, 28-29.

65 Naci, "Terakki Adımları", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 282, 25 Mayıs 1327 (7 June 1911), p. 1.

66 "Pazarertesi İttihad ve Terakki Mektebi'nde Tevzi'-i Mükâfat" *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 285, 4 Haziran 1327 (17 June 1911), p. 2.

67 "İttihad Mektebi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 307, 20 Ağustos 1327 (2 Sept 1911), p. 2.

whose parents who did not qualify could not register and that if they did not continue their education after primary school, the problem of illiteracy could not be eliminated. The author reminded readers that children from families facing financial problems could enrol at the military junior high school free of charge and advised parents to register their children as soon as possible.⁶⁸

In the 358th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, it was reported that students at Aya Filibo Primary School, who was financially supported by boatmen, were to recite patriotic poems at the Union and Progress Club and that those interested were welcome to attend.⁶⁹ An article in the 365th issue announced that Union and Progress School students delighted audiences with a play at the Union and Progress Club. Since both the downstairs and upstairs halls were packed, the students had to repeat their poems and performances in both halls.⁷⁰ The 414th issue of the same newspaper announced that the Union and Progress School was going to open at the beginning of September for the new academic year and had started registration. It was added that they were to admit a total of twenty-seven students, twelve of whom would register for free. Those students had to prove that they were needy (*fakr-u zaruret içinde*) with a document they could obtain from their local administration and apply to the committee via the club branches in order to qualify for free registration. Those who could pay the registration fee had to apply to the school administration by 15 September with their identity card and vaccination report.⁷¹

A report dated 18 October 1910 which was prepared by the British consulate in Trabzon stated that there were not any British schools or charities in Trabzon. The consul noted that they had decided to open a British school but because of official procedures the project was not yet realized.⁷²

In 1912, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey was appointed as the governor of Trabzon, and in his memoir he narrated various anecdotes about educational life in the city. He mentioned Hatuniyye Madrasa, which had been restored and saved from collapse. The madrasa had been built by Yavuz Sultan Selim's mother, Gülbahar Hatun, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey was also involved with revising the curriculum at the madrasas in an attempt

68 "Evladlarını Okutmak İsteyen Ebeveyne", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 302, 3 Ağustos 1327 (16 August 1911), p. 2.

69 "İttihad Kulübün'de", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 358, 22 Şubat 1327 (6 March 1912), p. 2.

70 "İttihad Mektebi Talebeleri", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 365, 17 Mart 1328 (30 March 1912), p. 3.

71 "İttihad ve Terakki Mektebi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 414, 8 Eylül 1328 (21 September 1912), p. 3.

72 PRO., F.O., 195/2362, 18 October 1910, p. 93.

to reform them. In addition, he reported that he opened new primary schools and expanded the industrial vocational school.⁷³

In his memoir, Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey mentioned an interesting incident that occurred during one of his trips around Trabzon. As he was carrying out an inspection of the town of Şiran in Gümüşhane, he noticed a suspicious man and had his bag searched. Propaganda brochures were found in the bag, inviting Muslims to become Christian. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey wrote that this person was going around Turkish villages trying to convert people to Christianity and was in fact successful with several of them.⁷⁴ He chalked up the missionary's success to the ignorance of the Muslim population so he opened more than fifty primary schools, many of them in Maçka, in order to eliminate illiteracy among the new generations during his tenure as the governor of Trabzon.⁷⁵

The majority of Ottoman statesmen were quite concerned about the problem of illiteracy. Since there were no schools in remote mountain villages, the Muslim population, who learned about their own religion via hearsay, were seen as being susceptible to the propaganda of Christian missionaries. For that reason, apostasy drew the attention of state officials in relation to illiteracy.

Statesmen considered counter-measures that could be put into place to counter the efforts of some countries to proselytize in Ottoman territories under the pretence of protecting minority rights as well as missionary activities which were seen as corrupting the social fabric and leading to social unrest. As a result of these queries, it was decided that spreading education to the remotest corners of the country was of utmost importance for the future of the state.

Some documents in the Ottoman archives made mention of an exceptional incident that transpired in the Trabzon Armenian community during Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey's tenure as governor. According to these documents, a dispute between some teachers in an Armenian school and the principal became even more complicated when some students also got involved. When the teachers, the principal, the Armenian representative (*murabhas*), and a priest started to send telegrams to the Armenian Patriarchate, the Ministry of the Interior asked the governorship of Trabzon for further information. Governor Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey sent a detailed report to the Ministry of the Interior, stating that the principal, a Russian subject, and some teachers had a fallout; one teacher took advantage of the situation to be appointed as principal and incited the students to cause unrest, as a result of which several people were beaten. Those students attempted to hold a rally but were dissuaded from doing so. Later, they raided

73 Mehmet Ali Ayni, *Canlı Tarihler*, Ankara: Türkiye Yayınevi, p. 81.

74 Ibid., p. 82.

75 Ibid.

the Armenian *Murabhashane*, forcing the *murabhas* to resign. When the police met with the dignitaries of the Armenian community, the situation was taken under control. Mehmet Ali Ayni Bey emphasized that it was in the state's best interest that the Armenian *Murabhas* continue with his job.⁷⁶

Another document about educational institutions in the Ottoman archives stated that permission was granted for a school lying in ruins in the courtyard of the Greek church in Kiraçhane Village to be rebuilt.⁷⁷ In another document it was said that immediately after the Ottoman Empire got involved in World War I, the governor of Trabzon, Cemal Azmi Bey, reported to the Ministry of the Interior that there were three foreign schools in Trabzon, two of which belonged to the French and the other to the Americans. Cemal Azmi Bey reported that the staff at those schools did not engage in any activities that were harmful to the state so he saw no need to expel them from Trabzon.⁷⁸

3.2. Cultural Life

3.2.1. The Press

3.2.1.1. Newspapers

After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, there was a press boom in Trabzon, just like in the rest of the country. Between 1908 and 1913, thirty Turkish, eight Greek and thirteen Armenian newspapers and magazines were licensed for publication.⁷⁹ In addition, the newspaper *İntikam* (*Revenge*) was licenced to be published in Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Armenian, French, Hebrew,

76 BOA., DH. İD., 139-9, 1331. B. 28 (3 June 1913).

77 BOA., DH. İD., 214-11, 1332. C. 07 (3 May 1914).

78 BOA., DH. ŞFR., 448-11, 1330. Tn. 01 (14 November 1914).

79 **Turkish Newspapers:** *Feyz* (1908), *Posta* (1908), *Trabzon'da Meşveret* (1908), *İnkılab* (1908), *Pulathane* (1908), *Bahr-i Siyah* (1908), *Haber Anası* (1909), *Haber Babası* (1909), *Trabzon'da Ahbab* (1909), *Kehkeşan* (1909), *Leyla ile Mecnun* (1909), *İkbal* (1909), *Envar-ı Vicdan* (1909), *Temkin* (1909), *Lazım* (1909), *Şebab* (1909), *Tahsil* (1909), *Tahsilat* (1909), *Mehdi* (1909), *Radendaz* (1909), *Lazan* (1909), *Yeni Haber Anası* (1909), *Hekim* (1910), *Tarık* (1909), *Şebab* (1910), *Rençber* (1910), *Şark* (1910), *Afacan* (1911), *Cadaloz* (1911), *Tilki* (1912).

Greek Newspapers: *Faros Anatólis* (1908), *Anezartilos* (1908), *Omanyia* (1908), *Feniki* (1908), *Drasis* (1909), *Nogos Istraponda* (1909), *Bontikos* (1909), *Esengi Drasis* (1909).

Armenian Newspapers: *Harish* (1908), *Paylak* (1908), *Gegçug* (1908), *Kharissky* (1909), *Keghtochoug* (1909), *Pontos* (1910), *Modzag* (1910), *Charjou* (1910), *Bondoss* (1910), *Petak* (1910), *Bidzag* (1911), *Pejichg* (1911), *Jamantağ* (1911).

Multilingual Newspapers: *İntikam* (1909). For further information, see: Hüseyin Albayrak, *Dünden Bugüne Trabzon Basını*, Ankara: Trabzon İli ve İlçeleri Eğitim, Kültür ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı Yayınları, 2010.

and Syriac in 1909.⁸⁰ The fact that a newspaper would be published in so many languages is suspicious on the grounds that it could be used as a tool for propaganda during the boycotts in those years. Despite being licensed, however, it either was never published or it was closed down after publishing a few issues. Because of the widespread looting that occurred during the Russian invasion in 1916, very few of those newspapers and magazines are now available.⁸¹

The Turkish-language newspapers and magazines that are still available with a wide range of issues are *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, *Feyz*, *Tarık*, *Kehkeşan*, and *Envar-ı Vicdan*. Due to their availability in archives, those publications constitute the main sources used in this study. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was published twice a week and was licensed on the grounds that it would publish articles about politics, science, and literature. The owner of the newspaper was Salihzade Naci Efendi, who came to be known as Meşveretçi Naci.⁸² As has been noted earlier, *Trabzon'da Meşveret* was the mouthpiece of the Unionists in Trabzon. On the one hand, it followed the social transformation of the Committee of Union and Progress, and on the other hand it served as the defender of the committee against opposition voices. Even though it has been claimed that it continued publishing until the 1916 Russian invasion, only issues 1 through 451 (until 1913) are currently available. Those issues are kept at the Press Museum in Çemberlitaş, Istanbul.

Feyz was also an influential newspaper in Trabzon during the Second Constitutional Period. The license granted to Silahdarzade Halil Efendi stated that the newspaper would report on politics, science, literature, and commercial and agricultural issues, and that it would be published three days a week.⁸³ The manager was Eyüpzade Osman Nuri, and *Feyz* followed a moderate policy. Even though the paper did support the proclamation of the constitution, it occasionally got into debates with *Trabzon'da Meşveret*. *Feyz* tried to be the voice of public opinion during its thirteen months of publication.

In the Second Constitutional Period, the newspaper *Tarık*, which was published by Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi, was the voice of dissent in Trabzon. It drew attention with its harsh criticisms of the Committee of Union and Progress and ultimately became the mouthpiece of the Freedom and Understanding Party in Trabzon. The paper's criticisms resulted in an adverse outcome: *Tarık*

80 Ibid., p. 72.

81 For further information, see: Hasan Duman, *Başlangıcından Harf Devrimine Kadar Osmanlı-Türk Süreli Yayınları ve Gazeteleri (1828-1928)*, Ankara: Enformasyon ve Dokümantasyon Hizmetleri Vakfı Yayınları, 2000.

82 BOA., DH. MKT., 1299-65, 1326. Ş. 25 (22 September 1908).

83 BOA., DH. MKT., 1289-26, 1326. Ş. 06 (3 September 1908).

was one of the first newspapers to be closed down in the provinces after the assassination of Sadrazam Mahmut Şevket Paşa in 1913, and Şatırzade Hasan Hicabi was one of the first dissidents to be arrested in Trabzon.⁸⁴

Another periodical to be published in Trabzon was the magazine *Envar-ı Vicdan*. Publication began in 1909 under the ownership and management of Zeynelabidin.⁸⁵ It was published weekly and featured articles on politics, social events, and literature. *Kehkeşan* was yet another publication in Trabzon, and it too was a product of the constitutional period. It had a run of twenty-four issues and was known as a literary magazine.⁸⁶ Halil Nihad Boztepe and İbrahim Alaaddin Gövsa wrote for *Kehkeşan*, among other serial publications. Another magazine was *Hekim*, which focused on medical issues. The first issue was published in 1910 and it ran uninterrupted for two years, during which time forty-eight issues were published.⁸⁷

The foremost minority publication in Trabzon was the Greek newspaper *Faros Anatolis*. It was published twice a week and included articles about local events, politics, commerce, and scientific developments. It was licensed under Dimitraki Serasi Efendi.⁸⁸ Publication began in 1908 and it continued to be published until 1923. Its stance was pro-government and at first it sided with the Unionists and then took the side of the Russians during the occupation; during the National Struggle, it supported the Ankara government. Because it generally supported whoever was in power, it managed to have a print run of 1,095 issues.⁸⁹ Other Greek publications either could not be put out for one reason or another despite having a license, or survived but briefly.

As far as Armenian publications are concerned, apart from *Harish*, the semi-official daily of Taşnaks, and *Bidzag*, the semi-official weekly humour magazine of Hınçaks, the others did not survive for long.⁹⁰

3.2.1.2. The Printing Presses

The printing press was introduced in Ottoman territories quite late and initially its dissemination occurred through state channels. A printing press became operational in the province of Trabzon in 1865, just as in many other provinces. The governor, the *naip*, the chief judge of the appeals court, the chief treasurer, and province letter writers ran the early printing press in Trabzon.

84 Birinci, *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

85 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 99.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 124

88 BOA., DH. MKT., 1283-10, 1326. B. 25 (23 August 1908).

89 Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 583.

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 591-593.

Publication of the newspaper *Trabzon* began on 13 April 1869. They also printed *Trabzon Vilayet Salnameleri* from 1869 to 1904 and continued to print all official documents until 1916, closing down the printing house because of the Russian invasion, during which time the machinery was irreparably damaged.⁹¹

The second printing press in Trabzon was set up in 1881 by Sofuoğlu Mücellit İsmail Hakkı Efendi. It was located in Meydan-ı Şarkî, and it was the second printing press in the Ottoman Empire that could print documents in Turkish, Greek, and Armenian.⁹² The Serasi Printing Press was set up in 1888 in Meydan-ı Şarkî by a Greek named Dimitraki Serasi, and it could print in Turkish, Greek, and French.⁹³ İkbâl Printing Press was set up in 1901 by Eyüpzade Osman Nuri, and Mihailidi Printing Press was set up by Yorgi Mihailidi on an unknown date before the Second Constitutional Period; it was the biggest printing press of the time. It was not mentioned in the 1904 *Trabzon Vilayet Salnamesi*, which was the last of its kind, so it must have been set up sometime between 1904 and 1908.⁹⁴

In the Second Constitutional Period, Meşveret Printing Press, which was set up in 1908 by Naci Bey, played an important role in the cultural and political life of Trabzon. The other printing presses in the same period were Mirkoviç Printing Press, established in 1909 by an Armenian of the same name, and Üskünar Printing Press, about which little is known.⁹⁵

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the Trabzon press enjoyed its heyday, but the advent of World War I in 1914 and the reinstatement of censorship delivered a serious blow to publishing, which was brought to an end by the Russian invasion in 1916. The invasion led to the closing down of periodicals and the destruction of newspaper collections, which marked a major loss for the cultural history of Trabzon.

3.2.2. Theatre and Cinema

Theatre had an important place in Ottoman society. As of the middle of the nineteenth century, Ottoman theatre began to grow in popularity, especially in

91 Ahmet Gedikli, “İkinci Meşrutiyet (1908-1918) Döneminde Trabzon (Eğitim ve Kültür Hayatı)”, [Master’s Thesis, Trabzon: Karadeniz Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of History, 2002], pp. 37-41. Years of publication for *Salname*: 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1887, 1891, 1893, 1895, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904. See Gedikli, *ibid.*, p. 40.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

93 Ali Birinci, “Trabzon’da Matbuat ve Neşriyat Hayatı”, *Trabzon ’88-89*, Trabzonlular Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Yayınları, 1989, p. 175.

94 Gedikli, *ibid.*, p. 46.

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 48-49.

Istanbul, and during the constitutional period it enjoyed much more freedom. Many Istanbul theatre groups went on tour to introduce theatre to the people of Anatolian and popularize it. There was some interest in theatre in Trabzon before the constitutional period thanks to touring theatre groups from Istanbul and that interest increased after the proclamation of the Second Constitution.

Ottoman theatre troupes travelled to Trabzon and staged the plays *Hicran-ı Ebedi* (Eternal Sorrow) and *Çoban Kızı* (Shepherd Girl) at a theatre located in Tuzluçeşme.⁹⁶ The 259th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* announced that the Varyete Theatre Group was going to visit Trabzon,⁹⁷ and their performances garnered much attention in the months of March and April in 1911.⁹⁸ Another theatre group that visited Trabzon was the Ottoman Theatre, which was run by Mehmet Hilmi Efendi. They staged several different plays over the course of a month and entertained locals with the İnce saz Takımı (Turkish Music Orchestra) on the off nights.⁹⁹ They also staged "Hernani" by Victor Hugo.¹⁰⁰

In addition to those Istanbul-based troupes, it is known that the young members of the societies and clubs in Trabzon also staged plays. Their performances aimed at strengthening social solidarity, appealing to national sentiment, and raising funds for the navy and the air force, as well as supporting educational institutions; they were not, however, so concerned with artistic productions. The 8th issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* mentioned that some young people staged a performance of *Vatan* (Homeland) by Namık Kemal and donated the 120 lira in proceeds to the Naval Society.¹⁰¹

Members of the *Muhibb-i Fen ve Marifet Gençler Kulübü* (Science and Arts Youth Club) staged *Mesâib-i İstibdad* (Calamity of Despotism) and donated half of the proceeds to the victims of the Çırçır fire and the other half to the club. The play was warmly received and Trabzon Customs Director Mehmet Emin

96 Veysel Usta, "Balkan Harbi'nde Trabzon: Trabzon Gönüllüleri ve Yardımlar", *Uluslararası Trabzon ve Çevresi Kültür ve Tarih Sempozyumu 16-18 Mayıs 2006*, (ed. Mithat Kerim Aslan-Hikmet Öksüz-Veysel Usta), Trabzon: Türk Ocakları Trabzon Şubesi Yayınları, 2011, vol. 1, p. 289.

97 "Varyete Tiyatro Kumpanyası Yarın Geliyor", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 259, 5 Mart 1327 (18 March 1911), p. 2.

98 "Varyete Kumpanyası", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 260, 9 Mart 1927 (22 March 1911), p. 3; "Varyete Kumpanyası", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 264, 23 Mart 1327 (5 April 1911), p. 4; "Varyete Kumpanyası: Yakında Romeo ve Jüliet", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 274, 28 Nisan 1327 (11 May 1911), p. 4; "Varyete Kumpanyası", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 275, 30 Nisan 1327 (13 May 1911), p. 3.

99 "Osmanlı Tiyatrosu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 373, 14 Nisan 1328 (27 April 1912), p. 3.

100 "Osmanlı Tiyatrosu'nda Bu Gece Ernani Piyesi", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 378, 2 Mayıs 1328 (15 May 1912), p. 3.

101 "Vatan Tiyatrosu", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 8, 13 Eylül 1324 (26 September 1908), p. 3.

Bey went onstage to congratulate the youth who put it on. He gave a speech and stirred the emotions of the crowd even further by reciting some poems.¹⁰²

Ottoman society first became familiar with cinema at the turn of the twentieth century and it quickly grew in popularity, becoming much more popular than theatre. Most likely it first came to Trabzon in 1909.¹⁰³ An archival document indicates that a non-Muslim Ottoman citizen by the name of Pilosyan established the Ottoman Cinematography Company in 1909 but he faced financial challenges screening educational, moral, and historical movies. He complained that he could not make much money because of the difficulties he faced during the establishment of the company and because of the number and price of the tax stamps on tickets. He requested that the number of tax stamps be reduced¹⁰⁴ and officials decided that only *Darülaceze İanesi* stamps would be put on movie tickets.¹⁰⁵

An article in the 331st issue of *Trabzon'da Meşveret* reported that the movie theatre had moved to a new building. The new Cinematography Building had been completed five days earlier near Freedom Square next to the Transit Depot and the equipment was also moved there. The article noted that after it had been decorated, the movie theatre would open its doors. It was held up as the work of a progressive entrepreneur because, as the only entertainment venue in Trabzon, it was built with state-of-the-art technology and in compliance with the Health Code.¹⁰⁶

The 375th issue of the same newspaper mentioned that a film, the screening of which had been previously announced, was to be shown that evening. The article said that the movie, which depicted military manoeuvres being held in the presence of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad, would demonstrate to the audience how developed the Ottoman Army had become.¹⁰⁷

In another issue, an announcement stated that for the next couple of days some movies were to be shown for the benefit of around eighty orphans and needy students from the Union and Progress School. After the movie, students were to recite poems about the homeland and Ottomanism and two students

102 “Millî Tiyatro ve Gençler Kulübü”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 16, 11 Teşrînisâni 1324 (24 November 1908), p. 3.

103 Enver Uzun, *Trabzon'da Sinema Kültürü*, Trabzon: Eser Ofset, 2006, p. 13.

104 Süleyman Beyoğlu, “Sinema Karadeniz’de (1909-1933)”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No: 92, August 2001, p. 48.

105 Ibid.

106 “Sinematograf Yeni Ebniyede”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 331, 16 Teşrînisâni 1327 (29 November 1911), p. 2.

107 “Bu Gece Sinematografda”, *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 375, 21 Nisan 1328 (4 Mayıs 1912), p. 2.

would stage a play about Tripoli under attack by the Italians. The people of Trabzon were invited to watch the show.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

With the proclamation of the Second Constitution on 24 July 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress took control of the government and started seeking out various solutions to the political and social problems facing the country. According to the Unionists, the political revolution that was introduced by the constitutional regime had to be supported with reforms in education and culture. The Unionists believed that the only way to elevate Ottoman society to a level equal to that of Europe was education, so they inaugurated major reforms in Anatolia.

These educational reforms had two main objectives. The first was the modernization of education and the second was making sure that schools were opened in the four corners of the empire. In the case of Trabzon, which was a major province, it is clear that much effort was put into realizing those projects. The Unionists tried to get schools to employ new methods (*usûl-i cedîd*) to teach literacy so that students could learn how to read and write in one year instead of the three years it had taken in the past. Some newspapers and magazines supported the Unionists in promoting those new methods through articles.

It was argued that more graduates of *Darulmuallimin* (Teacher's Colleges) were needed to facilitate the spread of modern education. The Unionists decided that funding for the Trabzon *Darulmuallimin* would be increased and a few more teacher's colleges would be opened in the province of Trabzon. Providing better working conditions and better pay for teachers who graduated from teacher's colleges was also promoted by luminaries in Trabzon, as well as improving the quality of the facilities at those schools. The belief was that graduates from the teacher's program would use the new curriculum they had learned with their students, thereby helping the Ottoman educational system make significant progress. In the villages, students would study at the new schools instead of madrasas and the new teachers would secularize education.

One of the biggest problems regarding education in Trabzon during the constitutional period was making sure that it became more widespread. Most of the 2,000 villages in Trabzon did not have schools and those that did lacked qualified teachers. The Unionists prioritized village schools and tried to persuade peasants to pay for the construction of school buildings. In addition, they

108 "Yetimler Menfaatine Sinematograf", *Trabzon'da Meşveret*, No: 381, 12 Mayıs 1328 (25 May 1912), p. 3.

used propaganda to gain the support of peasants so that they would be willing to contribute to the salaries of the teachers at their schools.

Almost all Greek and Armenian villages had a school and a teacher, in contrast to the majority of Muslim Turkish villages. The Unionists sought to improve the living conditions of peasants on the one hand, and on the other they tried to protect ignorant Muslim peasants from Christian missionaries. For that reason, they tried to garner the support of locals as well as the state. Another project involving education was setting up programs so that top students could get the opportunity to study in Europe, and committees were set up to help those students who went to study abroad.

The Trabzon branch of the Committee of Union and Progress held meetings with other clubs' committee representatives and city dignitaries so that they could identify shortcomings and problems with the education system and find solutions. Prompted by the Unionists, several vocational organizations also supported education. For example, under the leadership of the famous Unionist Yahya Kahya, boatmen paid for the Aya Filibo Primary School.

The Unionists organized evening classes for children and adults who otherwise could not get an education and indoctrinated them with Unionist ideology. At both the Union and Progress School and Şems-i Hürriyet School they made efforts to offer a modern education to both paying and non-paying students, and they advised poor parents to send their children to the military high school, which did not charge tuition.

The Unionists believed that education was key to modernization. They thought that by benefiting from European models of science the Ottomans could develop a modern civilization. However, because of political crises, economic difficulties, and wars, they were unable to attain their goals.

The press boom in Trabzon gave intellectuals a chance to freely express their opinions. Early on the Unionists grasped the importance and power of the press and used it to manipulate and transform Ottoman society, gain supporters, and keep the opposition under control. *Trabzon'da Meşveret* led the press in Trabzon with its Unionist ideas, especially during the Second Constitutional Period. A striking characteristic of that era was the ethnic diversity observable in publishing.

Theatre and cinema also had social rather than artistic objectives. The Unionists tried to propagate their ideas and collect donations through theatre and cinema; on the one hand, they offered entertainment through theatre and cinema, and on the other they tried to raise awareness about the concepts of homeland, nation, freedom, and Ottomanism.

The Committee of Union and Progress realized that radical reforms were necessary for the salvation of the state and part of that involved realizing educational projects. They efficiently used the press, theatre, and cinema to shape cultural life and engage in social engineering, but as can be seen in the example of Trabzon, their efforts yielded limited success.

