



Analytical Bulletin

ISSN: 1829-4502

e-ISSN: 2953-8254

Journal homepage: <https://analytical-bulletin.ccs.am/index.php/ab/index>



CENTER FOR CULTURE
AND
CIVILIZATION STUDIES
FOUNDATION

Anahit Kartashyan

The Ottoman Armenians Discuss Ottoman Civic Identity During the Tanzimat Reforms

Անահիտ Քարտաշյան

Օսմանյան քաղաքացիական ինքնության շուրջ օսմանահպատակ հայերի քննարկումները
Թանգիմարթյան բարեփոխումների ժամանակ

To cite this article: *Anahit Kartashyan*. “The Ottoman Armenians Discuss Ottoman Civic Identity During the Tanzimat Reforms.” *Analytical Bulletin (CCCS)* 17 (2023): 9-26 DOI: 10.56673/18294502-23.17-9

To link to this article: **DOI:** 10.56673/18294502-23.17-9



Published online:

23 December



[Submit your article to
this journal](#)



THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS DISCUSS OTTOMAN CIVIC IDENTITY DURING THE TANZIMAT REFORMS

*Anahit Kartashyan*¹

Armenian-Russian University

Abstract

This paper explores how the Armenian *efendis* conceptualized and responded to the Ottoman imperial nation-building project during the Tanzimat reforms. It seeks to answer whether for the Armenian elite, the new form of the Ottoman civic identity was exclusively based on membership in an imperial nation, or it promoted a dual identity – one imperial, and one ethno-religious or national.

Discourse analysis of reports of the Armenian National Assembly, and editorials of Armenian newspapers, published in Constantinople (Istanbul), let me argue that although the Armenian Tanzimat-men shared the idea of Ottoman citizenship, they made it clear that membership in an imperial nation could not exclude the Armenian identity which was relatively inflexible.

Article History

Received 11

November 2023

Accepted 7 December
2023

Keywords:

*Ottomanism,
citizenship, the
Ottoman nation, the
Armenian millet,
Tanzimat*

DOI:

**10.56673/18294502-
23.17-9**

Introduction

In the middle of the nineteenth century the issue of civic identity of non-dominant ethno-religious groups became an acute issue in the Ottoman Empire. During the Tanzimat reforms, the highest-level officials attempted to develop a sense of citizenship and membership in a common Ottoman political identity, which Howard Eissenstate described as “Ottoman proto nationalism”². This process, which Stefan Berger and Alexey Miller call “the project of building nations in the imperial metropolis”, aims at the preservation and extension of the Ottoman Empire rather than at the dissolution or the transformation of the entire empire into a nation-state.

¹ Armenian-Russian University, email: kartashyananahit@gmail.com

² Howard Eissenstat, “Modernization, Imperial Nationalism, and the Ethnicization of Confessional Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire” in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexey Miller (Budapest- New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 432.

Until the last decade, scholars³ studied the concept of Ottoman citizenship in the scope of Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876), which in historiography is known as the policy of “Ottomanism”, from the perspective of state intention. This scholarship describes Ottomanism as the first non-religious, ideological, and political doctrine in its modern sense, put forward by the Ottoman ruling circles to maintain the integrity of a multinational and multi-religious state. This approach does not reflect the attitude of non-Muslim subjects towards the state ideology. A new generation of scholars challenged this approach, examining XIX-century Ottoman history through the prism of the relationship between center and periphery, the location of non-Muslims in social and political structures, national identities, and the interaction of different ethno-religious groups⁴. This tendency can be

³ Roderic Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 59 (4) (1954), 844-864; Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 494; Carter Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 496; Ariel Salzmann, “Citizens in Search of a State: The Limits of Political Participation in the Late Ottoman Empire” in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, eds. Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999) 37-66; Ирма Фадеева, *Официальные доктрины в идеологии и политике Османской империи. Османизм – панисламизм (XIX – начало XX в.)* (Москва: Наука, 1985) 271; Рубен Сафрастян, *Доктрина Османизма в политической жизни Османской империи* (Ереван: Изд-во АН АССР, 1985) 147; Евгений Зеленев, *Османизм и его роль в общественно - политической жизни Сирии, вторая половина XIX - нач. XX вв.* (Ленинград: ЛГУ, 1990) 99.

⁴Sia Anagnostopoulou, "The 'Nation' of the Rum Sings of Its Sultan: The Many Faces of Ottomanism," in *Economy and Society on Both Shores of the Aegean*, ed. Baruh Tanatar and Kechriotis Vangelis (Athens: Alpha bank Historical Archives. S. Anagnostopoulou, 2010) 79-105; Dimitrios Stamatopoulos, "From millets to minorities in the 19th-century Ottoman empire: An ambiguous modernization", in *Citizenship in historical perspective*, ed. Steven G. Ellis, Gudmundur Halfdanarson and Ann Katherine Isaacs, (Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press Lungarno Pacinott, 2006) 253-273; Dimitrios Kamouzis, "Elites and the formation of national identity: the case of the Greek Orthodox millet (mid-nineteenth century to 1922)", in *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey*, eds. Benjamin Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dmitris Kamouzis and Paraskevas Konoratas, (Routledge, 2012) 26-59; Julia Cohen, "Between civic and Islamic Ottomanism: Jewish imperial citizenship in the Hamidian era", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 44(2) (2012): 237-255; Fatma Göçek, "The decline of the Ottoman empire and the emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish, and Arab nationalisms", in *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, ed. by Fatma Göçek, (SUNY Press, vol. 15 (2002)) 15-83.

observed regarding the history of the Ottoman Armenians⁵. However, these rich contributions tended to investigate Ottoman Armenian history either in the context of Nationalism or Empire Studies, while in this paper both perspectives are tightly entangled.

Beginning with the 1850s and ending with 1876 – the proclamation of the first Ottoman constitution, this paper examines the attitudes of the first generation of the Armenian Tanzimat-men – the Armenian Efendis⁶, towards the project of the Ottoman nation. It seeks to answer whether the ethno-religious or national and imperial identities were mutually exclusive or complemented each other for the Armenian Tanzimat-men.

The Emergence of Equality Discourse in the Ottoman Empire

Economic dependence on foreign capital, territorial losses, political concessions, the rise of the national liberation movement of the Balkan peoples, and the Egyptian conflict (1831-1841) became the reason for

⁵Masayuki Ueno, "'For the Fatherland and the state': Armenians negotiate the Tanzimat Reforms", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 45(1) (2013): 93-109.; Richard Antaramian, Antaramian, Richard. "In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844-1896." (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014); Ohannes Kılıçdağı, "Socio-Political Reflections and Expectations of the Ottoman Armenians after the 1908 Revolution: Between Hope and Despair." (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2014); DCora, Yaşar Tolga. "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century" n *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi,, 109-132. London: IB Tauris, 2016, Dzovinar Derderian, "Shaping Subjectivities and Contesting Power through the Image of Kurds, 1860s" in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, eds. Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, (London: IB Tauris, 2016) 91-108; Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, eds. Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, (London: IB Tauris, 2016), 109-132.

⁶ Taking into account their relative number and the fact that they were limited to a small geographic area of activity (almost exclusively in Constantinople), I consider them a social group as they were defined by formal or informal criteria of membership, and they shared a feeling of unity or are bound together in relatively stable patterns of interaction (A Dictionary of Sociology, ed. John Scott. Oxford University Press, 2014). In this social group, I include those graduates of European universities and the Ottoman Imperial School of Medicine (Ottoman Turkish: *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Adliye-i Şahane*) who became a part of the Ottoman bureaucracy. The Armenian Efendis had limited career opportunities in the Ottoman administration but unlimited power within the Armenian millet.

interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire by the foreign states. It emerged as a decisive impetus in reconsidering the real situation in the Ottoman Empire. Tanzimat statesmen Koca Mustafa Reshid Pasha (1800-1858), Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha (1815-1871), and Kechizade Fuad Pasha (1815-1869), who were grand viziers and were acquainted with Western political practices, culture, and lifestyle, were convinced of the necessity to continue the modernization of the state to improve its image and saving its integrity. Consequently, the Ottoman elite assumed reforms on the one hand as a channel of maintaining the integrity of the empire, on the other hand as a way of transition from a pre-modern to a modern state with Western institutions and even a western way of thinking, making the Ottoman state an equal player in the European state system.

At this conjuncture, traditional relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were gradually changing as well. Before the Tanzimat reforms, no one could challenge the idea of Muslims' superiority over the non-Muslims in the empire, however during the Tanzimat reforms the officials at the highest level were aware that in this process only egalitarian citizenship⁷ could unite all subjects without distinction of religion and ethnic background and tie the empire together.

In the second quarter of the XIX century such words as “equal treatment”, and “equality” entered the political vocabulary of the Ottoman establishment. Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) declared all his subjects equal for the first time⁸. The Tanzimat reforms set in the Rescript of Gülhane of 1839 officially declared all Ottoman subjects “equal” before the law⁹.

This was a revolutionary idea as before that non-Muslim subjects of the empire were tolerated but never considered equal. At the first stage of the

⁷ Until the XIX century, there was no concept or practice of equal rights and duties in the Ottoman Empire. The Muslim millet was dominant. Non-Muslims could not occupy high administrative posts or serve in the Ottoman army and had to pay jizyah in return for their exemption from military services.

⁸ Quoted in Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, 31.

⁹ The principle of "equality of all subjects" was reflected also in the preamble of the Ottoman criminal law, adopted on May 3, 1840, which ensured the safety of all subjects of the Ottoman state without exception (Gülhane hattı, Düstür I. Tertip. Cilt 1. 4). This process culminated in the 1869 Ottoman law of nationality, which defined all subjects of the empire as Ottoman citizens.

Tanzimat reforms (1830s-1850s) the concept of “equality” of all subjects, “the common territory” and “the common government” was formed in the Ottomanism policy framework. Ottoman official documents began to use the phrase “subjects of Sublime State (Ottoman Turkish: *Teba ‘a-yı Devlet-i Âliyye*)” in a collective sense.

However, in practice, the strong social differentiation between Muslims and non-Muslims alienated the non-Muslim communities from the Muslim society, thereby making it difficult for the reformers to integrate non-Muslims into the imperial nation¹⁰. Under these circumstances, officials at the highest level believed that equal rights for education and welfare would erase the social differentiation between Muslims and non-Muslims and develop a sense of citizenship and membership in a common “Ottoman” political identity.

To promote the principle of "the equality of all subjects" and to integrate non-Muslim elites into the Ottoman imperial nation, Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha and later on Ali Pasha together with Fuad Pasha considered the education and the army. Ali Pasha’s vision regarding education was a step forward. He suggested selective integration¹¹, which implied, that the state should raise a new social group among the subjects of the state, particularly, among the non-Muslims, loyal to the state and integrate them into the imperial nation. In his political testament, Ali wrote:

*The state should clear the minds of people from painful ideas and raise all subjects in the same spirit. Upbringing through education does not only mean learning to read and write. One must use the acquired knowledge for the benefit of the state. Upbringing in general can be carried out in lyceums, such as Galatasaray. If all subjects of the Sublime State are brought up in the common spirit, it will be possible to avoid ideological contradictions*¹².

¹⁰ Ruben Safrastyan states that the idea of "the unity of the Ottoman society" was put forward by Reshid Pasha, but, in practice, it was used by the grand viziers Ali and Fuad Pasha based on the "merging" doctrine (Turkish: *kaynaştırma*), relying on the Turkish-Muslim element (Сафрастян, *Доктрина Османизма в политической жизни Османской империи*, 46).

¹¹ The term was put into words by Benjamin Nathans analyzing the integration process of Russian Jews (Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*. (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California press, 2002) 426).

¹²Engin Akarlı, *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrazamlardan Âli ve Fuad Paşaların Siyasi Vasiyetnâmeleri*. (İstanbul: BÜY, 1978) 47.

The Ottoman educational reforms in the 1840s and 1850s were aimed at promoting the idea of equality to soften deep social differentiation and raising loyal subjects. In the 1840s, Western-style Ottoman technical and medical high schools were opened to train officers, physicians for the army, and administrative staff for the Ottoman bureaucracy. In 1841, the Imperial School of Medicine opened its doors to non-Muslims¹³. The same year four Armenians (Ferukhan Barunak, Stepan Arslanyan, Hakob Hovhannisyan, and Mkrtich Barlatyan, the latter being from the Armenian Catholic millet) were accepted to this medical school.

Along with state schools, Ottoman embassies in Europe became the most important agents of the political socialization of the first generation of the Armenian youth. The case of the Ottoman Armenians demonstrates that the majority of the first-generation Armenian students, sent by state scholarship or at their own expenses, studied in Paris and simultaneously worked as translators, counselors, or doctors at the Embassy of the Ottoman Empire in Paris when Mustafa Reshid Pasha was the ambassador¹⁴. Undoubtedly, the Parisian years left their mark on the formation of mutual trust and sympathy between the Armenian students and reformers. It was during these years that they became acquainted with the reformist ideas of Ottoman liberal circles and believed that the reforms would change the social structure of the Ottoman Empire and the living conditions of non-Muslims.

The majority of Armenian youth on their return from Europe or graduation from state schools joined Ottoman reformers as advisers, translators, physicians, lecturers, and diplomatic representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies, becoming a part of the Ottoman

¹³ Before the Tanzimat reforms the palace school (Ottoman Turkish: *Enderun-i Hümayun Mektebi*), where state officials were educated, and Muslim schools were closed to non-Muslim subjects.

¹⁴ For example, Krchikyan Hakob (Akop) Effendi (1806-1865) went to Paris as Reshid Pasha's interpreter and advisor and his sons' teacher in 1835. There, in Sorbonne, he attended courses in political science. Agathon (Agatonyan) Grigor Effendi (1823-1868) while studying at Grinyansk Agricultural College (France) worked as a translator at the Embassy of the Ottoman Empire in Paris. Stimaratchyan Gevorg Effendi (1821-1895) parallel with his study at Grinyansk Agricultural College worked as a translator to Reshid Pasha at the Embassy of the Ottoman Empire in Paris (Nazaret Taghavarian, *Grigor Aghaton. Tsagumn yev kensagrutyun*. (Venetik: Surb Ghazar, 1900) 24-26).

bureaucracy. They joined the ranks of the so called Men of Tanzimat, forming the group of Armenian Tanzimat-men who brought their investment in the reorganization, and the development of education, medicine, agriculture, and economy¹⁵. The technical role, specializations, and communication skills of the Armenian graduates were indispensable for Ottoman modernization. After the publication of the Imperial Rescript in 1856, which allowed non-Muslims to hold public offices, Armenian graduates were appointed members of the State Council and held administrative positions in the *vilayets*, where non-Muslims constituted a majority, allowing them a special status.

However, not all non-Muslim graduates occupied state positions upon returning home. Two hypotheses can be suggested for this, which in both cases are based on the issue of trust: not all non-Muslims were optimistic about reforms. Besides, the reformers appointed into governmental posts only those who, as Fuad Pasha stated, “really mastered the principle of a single Ottoman society”¹⁶, in other words, were reliable, politically socialized, and could be assigned to public office. The patronage of the Tanzimat reformers, who had a Western education, was an important factor in the selection of government personnel in the era of Tanzimat.

The Role of the Armenian Effendis in Shaping Ottoman Armenian Attitudes Towards the State Reforms

The Armenian graduates, who had absorbed European ideas of liberty and nation, were complained about the lack of equality and good education upon their return to the Ottoman Empire. They claimed that the life of the Ottoman Armenians could be improved if both the state and the Armenian nation achieved progress and civilization. On 27 April 1849, Armenian

¹⁵ For example, when the Imperial School of Medicine was established a majority of lecturers were non-Muslims. The picture was the same also in the 1850s. In 1852, among the lecturers of the Imperial School of Medicine Muslim lecturers were small in number, though the chief physician and supervision were Muslim. Among the non-Muslim lecturers were Valasidi, Gaspar Sinapyan, Zografos, Konstantin, Kara Todori, Servichen, Barochi, Pavlaki, Kalya, Valvan (Osman Uludağ, "Tanzimat ve hekimlik» in *Tanzimat I* (Istanbul: Maarif matbaası, 1940) 968).

¹⁶Akarlı, *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrazamlardan Âli ve Fuad Paşaların Siyasi Vasiyetnâmeleri*, 31.

students established the Araratyan union (Armenian: *Araratyan ynkerut 'yun*) in Paris. In an announcement of the Araratian union published in the newspaper, “*Arshaluys Araratian*” regarded education as the only possible solution to the existing situation. The ignorance could be challenged only by educating the nation; the former was the source of all troubles. The members of the union emphasized that the progress of the nation was mainly encouraged by the initiative of the state¹⁷. At this point, both the Tanzimat leadership and the Armenian youth united around the discourse of progress and civilization. This common vision made the incorporation of Armenian graduates into the imperial modernization project easier.

With the encouragement of the Ottoman reformers, the Young Armenians¹⁸ initiated the establishment of educational, medical, and agricultural associations and began to popularize the importance of raising the level of literacy among the Armenians and the development of agriculture in Armenia which was a geographical term. There were several important announcements of the “Agricultural Association” (Armenian: *Yerkragortsakan ynkerut 'yun*) established by the Armenian students of the Imperial Agricultural School in 1849. Both the Chair of the association (Grigor Aghaton – the dean of the Imperial Agricultural School) and the advisory board members (Hakob Krchikian, Serobve Vichenyan, Mkrtich Aghaton, Hakob Melikyan, Hevorg Stimarachyan, Nikoghayos Zorayan, Mikael Aghaton, Harutyun Mamdjyan) were European graduates. In the announcement of the first meeting, the progress of the Armenian people is viewed as an investment in the development of the Ottoman Empire¹⁹.

Additionally, the Young Armenians used the language of state reforms to justify their vision of the civilization of the Ottoman Armenians. Referring to state reforms that promised equal rights for all subjects, they emphasized

¹⁷ *Arshaluys Araratian*, № 366 (Hunis 23, 1850).

¹⁸ The term suggested by Vartan Artinian to refer to the Armenian graduates of state schools and European universities (Vartan Artinian, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ermeni Anayasası'nın Doğuşu 1839-1863. İstanbul: Aras yayıncılık, 2004*). I use this term to refer to those graduates who had just returned to Istanbul and started to promote the discourse of progress and civilization. They were not decision-makers within the Armenian millet yet but attempted to reorganize and democratize the Armenian millet's administration.

¹⁹ *Ashaluys Arartian*, № 328 (Hunvar 7, 1849).

the importance of education. They believed that only education could improve the lives of Armenians under Ottoman rule. However, the equality discourse and new exchange relationship framework between the state and Armenian millet was met dubiously by the traditional part of the Armenian elite. One of the well-known intellectuals, the head translator of the Navy, Vardan Pasha (Hovsep Vardanyan) noted that the rights received as a result of the state reforms were interpreted in different ways among the Armenian elite:

...Some people thought that being freed from the conditions of submission, the trust of the nation to the state would be converted into suspicion. Some claimed that the state would encourage such an initiative, which would lead to a civilized nation. While some thought that following its dreams and fantasies, the nation would lose everything it had...²⁰

The Young Armenians believed that the political agenda of the Ottoman reformers could provide a solid ground for their programme that Gerard J. Libaridian described as cultural rather than political. However, several factors forced them to realize the political implications of the liberal agenda - that what appeared to be a cultural issue could not be tackled without political change²¹.

The Imperial Rescript of 1856 launched the second phase of the reforms, aiming at the integration of non-Muslims into the Ottoman imperial nation. These reforms tended to archive unification and standardization in the state administration. In this scope, non-Muslim millets' administration was restructured as well. The Rescript, reapproved the privileges granted to non-Muslim religious authorities in 1853 and urged them to prepare their precepts and submit their regulation to Sublime Porte within a fixed period²². The draft regulation of 1857 written by the Young Armenians (Nikoghayos Balyan, Nahapet Rusinyan, and Grigor Otyan) was submitted to the Sublime

²⁰ Hovsep Vardanian, *Sahmanadrakan chshmartutyunner*. (K.Polis: H. Muhendisian, 1863) 57.

²¹ Gerard Libaridian, *"The ideology of Armenian liberation: the development of Armenian political thought before the revolutionary movement: 1639-1885."* (PhD diss., University of California, LA, 1987) 89.

²² MIAM, fund M. Izmirlyan, file 14, 613 (18 cemazi ül-ahir1856).

Porte on 17/29 June 1857²³. Several months later, the Sublime Porte declined to ratify the draft. At this point, Servichen Efendi (Serobve Vichenyan), a prominent representative of the Armenian Efendis and the leader of the constitutional movement, convened a new committee that promptly embarked on further activities. The re-edited draft was first promulgated in 1860, then suspended, and finally reinstated in 1863. With the Armenian Constitution²⁴ that adjusted every area of communal life, such as communal management, religious affairs, education, culture, and national taxes, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul transformed into a representative body. The millet's administration was now ruled over by a national assembly, deputies of which were elected by the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. The Patriarch, who was elected by the deputies, represented the millet to the imperial government.

Millet reforms conformed to cultural autonomy: however, increased control over the non-Muslim millets. From the perspective of equality, the reforms of the second phase - the acceptance of non-Muslims into the state bureaucracy, and universal conscription - were more tangible and welcomed by the non-Muslims more enthusiastically. In an article published in “*Meghu*” newspaper, the editor Harutyun Svachyan urged the Ottoman Armenians to take opportunity granted by the state and be “the captain on a ship instead of being servants”:

...The fate of our nation depends on the course taken by the Ottoman Empire. Whatever the Ottoman Empire does to develop to civilization, we should do the same thing. [...] We should start thinking from this very moment; otherwise, it may be too late afterward. Tajkasthan [the Ottoman Empire] will alter in a while: railways, steamers, prosperous agriculture and trade... It is dishonourable to have a lower status in such a country, instead of taking higher positions and the first place... We should decide whether to be a servant or the captain on a ship, whether to stay solely soldiers or

²³ BOA, fund I.MVL, file 00382, 16736 (1274 Ra. 13).

²⁴ Historiography applies the term “constitution” to the Armenian National Constitution, taking into account the Armenian name (*Azgayin Sahmanadrutyun Hayots*). Nevertheless, I am inclined to consider it “a regulation”, since the Armenian National Constitution was nothing more than a charter on the regulations of the Armenian Apostolic millet.

*deserve magnificent positions and honour and to have an influence on state affairs*²⁵.

Armenian Tanzimat-men accepted the existing state as a starting point and connected the future of the Ottoman Armenians with the state, underlining the importance of cultural autonomy. On November 12, 1860, Grigor Agaton, Grigor Otyan, Mkrtych Peshiktashlyan, and Tigran Yusufyan established the Armenian Charity Association (Armenian: *Baregortsakan ynkerut 'yun hayots*) that aimed to meet the education fees of poor and orphan Armenian boys. In the announcement the Armenian nation is considered “a major inseparable part of the Ottoman state’s society”. Its progress and development are regarded as a contribution to the development of the state that promised equal opportunities for all its subjects:

*...The Armenian nation formed a major part of this society. The Armenian nation knows that its fate depends on the Ottoman state, and its only hope, its protector, and the guarantor of its language and religion is the Ottoman government. However, it does not have a certain idea of how and within what frameworks can help the state that lead to the development and progress of the nation and the country. The country in which its [Armenian nation] fatherland is also located ...*²⁶

Discourse analysis of reports of the Armenian National Assembly and the deputies’ speeches at the sessions of the National Assembly lets me argue that the Ottoman Armenian elite learned and adopted the language of state reforms to demand real equal rights that would not be an illusion on the practical level and would improve the life of provincial Armenians.

The report of 1871, the initial edition of which was sent to the Grand Vizier, Mahmud Nedim Paşa, on April 11, 1872, was discussed during 4 sessions of the National Assembly. Referring to the Imperial Rescript of 1856, it was suggested providing Armenian soldiers to the Ottoman army instead of paying military tax. It aimed at relieving the tax burden and realizing the principle of equality. It was a ground-breaking point, which became the topic of heated discussions among the assembly members.

²⁵ Meghu, № 5 (Noyemberi 15, 1856).

²⁶ Haytararut'yun baregortsakan ynkerut'yan hayots. (Kostandnupolis: Tparan Hovhann Myuhendisyan, 1861) 7.

Though deputies agreed that military service would create a consciousness of equality among the Armenians and the Muslims, several assembly members opposed the idea of providing soldiers, bringing the argument that the provincial Armenians were not ready yet. Besides, it could lead to economic and demographic issues. Stepan Papazyan, a deputy of the National Assembly and journalist, insisted on the idea of conscription:

...Armenians should be conscripted into the Ottoman army to perceive that they are also masters of a country where their families live and their property is. To protect them they are obliged, alongside their Ottoman fellow citizens, to serve their homeland and country (Armenian: hayrenyats u terut 'yany) on equal terms. This is the only way Muslims can give up their ruling position by accepting the idea of equal citizenship²⁷.

Grigor Otyan, the most influential figure in the Armenian millet and an Ottoman Tanzimat-man who occupied different positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy, also shared this viewpoint and proposed to negotiate the idea of the Ottoman Armenians' conscription with the government, stating that "military service is an expression of a sense of honour and citizenship". However, Patriarch Mkrtich Khrimyan suggested postponing the issue until the nation would be ready for it. Particularly, he offered to use periodicals to spread patriotism and push the idea of civic responsibility among Armenians²⁸.

Discussions around the conscription into the Ottoman army demonstrate that the idea of a "common state and homeland" and "civil rights and duties" led to the construction of boundaries around Ottoman citizenship which was officially formed by Nationality law (1869). It defined all subjects of the Ottoman Empire citizens. Ruben Safrastyan argues that the Ottoman Nationality law set in motion a process of the "fusion" of Ottoman subjects²⁹.

On the practical level, both Muslims and non-Muslims of the empire were not ready for radical shifts. Matevos Mamuryan, a prominent intellectual and public speaker, stated that the policy of fusion was challenged by "religious prejudice, the superiority of those who ruled, and

²⁷ Atenagrutyunk' azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy. №. LB, 1871, 502.

²⁸ Atenagrutyunk' azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, №. LB, 1871, 503; 505.

²⁹ Сафрастян, *Доктрина Османизма в политической жизни Османской империи*, 89.

fears and doubts of those who were ruled”. Coming to the Ottoman Armenians’ preference, Mamuryan stated that they preferred religious freedom to political, “since political freedom was an illusion in Turkey”. Mamuryan saw the salvation of the nation [the Ottoman Armenians] in the joint future within the Ottoman state. He proposed to accept the idea of Ottoman citizenship and demand real equal civil and political rights from the state³⁰.

The concept of a common future and the idea of Ottoman citizenship were the points that the Armenian elite shared without any argument. Even though the idea of Ottoman citizenship was met enthusiastically by the deputies, the majority insisted on saving the Armenian identity.

In contrast to Mamuryan, Nahapet Rusinyan, one of the influential decision-makers in the Armenian millet, underlined the importance of cultural and religious autonomy. In the session of the National Assembly Rusinyan said, “Freedom of the Ottoman Armenians was limited by internal affairs and national institutions - schools, churches, and hospitals”. Consequently, he encouraged deputies not to go beyond all bounds in order “to enjoy the trust of the caring state”³¹.

For the Armenian elite, Ottoman citizenship was a form of coexistence, where all nations had equal rights and duties and were loyal to the state. They accepted the form of citizenship that did not require assimilation. Consequently, as “an integral part of the Ottoman society” begun to demand their rights³².

Assembly member Stepan Papazyan believed that while it was not clear what the reforms would lead to, the nation should have been very careful. He proposed to complain about assimilation policy rather than demand reforms for all nations:

...If we need to say something, we will announce to the whole world that the Armenian nation and the Ottoman Empire are linked with the existence and integrity of each other based on their private interests. The

³⁰ Matevos Mamuryan, «Verak’neal sahmanadrut’yun», *Arevelyan mamul*. № 3. (Mart 1871) 120-121.

³¹ Atenagrutyunk ‘azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, № Zh, 1874, 51-52.

³² Atenagrutyunk’ azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, № Zh, 1876, 181.

*Ottoman Empire can benefit from it [the Armenian nation] if at least once reviews the history, the alphabet, and other features of these ancient and devoted people. Armenia with its geography is a powerful barrier against the enemies of the Ottoman state. The Armenian nation is an ally of the Ottoman state. We will openly say and let our Ottoman fellow citizens understand that we are Armenians and will continue to maintain our Armenian identity even under the Ottoman flag. The idea of assimilation into one will not be useful to anyone; on the contrary, it will make us more dissatisfied. Having common interests, we are single and inseparable citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, we should respect the desires and opinions of each other and be useful to each other*³³.

The concept of a joint future and the idea of Ottoman citizenship was the point that the Armenian elite shared without any argument. Even though the idea of Ottoman citizenship was met enthusiastically, the majority of deputies insisted on saving the Armenian identity.

Conclusion

Exploring the Armenian *efendis*’ attitude towards the Ottoman nation-building project, I have argued that although the Armenian Tanzimat-men shared the idea of Ottoman citizenship, they made it clear that membership in an imperial nation could not exclude the Armenian identity which was relatively inflexible.

For the Armenian Tanzimat-men, Ottoman citizenship was both a status that connected the Armenians to the state, and a set of boundaries that encircled rights and duties. The reforms of the first phase promised equal rights for all subjects, allowing Armenians to produce an empire-wide school system that would increase literacy among the Armenians and bring people closer to the state. Progress and literacy would ameliorate the condition of the fatherland – Armenia.

Collectively and over time, we see the trend of citizenship boundary growing more permeable during the 1870s. Adapting and utilizing the language of state reforms, the Armenian elite began to consider the

³³ *Atenagrutyunk’ azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy*, № ZhZ, 1876, 326.

Armenians as an “integral part of the Ottoman society” who were loyal and contributed to the development of the homeland and the state. However, the efendis made it clear that they shared the idea of citizenship, which provided a double identity – one imperial and one national, complementing each other.

References

- Ashaluys Arartian, № 328, 07.01.1849.
- Arshaluys Araratian. № 366. 23.06.1850.
- Meghu, № 5, 15.11.1856.
- Atenagrutyunk’ azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, №. LB, 22.10.1871.
- Atenagrutyunk’ azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, № Zh, 10.09.1876.
- Atenagrutyunk’ azgayin yndhanur zhoghovoy, № ZhZ, 10.12.1876.
- Haytararut'yun baregortsakan ynkerut'yan hayots. Kostandnupolis: Tparan Hovhann Myuhendisyan. 1861.
- Gülhane hattı, Düstür 1. Tertip. Cilt 1.
- Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (MIAM), fund M. Izmirlyan, file 14, 613. Islâhat Firmânı (18 Cemazi ül-ahir 1856).
- Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), fund I.MVL, file 00382, 16736 (1274 Ra. 13).
- A Dictionary of Sociology, ed. by John Scott. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Akarlı, Engin. *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadriazamlardan Âli ve Fuad Paşaların Siyasî Vasiyetnâmeleri*. Istanbul: BÜY, 1978.
- Anagnostopoulou, Sia, "The ‘Nation’ of the Rum Sings of Its Sultan: The Many Faces of Ottomanism," in *Economy and Society on Both Shores of the Aegean*, edited by Baruh Tanatar and Kechriotis Vangelis, 79-105. Athens: Alpha bank Historical Archives.
- Artinian, Vartan. *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ermeni Anayasası'nın Doğuşu 1839-1863*. Istanbul: Aras yayıncılık, 2004.
- Cohen, Julia. "Between civic and Islamic Ottomanism: Jewish imperial citizenship in the Hamidian era", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 44(2) (2012): 237-255.

-
- Cora, Yaşar Tolga. “Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, 109-132. London: IB Tauris, 2016.
 - Davison, Roderic. “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 59 (4) (1954): 844-864.
 - Davison, Roderic. *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
 - Derderian, Dzovinar. “Shaping Subjectivities and Contesting Power through the Image of Kurds, 1860s” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Yasar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, 91-108. London: IB Tauris, 2016.
 - Eissenstat, Howard. “Modernization, Imperial Nationalism, and the Ethnicization of Confessional Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire” in *Nationalizing Empires*, Edited by Stefan Berger and Alexey Miller, 429-460. Budapest- New York: Central European University Press, 2015.
 - Findley, Carter. *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
 - Göçek, Fatma. "The decline of the Ottoman empire and the emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish, and Arab nationalisms", in *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, edited by Fatma Göçek, 15-83. SUNY Press, vol. 15 (2002).
 - Kamouzis, Dimitris. "Elites and the formation of national identity: the case of the Greek Orthodox millet (mid-nineteenth century to 1922)", in *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey*, edited by Benjamin Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dimitris Kamouzis and Paraskevas Konoratas, 26-59 (Routledge, 2012).

- Antaramian, Richard. *“In Subversive Service of the Sublime State: Armenians and Ottoman State Power, 1844-1896.”* (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014).
- Kılıçdağı, Ohannes. *“Socio-Political Reflections and Expectations of the Ottoman Armenians after the 1908 Revolution: Between Hope and Despair.”* (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2014).
- Libaridian, Gerard. *“The ideology of Armenian liberation: the development of Armenian political thought before the revolutionary movement: 1639-1885.”* (PhD diss., University of California, LA, 1987).
- Mamuryan, Matevos. «Verak’neal sahmanadrut’yun», *Arevelyan mamul.* № 3. (Mart 1871) 120.
- Nathans, Benjamin. *Beyond the Pale: the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia.* Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California press, 2002.
- Salzman, Ariel. “Citizens in Search of a State: The Limits of Political Participation in the Late Ottoman Empire”, in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, edited by Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly, 37-66. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- Stamatopoulos, Dimitrios. ”From millets to minorities in the 19th-century Ottoman empire: An ambiguous modernization”, in *Citizenship in historical perspective*, edited by Steven G. Ellis, Gudmundur Halfdanarson and Ann Katherine Isaacs, 253-273. Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press Lungarno Pacinott, 2006.
- Taghavarian, Nazaret. *Grigor Aghaton. Tzagumn yev kensagrutyun*, Venetik: Surb Ghazar, 1900.
- Ueno, Masayuki. ““For the Fatherland and the state”: Armenians negotiate the Tanzimat Reforms”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 45(1) (2013): 93-109.
- Uludağ, Osman. "Tanzimat ve hekimlik» in *Tanzimat I*, 967-977. Istanbul: Maarif matbaası, 1940.
- Vardanian, Hovsep. *Sahmanadrakan chshmartutyunner.* K.Polis: H. Muhendisian, 1863.

- Зеленев, Евгений, *Османизм и его роль в общественно - политической жизни Сирии, вторая половина XIX - нач. XX вв.*, Ленинград: ЛГУ, 1990.
- Сафрастян, Рубен, *Доктрина Османизма в политической жизни Османской империи*, Ереван: Изд-во АН АССР, 1985.
- Фадеева, Ирма, *Официальные доктрины в идеологии и политике Османской империи. Османизм – панисламизм (XIX – начало XX в.)*, Москва: Наука, 1985.

**ՕՍՄԱՆՅԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱՑԻԱԿԱՆ ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՇՈՒՐՁ
ՕՍՄԱՆԱՀՊԱՏԱԿ ՀԱՅԵՐԻ ՔՆՆԱՐԿՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ
ԹԱՆՉԻՄԱԹՅԱՆ ԲԱՐԵՓՈԽՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿ**

*Անահիտ Բարտաշյան
Հայ-ռուսական համալսարան*

Հոդվածն ուսումնասիրում է օսմանահպատակ հայ էֆենդիների արձագանքն օսմանյան կայսերական ազգաշինության նախագծին թանգիմարթյան բարեփոխումների ընթացքում: Այն փորձում է պատասխանել հարցին, թե արդյո՞ք հայ վերնախավի համար օսմանյան քաղաքացիական ինքնության նոր ձևը հիմնված էր բացառապես կայսերական ազգին անդամակցելու գաղափարի վրա, թե առաջ էր քաշվում երկակի՝ կայսերական, կամ էթնոկրոնական/ազգային ինքնության գաղափարը:

Կոստանդնուպոլսում (Ստամբուլ) լույս տեսած հայկական թերթերի խմբագրականների և Հայոց Ազգային ժողովի ատենագրությունների դիսկուրս վերլուծությունը թույլ է տալիս պնդել, որ հայ վերնախավը կիսում էր օսմանյան քաղաքացիության գաղափարը, բայց միևնույն ժամանակ ընդգծում էր, որ կայսերական ազգին անդամակցությունը չէր կարող բացառել հայկական ինքնությունը: