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## **Feminism, philanthropy and patriotism : female associational life in the Ottoman empire**

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# *Helping the Poor Soldiers' Families: the Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti\**

The legal framework set with the issuing of the Law on Associations in August 1909 combined with the Martial Law in force after the counterrevolution of April 1909, equipped the authorities with the instruments to control the growth of civil organizations. As a result, associational life in the Ottoman Empire became less vibrant. When the Committee of Union and Progress grabbed power in 1913, it tried to further control the existing organizations by forcing them to cooperate and coordinate their activities with the major three semi-public organizations, the *Donanma Cemiyeti* (Fleet Organization), the *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (National Defense Organization) and the *Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti* (Red Crescent Organization) on which will follow more later.

In this chapter, an organization founded after the takeover of the CUP, the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* and its activities are described and analyzed. Both Çakır<sup>1</sup> and Kurnaz<sup>2</sup> refer only briefly to this organization in their works. Through the use of more and different sources, it is possible to paint a more detailed picture of this organization than they did. This chapter, therefore, seeks to find the answers to the following questions. Who were the members of this organization, what were its aims and its activities. Who were their beneficiaries? And what do the answers to these questions tell us about the existing concepts of citizenship and about the prevalent ideas on community and/or nation building? Thus, besides merely describing the organization, an effort is made to place the existence of this organization in the wider context of

\* A slightly different version of this chapter was published earlier: Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Aiding the Poor Soldiers' Families: the Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti," *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, XXI, 2011, 255-289.

<sup>1</sup> Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 45-46.

<sup>2</sup> Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, 212-213.

historical processes taking place in the Ottoman Period during the Second Constitutional Period and, more specifically, during the First World War.

## The Organization, Its Members and Its Aims

The *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* or *Heyeti* (Ladies' Organization / Committee for the Support of Soldiers' Families), which in the very beginning of its existence also seems to have been referred to as the *Muhtaç Asker Ailelerine Muavenet Cemiyeti* (Organization for the Support of Needy Soldiers' Families),<sup>3</sup> *Bikes Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı (Hanımlar) Cemiyeti* ((Ladies') Organization for the Support of Indigent Soldiers' Families)<sup>4</sup> or *Bikes Asker Ailelerine Muavenet Cemiyeti* (Organization for the Support of Indigent Soldiers' Families)<sup>5</sup> was founded by the wives and daughters of prominent German and Ottoman men on the initiative of the daughter of Field Marshal Liman von Sanders, probably in December 1914.<sup>6</sup> The organization was set up as a twin organization with a German and an Ottoman department joining forces.<sup>7</sup>

Naciye Sultan, the wife of the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, and granddaughter of Sultan Abdülmecid, became its honorary president and its patron.<sup>8</sup> Initially she assumed this honorable task on her own, but by September 1915,

<sup>3</sup> Lebib Selim, "Türk kadınlığın harb-ı umumideki faaliyeti," *Türk Yurdu*, IX, 3, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 2797-2799. Although Lebib Selim calls the organization *Muhtaç Asker Ailelerine Muavenet Cemiyeti*, it is clear from the text that she refers to the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*.

<sup>4</sup> Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi, *Takvim - 4 -*, [İstanbul], 1918, 175-176; *Türkiye Hilal-i Ahmer Hanımlar Merkezi Darüssınaası Eytam ve Eramil-i şüheda-ya Muavenet*, 27-28.

<sup>5</sup> According to Kurnaz an organization with this name was founded in 1916. A document in the Red Crescent archives referring to the organization under this name, however, is dated 15 February 1915 (and not 2 Şubat/February 1914 as is jotted down on the document with pencil). TKA, 12/202, 1 Şubat 1330. Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, 214.

<sup>6</sup> Çiçek, "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nin faaliyetleriyle ilgili bir belge," 13. The first announcement of its being established was published in the newspapers in January 1915. "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Heyeti," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 29 Kanunuevvel 1330 (11 January 1915), 3. Based on articles in *Tanin* and *İçtihad*

Kurnaz gives a different date. However, both sources just mention the foundation of the organization without giving an exact date. Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, 212fn.

<sup>7</sup> "Remerciements à la Baronne de Wangenhaim (sic!)" *Lloyd Ottoman*, 26 Septembre 1915, 6; "Teşekkür," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Eylül 1331 (27 September 1915), 2.

<sup>8</sup> "Asker ailelere için," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Haziran 1331 (8 July 1915), 2.

the wife of the German Ambassador, *Freiin* von Wangenheim, became the second honorary president for the German department.<sup>9</sup> The organization had two presidents: Nelly, the daughter of Field Marshal Liman von Sanders and Nuriye Canbolat, the wife of the Director of Public Security. Emine Reşid was its first secretary and İrfan Bedri, wife of Bedri Bey, the General Director of the Police, its accountant. Amongst the other founding members were the wife of Talat Pasha, Hayriye Talat, the wife of the Director of the Press Office, Celile Hikmet, the wife of the first Ottoman sports instructor, Hadiye Selim Sırrı, and the wives of other prominent Ottomans, who were supposedly known to the readers of the newspapers. Furthermore, the other daughter of Liman von Sanders, the wife of General Erich Weber, Madam Weber Pasha, and a further unknown Madam Prag Bey were referred to as members “who had been elected.”<sup>10</sup> Besides these “elected” and active members, the organization also had “assisting” members with whom meetings were convened on a regular basis.<sup>11</sup> By November 1916, the organization was forced to discontinue its activities, but its Board remained intact to resume them whenever the circumstances would allow it to do so.<sup>12</sup> The Board continued to meet even though the organization was less active.<sup>13</sup> It seems, however, that by the beginning of 1918 the German members were no longer participating in the organization.<sup>14</sup> At that time, Nuriye Canbolat was still referred to as its president, while Emine Reşid was still its secretary. Hayriye Talat, the wife of Talat Pasha, however, had become its vice-president. At a meeting in February, they were re-elected. The former accountant İrfan Bedri was replaced by Suat Reşad, while its cashier was reported to be Sabiha Nuri. İrfan Bedri, Nezihe Veli, Tevhide Osman, Hadiye Selim Sırrı, Kamile

<sup>9</sup> “Remerciements à la Baronne de Wangenheim (sic!)” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 26 Septembre 1915, 6; “Teşekkür,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Eylül 1331 (27 September 1915), 2.

<sup>10</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Heyeti,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 29 Kanunuevvel 1330 (11 January 1915), 3; “Asker ailelerine,” *Tanin*, 11 Kanunusani 1330 (24 January 1915); “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179; “Grande fête au Jardin du Taxim au profit des familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 28 Juin 1915, 5.

<sup>11</sup> “Séance extraordinaire du comité des Dames,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 4 April 1915; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti tarafından,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 29 Teşrinievvel 1331 (11 November 1915), 2.

<sup>12</sup> TKA, 988/4, 22 Haziran 1335 (22 June 1919). This is the document also discussed in Çiçek, “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nin faaliyetleriyle ilgili bir belge.”

<sup>13</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 3 Mart /March 1333/1917, 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Freiin* von Wangenheim, for example, had left Istanbul in November 1917 where her husband had died in October 1915. “Madam (Wangenheim),” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Teşrinisani/November 1333/1917, 2.

İsmail and Madame Pançiri, the wife of the aide-de-camp of the Sultan were listed as members by that time.<sup>15</sup> The new Board seems to have had regular meetings again.<sup>16</sup>

The main aim of the organization was, as the name indicates, to help the families of soldiers, and especially those families who were left behind without a breadwinner (*muinsiz*), because “[i]t is true that the government provides support to a certain degree, but the remainder is the duty of private initiatives.”<sup>17</sup> Initially the organization wanted to help the *muinsiz* families by providing them with a bowl of soup every morning. However, finding it difficult to distribute soup, it decided to distribute (uncooked) food and goods instead.<sup>18</sup> For this aim it needed money.

## Financing Charity

Extensive (financial) year reports accounting for the incomes and expenditures of the organization are not available and it is, therefore, impossible to get a complete picture on the financial sources of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*. According to Yalman, the organization “did most of its work with funds from the army.”<sup>19</sup> Özbek found that the Istanbul Prefecture (*Şehremaneti*) had allocated 307.800 *kuruş* to the organization in the budget year 1331 (1915 - 1916).<sup>20</sup> Since the organization reported in December 1915 that it had generated an income of approximately 1.41 million *kuruş* and spent about

<sup>15</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti,” *Vakit*, 19 Şubat/February 1918, 2; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 163, 2 Mart/March 1918, 13; “Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti,” *Vakit*, 1 Mart/March 1918, 2; “L’association des Yardımcı hanımlar,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 1 Mars 1918, 3; “Der Verein Jardımdsche Hanum,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 1. März 1918, 3.

<sup>16</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Mart/March 1334/1918, 2; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nden,” *Vakit*, 22 Mart/March 1918, 2.

<sup>17</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179. For state assistance to the families without breadwinners and its shortcomings see Chapter Ten.

<sup>18</sup> Lebib Selim, “Türk kadınlığının harb-ı umumideki faaliyeti,” *Türk Yurdu*, IX, 3, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 2797-2799.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Emin [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, 259.

<sup>20</sup> Nadir Özbek, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda ‘Sosyal Yardım’ Uygulamaları, 1839 - 1918,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, Kış 1999/2000, 111-132, 126. It had also donated 82.080 *kuruş* to the support of the *Hilal-i Ahmer Hanımlar Darüssınaası* and the *Türk Kadınları Bıçkı Yurdu*.

1.23 million *kuruş*, this contribution constituted approximately 22% of the organization's income while it covered 25% of its expenditures.<sup>21</sup>

The *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* also received money from other organizations. A part of its money came, for example, from the *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*. In an interview published in *Servet-i Fünun*, the founders of the organization stated that they had received the money left on the account of the *Topkapı Fukaraperver Heyeti* (Topkapı Committee for Poor Relief) when it was temporarily closed down.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the *Hilal-i Ahmer* (Red Crescent) gave 100 Ottoman *lira* when the organization was founded and promised to support it further.<sup>23</sup> It kept its promise and transferred another 5,000 *lira* in February 1915.<sup>24</sup> It seems that the two organizations closely cooperated and that the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* took over the care for soldiers families in Istanbul which the Red Crescent had provided for before:<sup>25</sup> in publications of the *Hilal-i Ahmer Hanımlar Merkezi*, the *Bikes Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Cemiyeti* or *Bikes Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* as the

<sup>21</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Teşrinisani 1331 (5 December 1915), 2. According to Lebib Selim the organization had spent 120,000 Ottoman *lira* by November 1915, while its income until that date had been 130,000 Ottoman *lira*. Given that one *lira* was approximately 100 *kuruş*, these figures seem to be highly exaggerated. Lebib Selim, “Türk kadınlığının harb-ı umumideki faaliyeti,” *Türk Yurdu*, IX, 3, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 2797-2799.

<sup>22</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179. It is not clear which organization was meant by this “committee.” One would expect this to be the *Osmanlı Fukaraperver Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi Topkapı Şubesi* (Ottoman Charitable Organization for Poor Relief, Topkapı Branch). This organization was indeed closed down in 1913. However, it continued as an independent organization under a slightly different name: *Osmanlı Fukaraperver Cemiyeti Topkapı Müessesesi-yi Hayriye*. Nadir Özbek, “90 yıllık bir hayır kurumu: Topkapı Fukaraperver Cemiyeti,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXX, 180, 1998, 4-10. See also TKA, 72/75, 14 Mart 1329 (27 March 1913); TKA, 645/197, 8 Nisan/April 1919.

<sup>23</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179.

<sup>24</sup> In the document of the Red Crescent, the organization was referred to as *Bikes Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*. According to Kurnaz an organization with this name was founded in 1916. A document in the Red Crescent archives referring to the organization under this name, however, is dated 15 February 1915 (and not 2 Şubat/February 1914 as is jotted down on the document with pencil). TKA, 12/202, 2 Şubat 1330. Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, 214.

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. TKA, 12/182, 4 Nisan 1239 (17 April 1913); TKA, 12/183 (17 April 1913); TKA, 12/184 (17 April 1913).

organization was also called, was referred to as its *öz hemşire* (very sister) organization.<sup>26</sup>

Another source of income were the fundraising activities developed by the organization. Besides the methods to generate money known from other organizations, the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* developed some other, quite specific fundraising activities.

Like other organizations, this organization financed its activities partially through donations, the income generated through the organization of concerts and similar events, and by selling rosettes. One of the larger donations was made by the Sultan. When, a few weeks after the foundation of the organization, the daughter of Liman von Sanders and the wives of Bedri Bey and Mehmed Ali Bey paid a visit to the Imperial harem, they were received by the Sultan. He donated 100 Ottoman *lira*, while the first and second *Kadın* donated 50 Ottoman *lira* each.<sup>27</sup> Naciye Sultan donated another 40 *lira*.<sup>28</sup> *Freiin* von Wangenheim not only was actively involved in the distribution of goods, but also contributed by giving donations.<sup>29</sup> The members, too, donated money, while some shops contributed by giving clothes or provisions.<sup>30</sup> The rather large sum of 500 Ottoman *lira* plus a wagon full of green beans were donated by the German Mr. Richter, who owned one of the companies in charge of supplying the Ottoman army.<sup>31</sup> Other persons, too, donated sums of money.<sup>32</sup>

Some authors donated the sales revenues of their book,<sup>33</sup> while the organization also received the yield of, for example, the entrance fees to a

<sup>26</sup> Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi, *Takvim - 4 -*, [İstanbul], 1918, 175-176; *Türkiye Hilal-i Ahmer Hanımlar Merkezi Darüssınaası: Eytam ve Eramil-i Şühedaye Muavenet*, [İstanbul:] Ahmet İhsan ve Şürekası, 1339, 27-28.

<sup>27</sup> “Der Wohltätigkeitsausschuß der Damen beim Sultan,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 16. Januar 1915, 3. According to an article in *Servet-i Fünun* the Sultan donated 150 *Lira*. “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179.

<sup>28</sup> “Asker ailelere için,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Haziran 1331 (8 July 1915), 2.

<sup>29</sup> “Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Tanin*, 21 Eylül 1331 (4 October 1915), 2; “L’Association des dames de secours,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 27 Novembre 1915, 3; “Hilfsverein der Damen,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 27. November 1915, 3.

<sup>30</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179.

<sup>31</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 7 Kanunuevvel 1331 (20 December 1915), 2; “Remerciements publics,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 20 Décembre 1915, 3.

<sup>32</sup> “Teberruat-i vatanperverane,” *Sabah*, 14 Mayıs 1331 (27 May 1915), 2.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. the sales revenues of the reprint of a book by the deceased Makbule Leman were donated to the organization by her widower: Makbule Leman, *Makes-i Hayal*, Dersaadet:



submarine conquered from the French in the Dardanelles, hauled to Istanbul and opened to the public,<sup>34</sup> and the sales revenues of the programme of the first play put on stage by students of the newly opened *Darülbedayi* (Conservatory).<sup>35</sup>

The income from the sales of tickets for a concert of the students of the German school together with the Imperial band, Ertuğrul, under the direction of Lanka Bey in July 1915 was transferred to the organization.<sup>36</sup> During the summer of 1915, an obviously regular source of income was formed by a part of the yields generated from the sales of tickets for shows at a (movie)theatre in Erenköy.<sup>37</sup>

Three months after its foundation, on 25 March 1915, the organization organized its first fundraising activity near Taksim at the newly opened “Variété Sinema Theatre.” The programme offered consisted of music by the Imperial band, Ertuğrul, under the direction of Lanka Bey, circus acts by women on horses, a film and patriotic poems recited by young boys. These afternoon activities, which had the relatively high entrance fee of 15 to 50 *kuruş* were open to women only.<sup>38</sup> This first fund raising activity was followed by many others in the months to come.

Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekası, 1331; “Makes-i Hayal,” *Sabah*, 22 Teşrinisani 1331 (5 December 1915), 4.

<sup>34</sup> “Müstecip Onbaşı,” *Sabah*, 29 Teşrinievvel 1331 (11 November 1915), 1; “Müstecip Onbaşı’yı ziyaret,” *Turan*, 31 Teşrinievvel 1331 (13 November 1915), 2; “Müstecip Onbaşı’yı ziyaret,” *Sabah*, 3 Teşrinisani 1331 (16 November 1915), 3; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 5 Teşrinisani 1331 (18 November 1915), 2. See also Ali Şükrü Çoruk, “Turkuaz yahut Müstecip Onbaşı’nın hikâyesi...” *Mostar*, 61, Mart 2010, at <http://mostar.com.tr/> (accessed 22-7-2010).

<sup>35</sup> Orhan Alkaya, “Mevcudu biraz daha temiz tutalım,” *Radikal*, 1-4-2007 at [http://www.radikal.com.tr/ek\\_haber.php?ek=r2&haberno=6895](http://www.radikal.com.tr/ek_haber.php?ek=r2&haberno=6895) (accessed 22-7-2010); Hayrettin Filiz, “Saygıdeğer bir madam üzerine: Kıran Sıvacıyan’ın hikayesi,” *Bilimsel Tiyatro Atölyesi*, 9 Ocak 2007, at <http://www.btasahnesi.net/yazilar/hf/hf8/saygidegerbirmadam.htm>. (accessed 23-7-2010). At the latter website a copy of the programme of the play can be found with the announcement that the yields of the play were to be donated to the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*.

<sup>36</sup> “Konser,” *Sabah*, 19 Haziran 1331 (2 July 1915), 3.

<sup>37</sup> “Sinema,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 8 Temmuz 1331 (21 July 1915), 2; “Erenköyü’nde Osmaniye bahçesi sinemasında,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 13 Temmuz 1331 (26 July 1915), 2; “Erenköyü’nde eski İstasyon caddesindeki Osmaniye sinemasında,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 16 Temmuz 1331 (29 July 1915), 2; “Erenköyü’nde Osmaniye sinemasında,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 27 Temmuz 1331 (9 August 1915), 2; “Erenköyü’nde Osmaniye sinemasında,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 3 Ağustos 1331 (16 August 1915), 2; “Hasılatı kısmen...,” *Tanin*, 18 Ağustos 1331 (31 August 1915), 4.

<sup>38</sup> “Fevkalade oyun,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Mart 1331 (23 March 1915), 2; “Wohtätigkeitsvorstellung [sic!],” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 19 März 1915, 3; “Wohtätigkeitsvorstellung,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 23 März 1915, 2.

On 6 May a public concert was given at Gülhane park for which the entrance was more moderate: only 1 *куруş*.<sup>39</sup> Gülhane Park was also the location for a programme of “afternoon entertainment” including “shooting with a carbine for ladies and gentlemen and ‘games of massacre’” (*jö dö masak, jeux de massacre*)<sup>40</sup> which was organized in in the first week of June 1915.<sup>41</sup> Only a few weeks later a concert was planned to take place at the Tepebaşı garden. During the concert a lottery would be held where people could win one of the presents donated to the organization.<sup>42</sup> The concert had to be cancelled, though, since the Sultan had fallen ill.<sup>43</sup> Instead, a large festivity was organized at the Taksim Gardens on 1 July of that year.<sup>44</sup> The electricity company sponsored the illumination of the gardens and the various “electric games” which could be played.<sup>45</sup> This activity was organized by a committee completely composed of men: its president was the prefect of Istanbul, İsmet Bey; its vice-president the Governor of Pera, Kani Bey, while its members were men belonging to the Ottoman Muslim, Christian and Jewish establishment.<sup>46</sup> These men probably belonged to the “men’s section” of the organization. The men’s section was also in charge of another *grande soirée*, under the patronage of Enver Pasha in November 1915.<sup>47</sup> His wife, Naciye Sultan, was the patron of a concert for women only, on 4 December of that year, which also included a lecture on the factory which had newly been opened in Adapazarı in an effort to establish a

<sup>39</sup> “Asker aileleri için,” *Sabah*, 23 Nisan 1331 (6 May 1915), 4.

<sup>40</sup> A *jeu de massacre* was a kind of bowling game of French origin in which people had to try to overthrow wooden figurines with a cloth ball stuffed with hay (I am indebted to Gisela van Duijnen-Minach for this information).

<sup>41</sup> “Gülhane Parkı’nda parlak bir gün,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 18 Mayıs 1331 (31 May 1915), 2; “Topkapı Parkı’nda mutena bir gün,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 20 Mayıs 1331 (2 June 1915), 2; “Gülhane Bahçesi’nde,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Mayıs 1331 (4 June 1915), 2; “Pour les familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 31 Mai 1915, 4; “Pour les familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 2 Juin 1915, 4. In the second announcement in the *Lloyd Ottoman* the *jeux de massacre* had disappeared. In *Tasvir-i Efkar* the *jö dö masak* was also mentioned in the announcement of 2 June.

<sup>42</sup> “Konser ve piyango,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Haziran 1331 (14 June 1915), 2.

<sup>43</sup> “Konser ve piyango,” *Sabah*, 14 Haziran 1331 (27 June 1915), 3.

<sup>44</sup> “Taksim Bahçesi’nde konser,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Haziran 1331 (27 June 1915), 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Taksim Bahçesi’nde eğlence,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 17 Haziran 1331 (30 June 1915), 4.

<sup>46</sup> “Grande fête au Jardin de Taxim au profit des familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 28 Juin 1915, 5; “La Kermesse au Jardin de Taxim,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 30 Juin 1915, 4; “La Kermesse au Jardin de Taxim,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 7 Juillet 1915, 5.

<sup>47</sup> See “En faveur des familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 5 Novembre 1915, 6; “Müsamere-i fevkalade,” *Sabah*, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 3 and “Müsamere,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 2 which all three refer to a “men’s section.”

national industry.<sup>48</sup> This concert was followed by a concert for men two weeks later on Saturday and another one for women on Sunday.<sup>49</sup> The sale of rosettes at the occasion of the anniversary of the Sultan's accession to throne, one of the favorite fundraising activities of Ottoman women's organizations, yielded the amount of almost 5,000 *kuruş* at the end of April 1915.<sup>50</sup>

Yalman, moreover, refers to two other activities of the organization to finance its activities: it set up a model trench including "barbed wire entanglements" and "communication lines," which people could visit after having paid an entrance fee, and the wooden gun or cannon.<sup>51</sup>

### The Wooden Cannon; *Hatıra-i Celadet Topu*

The idea of a wooden statue or another similar patriotic object in which the public, against payment, could hammer a nail, originated from Vienna where in March 1915 the first *Wehrmann in Eisen* (Man-in-arms in Iron) was erected at one of the central squares. The first nails were driven into this statue of a medieval knight by, amongst others, the Ottoman ambassador, Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha. From Vienna the idea spread fast, not only to other cities in Austria-Hungary, but also to Germany and other countries, including the Ottoman Empire.<sup>52</sup> In November 1915 the women of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı*

<sup>48</sup> "Müsamere," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 17 Teşrinisani 1331 (30 November 1915), 2; "Müsamere," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Teşrinisani 1331 (2 December 1915), 2; "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 21 Teşrinisani 1331 (4 December 1915), 2; "En faveur des familles des soldats," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 1 Décembre 1915, 3. This factory had been established on the initiative of Enver Pasha and produced, amongst other things, furniture, wagons and agricultural machinery. Gustav Hertl, "Kriegswirtschaft in der Türkei," *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, XI, 3, 1917, 245-250.

<sup>49</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 3 Kanunuevvel 1331 (16 December 1915), 2; "Müsamere," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 5 Kanunuevvel 1331 (18 December 1915), 2; "Galaabend zum besten der Soldatenfamilien," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 14 Dezember 1915, 4.

<sup>50</sup> "Asker aileleri için," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Nisan 1331 (23 April 1915), 3; "Asker ailelerine," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 13 Nisan 1331 (26 April 1915), 2; "Asker Ailelerine Hanımlar Cemiyeti [sic!] tarafından varid olmuştur," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Nisan 1331 (8 May 1915), 2; "Der Damenausschuß zur Unterstützung der Soldatenfamilien...," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 8. Mai 1915, 4. The *Osmanischer Lloyd* refers to a yield of 48,849 *kuruş*, *Tasvir-i Efkar* reports a yield of 4,884 *kuruş*.

<sup>51</sup> [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 259.

<sup>52</sup> Dietlinde Munzel-Everling, *Kriegsnagelungen Wehrmann in Eisen Nagel-Roland Eisernes Kreuz*, Wiesbaden, 2008. ([http://www.munzel-everling.de/download/munzel\\_nagelfiguren.pdf](http://www.munzel-everling.de/download/munzel_nagelfiguren.pdf),

*Hanımlar Cemiyeti* asked for permission to place a wooden cannon on a central location in the city “in which persons, against payment of a certain sum, could hit an iron nail until the whole cannon would be covered by iron.”<sup>53</sup> Enver Pasha obviously liked the idea and gave his permission. It took some time for the cannon to arrive from Austria, but when it arrived it was placed at the Beyazit Square, a central location in old Istanbul in front of the Ministry of War.



**Figure 4 A reproduction of the certificate handed to those who had driven a silver or golden nail into the cannon. *Servet-i Fünun*, 1299, 28 Nisan 1332 (11 May 1916), front page. Note the canon in the medallion on the top center.**

The original idea had changed somewhat: anyone who wanted could still hit a nail into the wood against payment. Those interested, however, could choose between different nails, each with their own price: a gold nail costing five Ottoman *lira*, a silver one of one Ottoman *lira* and an iron one of one *kuruş*. The

accessed 4-8-2011); “Wehrmann in Eisen,” [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wehrmann\\_in\\_Eisen](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wehrmann_in_Eisen) (accessed 4-8-2011).

<sup>53</sup> “Aufstellung einer ‘eisernen Kanone’” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 9. November 1915, 3.

contributors were rewarded with a certificate (see figure 4) and a gilded, silvered or tin rosette, respectively.<sup>54</sup>

Finding the nails in the Ottoman Empire, however, proved difficult. Thus, in March 1916 the Minister of Interior, Talat Pasha, asked the Ambassador in Vienna, Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, to purchase them from the Skoda factory in Austria. He informed him that he had handed the money for this purchase to the representative of the Skoda factory in Istanbul, Mr. Rosenthal, who was travelling to Vienna at that time.<sup>55</sup>

The cannon was a wooden copy of the Skoda cannon with which the Ottomans had sunk three enemy ships of Çanakkale in March 1915.<sup>56</sup> It was named *Hatıra-i Celadet* (Souvenir of Bravery), a reference to the “bravery shown specifically at Çanakkale by the Ottoman Army” as the president of the organizing committee, Nuriye Canbolat, explained in her speech at the women’s inauguration of the cannon.

The men’s inauguration took place in the presence of many prominent Istanbul men on 12 April 1916. Princes of the Ottoman dynasty and ministers joined in the occasion, while all the Members of Parliament, for example, were explicitly and urgently invited to be present.

One day later the ceremony was repeated for women. After the speech by Nuriye Canbolat and the unveiling of the cannon, Naciye Sultan was the first one to drive a golden nail into the wood. She, furthermore, donated an additional 100 Ottoman pounds. The other women present amongst whom the wives of almost all ministers as well as the wife of the Ambassador of Austria-Hungary, *Markgräfin* Pallavicini, the wives of officials from the German Embassy and the presidents of the *İstihlak-i Milli (Kadınlar) Cemiyeti* ((Women’s) Organization for National Consumption) and the *(Türk Kadınları) Biçki Yurdu* (Turkish Women’s Tailor’s Home) followed suit.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> “Hatıra-i Celadet,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 26 Mart 1332 (8 April 1916), 2.

<sup>55</sup> BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti, Kalem-i Mahsus (hereafter DH.KMS), 37/42, 25 Receb 1334 (28 May 1916).\

<sup>56</sup> Munzel-Everling, *Kriegsnagelungen*, 23.

<sup>57</sup> “Bugünkü abide-i celadet merasimi,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 30 Mart 1332 (12 April 1916), 1; “‘Hatıra-i Celadet’ topu,” *Tanin*, 1 Nisan 1332 (14 April 1916), 2; “Die Holzkanone,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 10. April 1916, 3; “Die hölzerne Kanone,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 12. April 1916, 3; “Hatıra-i Celadet,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1295, 31 Mart 1332 (13 April 1916), 250; “Die hölzerne Kanone,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 14. April 1916, 3; “Hatıra-i Celadet,” *Tanin*, 30 Mart 1332 (12 April 1916), 1; “Hatıra-i Celadet topu: hanımlar tarafından resm-i küşadı,” *Tanin*, 1 Nisan 1332 (14 April 1916), 2-3.

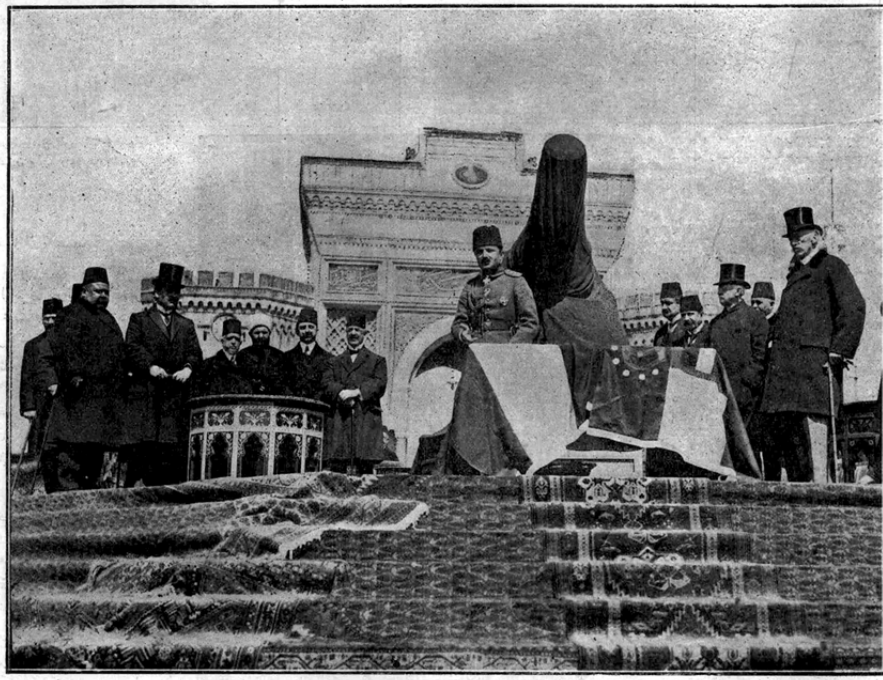


Figure 5 The wooden cannon on Beyazıt Square in front of the Ministry of War. *Harb Mecmuası*, I, 7, Mart 1332 (March/April 1916), 97 (front page).

From the date of its inauguration until the second half of May, the newspapers published lists of donors almost every day. Amongst them were also women's organizations and their leaders or members, such as the *Şişli Cemiyet-i Hayriye-i Nisvanyesi*,<sup>58</sup> the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* itself, the *Kadıköy Fukaraperver Cemiyeti Hanımlar Şubesi* (Ladies' Branch of the Kadıköy (Ottoman) Organization for Poor Relief), the students of the (*Türk Kadınları*) *Biçki Yurdu* and the presidents of the *Yeniköy ve İstinye Müdafaa-i Milliye (Cemiyeti)*, *Seraste hanım*, and of the *İstihlak-i Milli (Kadınlar) Cemiyeti*, *Melek hanım*.<sup>59</sup> Not only from Istanbul, but also from places further afield<sup>60</sup> and

<sup>58</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 5 Nisan 1332 (18 April 1916), 2.

<sup>59</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 6 Nisan 1332 (19 April 1916), 2. The *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* was referred to as the *Muhtaç-ı Muavenet Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* (Organization of Lady Helpers for Soldier's Families in Need of Assistance) in this list.

<sup>60</sup> BOA, DH.KMS, 40/7, 20 Şaban 1334 (21 June 1916); BOA, DH.KMS, 40/17, 10 Ramazan 1334 (11 July 1916); BOA, DH.KMS, 41/48, 07 Cemaziyelevvel 1335 (1 March 1917); BOA,

even from abroad<sup>61</sup> donations arrived. An appeal was especially made to children and schools and their pupils visited the cannon and donated their share.<sup>62</sup> After May, however, interest seems to have waned somewhat, but notices of donations continued to appear regularly.<sup>63</sup> Inspired by the wooden cannon in Istanbul, the authorities in Konya decided to erect a *Hatıra-i Celadet kılıcı* (Souvenir of Bravery Sword) of wood at a central location of the town in which patriotic citizens could drive the nails they had purchased.<sup>64</sup>

Photographs of the wooden cannon formed an important part of the organization's premises at the exhibition of the *Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti* at Galatasaray in February 1917.<sup>65</sup> Two months later the organization proudly announced that it had succeeded in raising 17,517 *lira* with this activity. The cannon remained on the square until 26 April after which it was moved to the Military Museum, where it can still be seen today.<sup>66</sup>

### The Logistics of Distributing Charity

The money obtained through all these fundraising activities was used to purchase food for the organization's target group: soldiers' families in need of, especially, food. These families actually had a right to state welfare in the form of the *Muinsiz Aile Maaşı* (Family Allowance) since their husbands were serving their fatherland, but the state provisions proved to be far from sufficient.<sup>67</sup> Through advertisements in the newspapers the indigent families of soldiers were invited to apply for additional assistance. Families who wanted to apply needed

DH.KMS, 45/28, 09 Zilkade 1335 (28 August 1917). See also "Hatıra-i Celadet," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 19 Nisan 1332 (2 May 1916), 2.

<sup>61</sup> BOA, HR.SYS, 2420/21, 4 May 1916; BOA, HR.SYS, 2420/40, 9 May 1916.

<sup>62</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu," *Tanin*, 14 Nisan 1332 (27 April 1916), 3. By May the lists of donators consisted largely of schools: "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 22 Nisan 1332 (5 May 1916), 3; "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 27 Nisan 1332 (10 May 1916), 2; "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 4 Mayıs 1332 (17 May 1916), 2; "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'na iane verenler," *Tanin*, 6 May 1332 (19 May 1916), 2.

<sup>63</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet Topu'nda," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 20 Haziran 1332 (3 July 1916), 2.

<sup>64</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet Kılıcı," *Tanin*, 8 Kanunuevvel 1332 (21 December 1916), 3; "Hatıra-i Celadet Kılıcı," *Tanin*, 13 Kanunuevvel 1332 (26 December 1916), 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Galatasaray'ında Tertib ve Küşad Olunan İlk Hilal-i Ahmer Sergisi Rehberi*, [İstanbul: Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti], 1332 (1916 - 1917), 34.

<sup>66</sup> "Teşekkür," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 6 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 2; "Teşekkür," *Tanin*, 6 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 2.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter Ten.

to obtain a “certificate of poverty” stating that their breadwinner was called in arms from the local *imam* and *muhtar* (headman). This certificate had to be presented to the local police station. After a further investigation into their situation, the police would provide them with a *vesika* (official document) attesting to their poverty. This document together with the booklet showing their income as soldiers’ families had to be handed to the organization in order to obtain goods. The organization did not distribute any money.<sup>68</sup> The assistance to these families was thus need-based, that is, only those who needed the assistance and could testify to it had a right to assistance. Moreover, the women were not just poor women as such, but very explicitly the wife of soldiers.

Initially the food distribution, which started on 14 January 1915, took place from the mansion of Nuriye and Ismail Canbolat.<sup>69</sup> By the end of that month, however, the number of applicants had increased to such a degree that the organization was forced to professionalize its distribution network. It informed its potential “clients” that the

Committee has for the moment decided to open four branches, that is, in İstanbul, Şişli, Kadıköy and Bebek. At every branch one month of provision will be distributed once a month. On Monday 19 January (1 February) at our branch at Bozdoğan Kemerli at Şehzadebaşı, on Monday 26 January (8 February) at our center at the house of İsmail Canbolat at Şişli, on Monday 2 February (15 February) at the Müdafaa-i Milliye branch at Kadıköy, on Monday 9 February (22 February) at our branch near the quay in Bebek.

On the aforementioned days the distribution will start from four o’clock Turkish time. Since the city is at this moment divided into four districts, those living in İstanbul are requested to apply at our Şehzadebaşı branch, those living between Beyoğlu and Kuruçeşme at our Şişli branch, those in Üsküdar and its environments at our Kadıköy branch, those living beyond Kuzguncuk and Kuruçeşme at our Bebek branch.

It is announced that the needy in these districts have to apply to these branches with their bowls for beans, rice and oil carrying the numbered

<sup>68</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179; “Asker ailelerine muavenet,” *Tanin*, 22 Eylül 1331 (5 October 1915), 4; “Les secours aux familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 7 Octobre 1915, 3; “Asker ailelerine erzak tevzii,” *Tanin*, 17 Nisan 1332 (30 April 1916), 4.

<sup>69</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Heyeti,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 29 Kanunuevvel 1330 (11 January 1915), 3; “Müesser-i hamiyet ve şefkat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Kanunusani 1330 (14 January 1915), 5.



documents which have been issued by our organization in their name upon their application to their local police station.<sup>70</sup>

While the mansion of the Canbolat's thus originally continued to be one of the distribution centers, the Teşvikiye Mosque in Nişantaşı took over this function later in 1915.<sup>71</sup> By February 1915, the number of families applying in the old part of Istanbul (Istanbul *intra mures*) had grown so much that the organization decided to open three sub centers in this part of town: Şehzadebaşı, Eyüp and Şehremini.<sup>72</sup> Initially the goods were distributed to all four parts of the city once every month on Mondays in different weeks, so that the poor of every neighbourhood would receive their ration once a month, as mentioned in the announcement.<sup>73</sup> Later the distribution centers started to operate on other days as well.<sup>74</sup> In May 1915, the organization widened its scope and opened a distribution center in Makriköy (present-day Bakırköy).<sup>75</sup> Its activities remained, however, limited to larger Istanbul. The telegram of two women from Malatya who applied for help, therefore, was forwarded to the provincial governor with the request to deal with this case.<sup>76</sup>

The number of beneficiaries grew fast. The month following the foundation Nuriye Canbolat hosted the first 150 needy families, totalling 520 persons in her mansion to distribute food and clothing.<sup>77</sup> Initially the families received two weeks of goods on Wednesdays and thus were supposed to come every other week. In an advertisement the organization explained that the organization distributed food to the families of soldiers in arms only and not to other poor

<sup>70</sup> "Asker aileleri için," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Kanunusani 1330 (27 January 1915), 4.

<sup>71</sup> "Asker aileleri için," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Kanunusani 1330 (27 January 1915), 4; "Asker Ailelerine," *Tanin*, 10 Eylül 1331 (23 September 1915), 2; "Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti," *Tanin*, 21 Eylül 1331 (4 October 1915), 2.

<sup>72</sup> "Asker ailelerine tevziat," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 13 Şubat 1330 (26 February 1915), 3.

<sup>73</sup> "Asker aileleri için," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Kanunusani 1330 (27 January 1915), 4; TKA, 988/4, 22 Haziran 1335 (22 June 1919).

<sup>74</sup> "L'association des dames au secours," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 27 Novembre 1915, 3.

<sup>75</sup> "Asker ailelerine tevziat," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 30 Nisan 1331 (13 May 1915), 2.

<sup>76</sup> BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-8/83, 16Ş1333. According to Lorenz the organization closely cooperated with the women's branch of the Red Crescent. She refers to the existence of workshops for the wives and daughters of soldiers opened by the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* including one in Bursa. However, these must be the *Darüssmaa* of the Red Crescent. Lorenz, Charlotte, "Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der arbeitenden Klasse," *Die Welt des Islams*, VI, 3/4, 1918, 72-214, 190.

<sup>77</sup> "Müesseri hamiyet ve şefkat," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Kanunusani 1330 (14 January 1915), 5; "Für die Familien der türkischen Soldaten," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 17. Januar 1915, 4.

(*fukara-yı saire*). Receiving 30 *kuruş* of “*ekmek parası*” (they were probably referring to the *Muinsiz Aile Maaşı*)<sup>78</sup> was not an impediment to receiving the benefits. Working as a servant or seamstress and thus earning an additional income besides the family allowance was. The organization furthermore called upon the readers to point out the existence of the organization to the illiterate and to share with them the other announcements which would appear in the future.<sup>79</sup>

According to an article in *İçtihad* the “committee” distributed more than 500 *kıyye*<sup>80</sup> (= 650 kilos) of oil, rice, beans, and salt to 297 families on the first day it opened its doors officially, 22 January 1915.<sup>81</sup> By the end of January 1915, the organization had assisted 721 families with in total approximately 2,000 persons.<sup>82</sup> At the end of February, the organization informed the public that more than 3,000 families had been registered.<sup>83</sup> Although the distribution centers had been established by then, registration for the Beyoğlu district still took place at the mansion of the Canbolats.<sup>84</sup> The first week of March, more than 10,000 persons belonging to 3,000 families received beans, bulgur and oil.<sup>85</sup> Approximately, a month later, the Eyüp center distributed food to 5,096 families totalling 10,408 persons.<sup>86</sup> By the end of April 1915, the organization announced that it had provided food for 12,000 families with in total 30,000 persons.<sup>87</sup> Early May, the women in Kadıköy reported to have distributed food to 3,545 persons.<sup>88</sup> The Bebek branch fed another 2,305 persons that same month.<sup>89</sup> For the month of Ramadan in July and August 1915, all registered families, including 2,244 of them that had applied to the Nişantaşı distribution centre, received

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter Ten.

<sup>79</sup> “Muhtaç asker ailelerine,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 8 Kanunusani 1330 (21 January 1915), 4. See also “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179.

<sup>80</sup> A *kıyye* (or *okka*) is approximately 1,300 grams.

<sup>81</sup> “Bir fazilet dersi,” *İçtihad*, 126, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 462.

<sup>82</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1234, 15 Kanunusani 1330 (28 January 1915), 179.

<sup>83</sup> “Asker ailelerine tevziat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 13 Şubat 1330 (26 February 1915), 3.

<sup>84</sup> “Asker ailelerine tevziat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 23 Şubat 1330 (8 March 1915), 3.

<sup>85</sup> “Asker ailelerine tevziat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Şubat 1330 (10 March 1915), 3.

<sup>86</sup> “Asker ailelerine yardım,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 20 Mart 1331 (2 April 1915), 4.

<sup>87</sup> “Asker ailelerine,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 13 Nisan 1331 (26 April 1915), 2.

<sup>88</sup> “Asker ailelerine tevziat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Mayıs 1331 (14 May 1915), 2.

<sup>89</sup> “Asker ailelerine tevziat,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 6 Mayıs 1331 (19 May 1915), 1.

double rations.<sup>90</sup> This exhausted the stocks of the organization to such an extent that it had to postpone its distribution in September with a fortnight and at some distribution points even longer.<sup>91</sup> By the end of September, the organizations had procured so much funding from a further unknown source, that it decided to not only resume, but to even expand its activities and to invite more families to apply.<sup>92</sup> Early October 1915, one month worth of potatoes, chickpeas and other staples were distributed to 7,000 families by *Freiin* von Wangenheim and the wives and daughters of other German “notables” from Istanbul.<sup>93</sup> In the first week of October, the organization assisted more than 15,000 families with in total 37,000 persons.<sup>94</sup>

When the weather conditions deteriorated in fall, the organization announced that it had decided to distribute two months’ worth of goods to the applicants in Kadıköy.<sup>95</sup> In November 10,000 families of in total 25,000 persons received *bulgur*, olives and (broad)beans for one month.<sup>96</sup> In December 1915 a brief year report was published in *Tasvir-i Efkar*. According to this report, the organization had during its first year of existence assisted 15,379 families of, in total, 41,014 persons. These families had received goods, such as beans, oil, rice, olives, chickpeas, bulgur, potatoes and salt up to the amount of in total 545,000

<sup>90</sup> “Erzak tevzii,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Haziran 1331 (27 June 1915), 2; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 16 Haziran 1331 (29 June 1915), 2.

<sup>91</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 26 Ağustos 1331 (8 September 1915), 2; “Asker aileleri hakkında,” *Tanin*, 26 Ağustos 1331 (8 September 1915), 3; “Asker ailelerine,” *Tanin*, 8 Eylül 1331 (21 September 1915), 3; “Asker ailelerine,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 8 Eylül 1331 (21 September 1915), 2.

<sup>92</sup> “Asker ailelerine,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Eylül 1331 (23 September 1915), 2; “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 12 Eylül 1331 (25 September 1915), 2; “Asker ailelerine muavenet,” *Tanin*, 22 Eylül 1331 (5 October 1915), 4 ; “Les secours aux familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 7 Octobre 1915, 3.

<sup>93</sup> “Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti,” *Tanin*, 21 Eylül 1331 (4 October 1915), 2; “Secours aux familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 4 Octobre 1915, 3 ; “Asker ailelerine muavenet,” *Tanin*, 22 Eylül 1331 (5 October 1915), 4.

<sup>94</sup> “Asker ailelerine muavenet,” *Tanin*, 22 Eylül 1331 (5 October 1915), 4. *Lloyd Ottoman* mentions 10,000 families and more than 35,000 persons. “Les secours aux familles des soldats,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 7 Octobre 1915, 3. The figures mentioned by *Tanin* seem more likely, though, given the average size of the families accounted based on the figures given earlier.

<sup>95</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tanin*, 2 Teşrinievvel 1331 (15 October 1915), 4.

<sup>96</sup> “Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 14 Teşrinisani 1331 (27 November 1915), 2; “Hilfsverein der Damen,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 27. November 1915, 3; “L’association des dames au secours,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 27 Novembre 1915, 3.

*okka* (= 708,500 kilos).<sup>97</sup> The number of families in need of assistance continued to increase, however. A few days before the wooden cannon was unveiled *Tasvir-i Efkar* informed its readers that the organization had until then assisted more than 25,000 families.<sup>98</sup> By November 1916 the organization had reportedly assisted 22,000 families totalling 65,000 persons.<sup>99</sup> This last number is consistent with another report sent to the General Secretariat of the *Hilal-i Ahmer*, dated 22 June 1919, according to which the number of persons registered with the organization between 24 January 1915 and 28 November 1916 totalled 65,491 of whom 49,116 were Muslim and 16,370 non-Muslim. They had, by November 1916, received nine different kinds of food up to a total of almost 1,900,000 *okka* (=almost 2.5 million kilos).<sup>100</sup>

Despite these numbers, the situation in Istanbul was so desperate that the organization was not able to help all the poor who applied for assistance and regularly had to halt the registration of needy families and even the food distribution itself. By the beginning of 1916, for example, the organization had to temporarily withdraw from its activities due to problems in procuring sufficient food stuffs. The activities around the wooden canon, however, were so successful that, according to an announcement in *Tanin*, the organization was able to resume its distribution in April of that year as formerly because it had by then succeeded in acquiring an adequate amount of goods. It, therefore, invited families in, particularly, Üsküdar and Kadıköy, to come with their old registration cards and soldiers' passes to collect their rations.<sup>101</sup> By that time, however, another commission, the *Aile Erzak Komisyonu* (Family Food Commission), had started to distribute food to soldier's families as well.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>97</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 22 Teşrinisani 1331 (5 December 1915), 2.

<sup>98</sup> "Hatıra-i Celadet," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 26 Mart 1332 (8 April 1916), 2.

<sup>99</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nden," *Tanin*, 22 Teşrinievvel 1332 (4 November 1916), 4.

<sup>100</sup> TKA, 988/4, 22 Haziran 1335 (22 June 1919).

<sup>101</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 17 Nisan 1332 (30 April 1916), 2; "Asker ailelerine erzak tevzii," *Tanin*, 17 Nisan 1332 (30 April 1916), 4; "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Heyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 24 Nisan 1332 (7 May 1916), 2; "Muhtaç asker ailelerine erzak tevzii," *Tanin*, 11 Haziran 1332 (24 June 1916), 4; "Asker ailelerine muavenet," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 16 Haziran 1332 (29 June 1916), 2; "Asker ailelerine muavenet," *Tanin*, 16 Haziran 1332 (29 June 1916), 3.

<sup>102</sup> "Zabitan ve mensubin-i askeriye ailelerinin nazar-ı dikkatına," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 12 Nisan 1332 (25 April 1916), 2. When the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* had to stop its distribution, this committee seems to have taken over its distribution centres. "Asker ailelerine

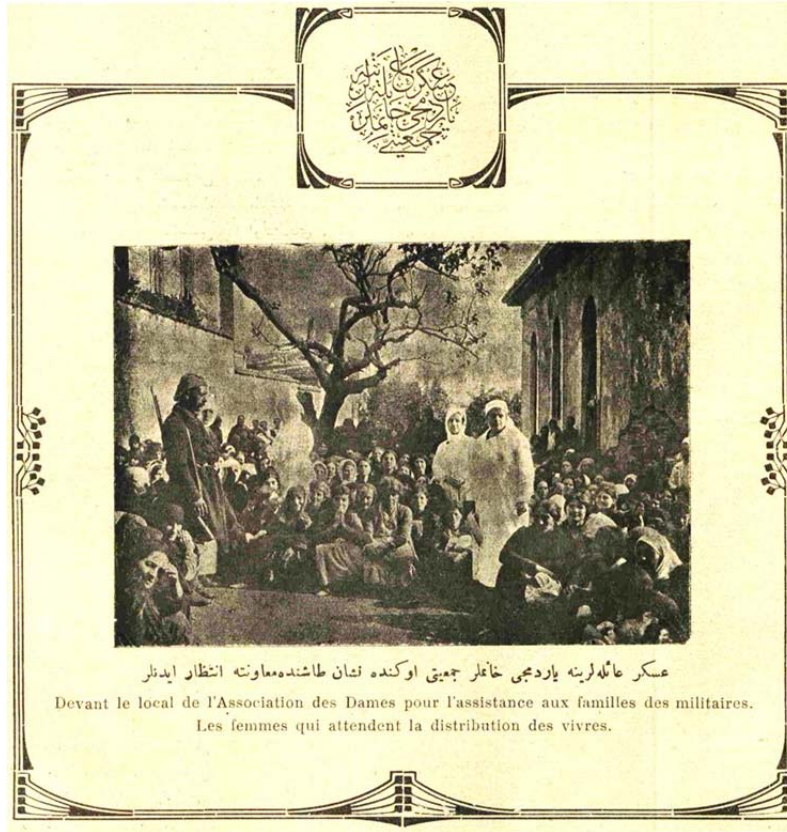


Figure 6 *Servet-i Fünun*, 1332, 22 Kanunuevvel 1332 (4 January 1917), front page. Note the logo of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* at the top of the frame. The photograph is not only clearly posed, which is inevitable given the technique available at the time, but probably also staged to accentuate the contradiction between the matrons towering high in white over their beneficiaries squatting low on the ground.

To show its appreciation for the activities of the organization, the *Hilal-i Ahmer* decided in May 1916 to award the *Hilal-i Ahmer* Medal in silver to its Ottoman Muslim members.<sup>103</sup> By November of that year the food situation in

erzak tevzii,” *Tanin*, 8 Teşrinievvel/October 1333/1917, 4; “Aile Erzak Komisyonu’ndan,” *Tanin*, 28 Teşrinisani/November 1917, 3.

<sup>103</sup> TKA, 168/70, 13 Mayıs 1332 (25 May 1916); BOA, DUİT, 47/1-3, 20 Cemaziyelahir 1334 (23 April 1916); BOA, Nişan Defterleri, no. 32, Hilal-i Ahmer Madalyaları, 7-10.

Istanbul had deteriorated to such an extent,<sup>104</sup> however, that the organization could no longer continue its work. According to the above-mentioned report to the Red Crescent, the organization decided to stop its activities temporarily by that time because “the procurement of food was difficult and the organization was increasingly experiencing problems in feeding those registered with them.”<sup>105</sup>

That the situation had become increasingly severe was also recognized by the authorities. Despite all the public and private initiatives, there were so many people in dire need of food in Istanbul by 1917 that also (semi-)official organizations such as the Red Crescent and the CUP started to set up soup kitchens. A charitable committee of women in Bebek (*Bebek Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*) chaired by the wife of Cevat Pasha had opened such an institution in Bebek in November 1916 and aimed at feeding 300 families three or four times per week.<sup>106</sup> In March 1917 the CUP opened its first “family kitchen” (*aile matbahı*) to distribute food and bread to the needy.<sup>107</sup> By April 1917 the

In December 1917, these women (Nuriye Canbolat, İrfan Bedri, Hayriye Talat, Sabiha Nuri, Didar Arif, Halet Zeki, Meliha Kasım İzzeddin, Celile Hikmet, Hadiye Selim Sırrı, Emine Reşid) received the ribbon going with the medal which for an unclear reason had been forgotten earlier. BOA, DUİT, 47/106, 8 Rebiülevvel 1336 (23 December 1917); BOA, Nişan Defterleri, no. 33, Hilal-i Ahmer Madalyaları, [62-63].

The two daughters of Liman von Sanders received a Şefkat Nişanı of the second degree in December 1915 and a silver *Hilal-i Ahmer* Medal in June 1916 not for their work with the organization, but for their work at the Hospital of the Military School. BOA, Nişan Defterleri, no. 34, Şefkat Nişan-i Hümayun irade-i seniye defteri, 5; BOA, Nişan Defterleri, no. 32, Hilal-i Ahmer Madalyaları, 17-18.

<sup>104</sup> There are several reasons for the deterioration of the food situation in Istanbul. As discussed in Chapter Eleven, the large majority of the soldiers mobilized were from rural extraction. The food production, therefore, was severely hampered by the lack of labour caused by the large scale mobilization and the long duration of the war. Moreover, the military confiscated a large part of the limited production to feed the Ottoman army. Furthermore, due to the lack of food reaching the city, hoarding became a common practice in Istanbul which led to an enormous increase of the food prices.

<sup>105</sup> TKA, 988/4, 22 Haziran 1335 (22 June 1919). See also Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi, *Takvim - 4 -*, [İstanbul], 1918, 175-176.

<sup>106</sup> Its vice-chair was Mme Jak Bey, its secretary Mme Yuhanidi, while other board members were Mme Artar, Mme Sur, Mme Geuler and Mme Obest. “Eröffnung der Suppenküche in Bebek,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 26 November 1916, 3; “Bebek fukara matbahının resmi küşadı,” *Tanin*, 14 Teşrinisani 1332 (27 November 1916), 4. A few years earlier, in November 1913, the *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* had announced that it wanted to open a soup kitchen in Gedikpasha. Whether or not this soup kitchen was ever materialized remains unknown. “Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti’nden,” *Tanin*, 19 Teşrinievvel 1329 (1 November 1913), 5.

<sup>107</sup> “Aile matbahı küşadı,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Mart 1333 (10 March 1917), 2.

Committee announced that it planned to open 40 kitchens to feed more than 100,000 people and an *Aile Matbahları Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi* (General Directorate of Family Kitchens) was established.<sup>108</sup> Meanwhile organizations from the Christian and Jewish communities in town started to found soup kitchens as well.<sup>109</sup> According to a rough census made on 24 May 1917, there were about 710,000 persons in need of food and other materials in Istanbul besides military, foreigners and nursing children. In July 1917 the president of the organization in charge of the food provisioning in Istanbul announced that he planned to set up soup-kitchens for a total of 200,000 persons.<sup>110</sup> The Red Crescent, however, became by far the largest provider of cooked food. After it had decided in February 1917 to establish soup kitchens,<sup>111</sup> it managed to open 12 of them in various parts of Istanbul between 1 March 1917 and the end of January 1921, some of which were set up only for a brief period after a large fire. The six kitchens that were open for a longer period distributed a total of approximately 35,5 million bowls of food during that period. This amounts to an average of somewhat more than 25,000 bowls per day, only a drop in an ocean.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> “Die Volksküche des Ausschusses ‘Einheit und Fortschritt,’” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 1. April 1917, 4; “Aile Matbahları Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi’nden,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 27 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 2; “Eröffnung einer neuen Volksküche,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 12. Mai 1917, 3.

<sup>109</sup> “Les cuisines populaires,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 11 Août 1917, 3; “Cuisine populaire de Moda,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 4 Septembre 1917, 4; “Cuisines populaires,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 6 Mart 1918, 3; “La cérémonie de la cuisine populaire,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 21 Mars 1918, 3; “Cuisines populaires,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 23 Mars 1918, 3; “Les cuisines populaires,” *Lloyd Ottoman*, 20 Avril 1918, 3; “Die Volksküchen,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 8. März 1918, 3; “Die Volksküchen,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 9. März 1918, 5; “Eine neue Volksküche,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 23. März 1918, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Zafer Toprak, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye’de Devletçilik 1914 - 1918*, İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2003, 142-143.

<sup>111</sup> “Volksküche des Roten Halbmonds,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 27 Februar 1917, 3; “Hilal-i Ahmer’in hayırlı bir teşebbüsü,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 15 Şubat 1332 (28 February 1917), 2; “Hilal-i Ahmer’in hayırlı bir teşebbüsü,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 1 Mart 1333 (1 March 1917), 2.

<sup>112</sup> *Türkiye Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Merkezi Umumisi Tarafından 1339 Senesi Hilal-i Ahmer Meclis-i Umumisine Takdim Edilen (1335 - 1338) Dört Senelik Devresine Ait Rapor*, İstanbul: Ahmet İhsan ve Şürekası, 1339/1923, 104 as reproduced in Safiye Kıranlar, “Savaş Yıllarında Türkiye’de Sosyal Yardım Faaliyetleri (1914 - 1923),” [Unpublished PhD-Thesis, İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2005], 436. See also “Die erste Volksküche des Roten Halbmonds...,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 2 März 1917, 3; “Hilal-i Ahmer Aşhanesi’nin küşadı,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 2 Mart 1333 (2 March 1917), 2; “Volksküche,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 10 März 1917, 3; “Aşhanelerin tevzii,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Mart 1333 (10 March 1917), 2; “Hilal-i Ahmer’in ikinci aşhanesi,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 26 Mart 1333 (26 March 1917), 2; “Üsküdar Hilal-i Ahmer aşhanesi küşadı,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 26 Mart 1333 (26 March 1917), 2; “Die Volksküchen des Roten Halbmonds,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 26 März 1917, 3; “Die Volksküche des Roten Halbmonds,” *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 27 März 1917, 2; “Yeni bir Hilal-i Ahmer aşhanesi,” *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 2 Haziran/June 1333/1917, 2; “Bu hafta,” *Servet-i Fünun*, 1351, 7 Haziran 1917, 420.

Despite the problems in the procuring of food the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* tried to continue its activities albeit on a much more modest scale. According to the 1918 Almanac of the Ottoman Red Crescent's Women's Committee, which was supposedly prepared in the course of 1917, the organization had started to distribute lunches to 50 school children at four different neighbourhoods, "Fatih, Eyüp, Feriköy, and Beşiktaş," while it also paid the school expenses for 15 students. It also (financially) supported the Kadirga Birth Clinic to ensure that it could continue to assist the poor wives of soldiers in arms.<sup>113</sup> By January 1918, the members of the organization had donated three milk cows<sup>114</sup> to the children's hospital to ensure the daily delivery of fresh milk for its patients<sup>115</sup> and in February it opened a soup kitchen where school children, the children of soldiers and others could obtain a meal.<sup>116</sup> In May it started to distribute food to schools to provide lunches for indigent day students.<sup>117</sup> According to the report in the *Türk Kızılayı* Archives, 4,500 kilos of olives, grapes and figs were thus distributed to the school children and to the victims of the large Fatih fire of early June 1918. Moreover, 5,000 *lira* and food were donated to the committee in charge of the victims of the fire as well as 5,000 *lira* to the *Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Darüssınaası* (Red Crescent Crafts Home) to educate and employ the wives and daughters of soldiers.<sup>118</sup>

It remains unclear what happened to the organization after the summer of 1918 and whether it, for example, participated in the *Milli Kongre* (National Congress), a conglomerate of associations formed in the direct aftermath of the First World War joining forces in protest to the outcome of the Armistice of Mudros.

<sup>113</sup> Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi, *Takvim - 4 -*, [İstanbul], 1918, 175-176. See also, "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Cemiyeti," *Vakit*, 14 Şubat 1918, 2.

<sup>114</sup> The Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi, *Takvim - 4 -* refers to two cows only (175-176).

<sup>115</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nin yeni bir muaveneti," *Tanin*, 12 Kanunusani/January 1333/1918, 3.

<sup>116</sup> "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Cemiyeti," *Vakit*, 14 Şubat 1918, 2. "Cuisines populaires," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 14 Février 1918, 3; "Volksküche," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 14. Februar 1918, 5.

<sup>117</sup> "Muhtaç-ı muavenet nehari talebeye," *Tanin*, 5 Mayıs/May 1334/1918, 4; "L'association de Yardemci Hanemler [sic!]," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 31 Mai 1918, 3; "Erzak tevzii," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 31 Mayıs/May 1334/1918, 2.

<sup>118</sup> TKA, 988/4, 22 Haziran 1335 (22 June 1919). See also "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 10 Haziran/June 1334/1918, 2; "Don généreux," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 10 Juin 1918, 3; "Spende des Frauenvereins," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 10. Juni 1918, 3.



## Conclusion

In the case of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* the juxtaposition of a “community” of women fulfilling their civil duty next to a “community” of mobilized and conscripted male fulfilling their military duty is even more accentuated than in the previous chapter: the women participating in the organization were almost all the wives and daughters of high military officers and officials of a state at war. As such they took care of the families of those men, who their husbands had taken to war. Through this organization, the state incorporated the wives of its military and civil elite and their activities and turned them into “a service elite of civil volunteers”<sup>119</sup> whose activities could be regarded as an extension of the official state support. In fact, it seems that the state, directly and indirectly, contributed substantially to the organization. The patronage of Naciye Sultan, the wife of the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, and a member of the Ottoman dynasty, both representatives of the Ottoman state, and her active and widely published participation in, for example, the inauguration of the wooden cannon, contributed further to the visible interconnection of the organization with that state.

Through their associational activities, the women of the organization did not enter the male, public sphere, but they rather created a counter-public sphere separately from that of men.<sup>120</sup> During the second decade of the twentieth century, Ottoman Muslim women were, not unlike female voluntaries in other countries, able to claim this counter-public sphere by extending their role as mothers of their own family to that as the nurturers and care-takers of a larger unit. Acting “within the parameters of cultural convention” as performers of caring labour,<sup>121</sup> the members of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* were able to “domesticate the public,” while they, by their connection to the state through their husbands, also contributed to the constitution of a notion of the state as caring.<sup>122</sup>

Both the members of the organization and its beneficiaries seem to have belonged to various ethno-religious groups within the Ottoman Empire. About 25% of the persons receiving assistance between the start of the distribution of food by the organization and the time they had to halt these activities were

<sup>119</sup> Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy*, 7.

<sup>120</sup> Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere.”

<sup>121</sup> Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 138-139.

<sup>122</sup> Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy* 7.

reportedly non-Muslim. As such it followed the official state policy of Ottomanism. In this it differed from the more private women's organizations established by Ottoman Muslim women,<sup>123</sup> whose activities to a large extent explicitly were directed at the needy from the own ethno-religious group, that is, Turkish women and girls, whose Turkishness was more or less defined by their being Muslims.

While the "community" of conscripted men of whom Enver Pasha was in charge went beyond the traditional boundaries of the (local) community an Ottoman subject belonged to, the "community" of the members of the *Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti* and their beneficiaries was limited to the local level. As also Lewis noticed, this seems to be characteristic for voluntary charitable organizations of women not only in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>124</sup> Writing about the development of a welfare state in Britain, she argues that local government and the voluntary sector were conceptualized as extensions of family and neighbourhood, whereas national politics and policy-making were not. Although the situation in the Ottoman Empire was completely different, it might be possible to draw a parallel. Ottoman Muslim women may have limited their activities to the local level, because the local level of the "lived" or "experienced" community was conceptualized as an extension of family and neighbourhood and thus as a geographical space safe and permissible for women.

So, while Ottoman Muslim women definitely belonged to the new social groups which according to Watt and Marwick entered public life as a result of the development of associational life and of war, this did not mean that this was the same public life as that of men. It rather was a public life distinct both in content, scope and geography from its male counterpart. By consciously drawing a particular group of women, namely the upper-middle class women whose husbands belonged to the bureaucratic and military establishment, into this public life, though, the Ottoman state was able to create a notion of itself as a caring state. A caring state not only for its Muslim inhabitants, but also for its non-Muslim inhabitants.

<sup>123</sup> Such as, for example, the *Türk Kadınları Bıçkı Yurdu* and the *Osmanlı ve Türk Hanımları Esirgeme Derneği* which are both discussed in Chapter Eight.

<sup>124</sup> Lewis, "Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of 'Welfare States'," 38-55.