Formation of Public Sphere(s) in the Aftermath of the 1908 Revolution among Armenians, Arabs, and Jews

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Revolutionary theories are most useful when they attempt to define and interpret the causes and mechanisms of revolutions. However, when they attempt to forecast the outcomes and the impact of revolutions on their indigenous societies, they are largely unsuccessful. This article deals with the impact of the Young Turk revolution on three non-dominant ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Arabs, and Jews. It will argue that the revolution resulted in the creation of a multiplicity of public spheres among the ethnic groups.¹ This multiplicity of public spheres became the main medium through which these ethnic groups internalized the Young Turk revolution. In the case of the Armenians and the Jews, these public spheres resulted in the occurrence of micro-revolutions, whereas in the Arab case it led to the erosion of social and political stability. Nevertheless, these various subordinate public spheres cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. They were interconnected and influenced each other both directly and indirectly. Moreover, within these interconnected public spheres, new actors emerged, threatening the social and political stability of the existing orders not only to (re)define their identities in the post-revolutionary period by inventing their own ancien régimes, victories, and new orders, but more importantly by competing against each other over control of existing positions of power, and in some cases, creating new ones. We will notice that in ethnic groups where power was centralized, the revolution was more successful than

those where power was decentralized. Furthermore, this paper will argue that ecclesiastic politics, a subject that is totally marginalized within the Ottoman historiography of the Young Turk revolution, was a crucial factor in defining the intra-ethnic politics in the newly emerging subordinate public spheres.

The Public Sphere and the Ottoman Empire

The history of the notion of the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire has yet to be written, and this article does not undertake that task. The notion of public sphere within the context of the Ottoman Empire, Middle East, and Muslim world still remains in its infancy. Of course, the public sphere, both in its pre-modern and modern forms, existed in the Ottoman Empire. However, it had a different background, and different factors affected it than in the European milieu. Autonomous institutions that did not exist in the European milieu functioned as the ultimate mediums for the creation of a pre-modern public sphere in the Ottoman context. For example, in the 17th and the 18th centuries waqfs constituted important elements of the public sphere and of social organization that gave substance to civil society in the Ottoman Empire. Haim Gerber argues that the waqf institution was so pervasive in the Ottoman society “that one is almost tempted to view it as a key institution in the way the cockfight was seen by Geertz to be a key institution in Balinese society.”

As a result of modern urban development, the public sphere began to enter into its modern form. Spurred by the development of peripheral capitalism and the opening of urban spaces in the form of public squares, gardens, and wider roads, and accompanied by the proliferation of cafés, associations, theatres, and scientific and literary societies, literary public


4 Haim Gerber, “The Public Sphere and Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire,” in Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Nehemia Levtzion (eds.), *Public Sphere in Muslims Societies*, p. 75.
spheres were formed in the Empire. However, the main factor that led to
their proliferation in the Empire during the 19th century was the press in
general, and newspapers in particular. This was especially evident
among Armenians, Jews, and Greeks. The official Ottoman press began
to be published in the 19th century and was followed by the emergence
of the private press. The transformation of the literary public spheres into
political public spheres in the modern sense took place in the second half
of the 19th century, reaching its peak with the promulgation of the Otto-
man constitution in 1876. In fact, the creation of private press and the
proliferation of the ethnic press in the second half of the 19th century
further developed the notion of multiple public spheres as opposed to the
public sphere dominated by the Ottoman ruling elite. Hence, public
spheres already existed among the ethnic groups in the first half of the
19th century.

In 1878, however, Sultan Abdülhamid dissolved the Ottoman parlia-
ment and derailed the constitution, thereby putting an end to the political
public sphere. He also established one of the most sophisticated spying
systems in the history of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, by the begin-
ing of the 1880s, the journalistic activities of the ethnic groups shifted
west, from Lebanon, Syria, and Anatolia, to European cities and Egypt.
Here an exilic public sphere was established in which exiles of different
ethnic backgrounds expressed their political views, discussed their pro-
jects for the Empire, interacted with each other, and attempted to mobi-
lize their host governments by using various means of expression, from
exilic media to public gatherings and discussion.

After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, this exilic public sphere was
transformed into a homeland public sphere. The revolution allowed for
an immediate boom in serial publications of different ethnic groups in
the Empire. It is worth recalling that in the span of three decades, the

5 See Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Oxford University
Press, 1995).
6 Notice that for different ethnic groups the emergence of the political public sphere
took place in different periods of the 19th century.
7 The periodicals *Pro-Armenia, Meşveret, Şura-yi Ümmet,* and *al-Muqattam* could be
regarded as the best example of such a tool.
8 The best study on the post-revolutionary press is that of Palmira Brunnett, *Image
and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* (Albany: State Univer-
sity of New York Press, 2000). Despite the fact that it concentrates more on the satirical
press during the post-revolutionary period, mainly in the Ottoman press, it still provides
important information on political discourse in the Ottoman press from the Turkish per-
spective. The same kind of work needs to be undertaken on the ethnic press.


educational institutions within the Ottoman Empire advanced tremen­
dously.9 Thus, when the revolution took place, a whole new educated
class was ready to elaborate its significance, implications, and reverbera­
tions. In the two years after the revolution, censorship was nonexistent.
In the first year alone, about two hundred periodicals were published in
Istanbul.10

The Armenian Public Sphere and the Micro-Revolution of 1908

The public sphere that was developed among Armenians of the Empire
after the 1908 revolution caused major changes in the dynamics of power
of the Armenian millet of the Empire. It resulted in the change of the
leadership and the transfer of the center of power from the Armenian
Patriarchate to the Armenian National Assembly (ANA). The downfall
of Patriarch Maghakia Ormanian represented the downfall of the Arme­
nian ancien régime and the beginning of a new era. Armenians, more
than the Jews and Greeks of the Empire, internalized the Young Turk
revolution by creating their own ancien régime and their own victory.

The Young Turk revolution became a milestone in defining intra-eth­
nic relationships in the Armenian millet of the Empire. It resulted in a
micro-revolution, culminating in the reinstatement of the Armenian
National Constitution, the (re)opening of the Armenian National Assem­
bly, and the election of Madteos III Izmirliyan as Patriarch. I refer to this
as a micro-revolution because of its resemblance to the changes taking
place within the Empire. However, the Armenian micro-revolution elimi­
nated competing centers of power more successfully than did the Young
Turk revolution. It was able to get rid of Patriarch Ormanian, whose
“regime was nothing else except a miniature of the Ottoman ancien
régime in the national arena.”11 This is because whereas the ancien

9 See Selçuk Akşin Somel, The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman
Empire: 1839-1908 Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001) and
Benjamin C. Fortna, Imperial Classroom: Islam, Education and the State in the Late
Ottoman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

10 For example, during the first two years after the revolution about 79 new Armenian
newspapers were published in the Ottoman Empire: 49 in Istanbul, 8 in Van, 6 in Izmir
and the rest in Diyarbekir, Erzincan, Trebizond, Erzerum and Sivas. Amalya Kirakosian,
Hay Barperagan Mamuli Madenakruitun (1794-1967) [The Literature of the Armenian

11 Dikran Aslanian, “Hosank’ner ew Nerhosank’ner,” [Currents and Undercurrents]
Puzantion, August 22, 1908, #3610, p. 1.
régime of the Ottoman Empire during the post-revolutionary period was embodied in the Yıldız clique, which managed “to deceive the Sultan for 30 years,” the Armenian ancien régime was embodied in one person: Patriarch Ormanian. Immediately after the Young Turk revolution, Patriarch Ormanian resigned.

The Downfall of Ormanian: The Armenian ancien régime as a spectacle of humiliation

While his opponents protested outside, Ormanian appeared before the mixed council of the ANA chaired by Kapriel Effendi Noradoungian to submit his resignation. After long deliberations, it was accepted and Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian was chosen as the locum tenens of the Armenian Patriarch. Part of Ormanian’s resignation letter read:

National affairs, after so many years of difficulties, are now in such a condition, that they need to be ordered according to the national constitution, which contrary to different difficulties, I am happy to remit today to my beloved nation. Hence, with a willing heart I come to declare that from this moment on consider me free from the obligation of my duty, let us move to choose a locum tenens, and take all of that in a proper way to the General Assembly tribunal.

However, things did not end there. Immediately after the resignation, rumors spread in the capital that ex-Patriarch Ormanian had appropriated 30,000 gold pieces from the Patriarchate finances and was planning to abscond. The rumor caused much agitation among the population of the capital. On the 7th of August, 1908, people gathered in the streets of Eter and Valideçeşme near Ormanian’s residence and demanded that he go to the Patriarchate in order to account for his actions. The demonstrators threatened that if he refused, they would take him by force. Ormanian left his residence in a carriage surrounded by policemen and headed towards the Ministry of Police. The crowd followed shouting and cursing Ormanian and demanding that he be taken to the Patriarchate. In the end, the masses succeeded in taking over his carriage and taking him to the Patriarchate. Ormanian became the ultimate spectacle of humiliation.

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14 Puzant Kecheyan vehemently criticized the humiliation of Ormanian which was the
over, this procession of public humiliation represented the humiliation of the ancien régime. The ancien régime had to be dragged in the streets, humiliated and scolded, in order to fulfill the aim of the revolution. The Levant Herald reported that at Kum-Kapu “the mob was unmanageable and the ex-Patriarch would probably have been lynched but for the timely intervention of the police.”

In many parts of the provinces, local prelates were dismissed by the local Armenian population. For example, in Harput the Armenian population succeeded in dismissing the Armenian Bishop. In Diyarbekir the local prelate, Father Yezegel, escaped along with his mother, uncle, servant and four soldiers leaving behind “the anger and the dismay of the community.” The downfall of Ormanian’s regime was finalized by the (re)election of Archbishop Madteos Izmirliyan on November 4, as Patriarch of Istanbul.

The Reinstatement of the Armenian National Constitution and the Armenian National Assembly

The reinstatement of the Armenian National Constitution and the Armenian National Assembly, which became the center of Armenian national policy-making in the Empire, are important political processes in the post-revolutionary period, which have been under emphasized in the historiography of the Ottoman Empire. Scholars tend to reconstruct the history of the Armenians in the post-revolutionary period through the prism of Armenian political parties, whose role in the political process has been over-emphasized. The Armenian National Assembly contained most of the prominent Armenian clerical and lay figures in the Empire.
This included members of the Armenian political parties, Armenian members of Ottoman parliament, and representatives of different Armenian societies. The Assembly should therefore be regarded as the center for the Armenian policy making. An examination of the debates in the Assembly sheds new light on the position of the Armenian leadership from the post-revolutionary period until the counter-revolution. In fact, when one examines the 25 sessions of the Armenian National Assembly from 1908-1909, one notices that utmost importance was given to the Armenian constitution. Constitutionalism became a key factor upon which the affairs of the community were administered. The Armenian National Constitution was even above the highest Armenian cleric, i.e., the Patriarch. The National Assembly became a mini-parliament which discouraged partisanship (at least in its earlier stages) and advocated loyalty to the Empire. When chosen as the President of the Parliament, Minas Cheraz made the following statement:

Delegate Reverends and Gentlemen, thanks to the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution, the Armenian constitution, which has been paralyzed by despotism for years, was also reinstated. The rebirth of both constitutions is equally happy occasion for us, because, if it is the call of the Ottoman constitution to administer the affairs of the country according to the principles of justice, it is also the call of the Armenian constitution to administer its national affairs according to the principles of justice-principles whose anchor is the popular right [zhjoghovrdayin iravunkê] or, according to an old expression “the voice of many, the voice of God,” [tsayn bazmats’ tsayn astutzoy].

Three main issues characterized the debates in the Armenian National Assembly during this period: the formation of an investigation commission to investigate ex-Patriarch Ormanian, the issue of the provinces, and the question of Jerusalem. Among these three, the issue of the Eastern provinces occupied a central place in the Armenian public sphere after the revolution until World War I.

19 This included members of the Dashnak party (Shahrigian, Vartkes, Khegam, Veramian, Dr. Paşayan), Ramgavar party (Hayg Hojasarian, Vahan Tekeyan) and the Hunchak party (H. Cihangulian, Murad, Zakarian, Hemayag Aramiants (ed. Of Gohag).

20 This included Bedros Haladjian, Krikor Zohrab, Haroutiun Shahrigian, Nazaret Daghavarian, Hampartsum Boyadjian.

21 See Azgayin Èndhanur Zhoghov, Nist B[Session II], October 10, 1908, p. 15.

The Issue of the Eastern Provinces

One of the major issues that the developing Armenian public sphere had to deal with was the issue of the Eastern provinces. The issue was very dominant both within the Armenian press and the Armenian National Assembly. This despite the fact that in some places in the Eastern provinces the constitution prevailed two to three months after its proclamation, in other areas the ancien régime continued to rule. For example, the declaration of the constitution did not bring about reform in Mush. On the contrary, the Hamidiye Regiments and the Kurdish Ashrets oppressed the population there. Kassim Bey tyrannized the Armenians and collected taxes from them using oppressive methods.\(^\text{23}\) The case of Mush attracted much attention in the Armenian press.\(^\text{24}\) Another case that covered the pages of the Armenian press was the situation in Khenus, where the Zabtiye and the local Kurdish tribes harassed and oppressed the Armenians.\(^\text{25}\)

The condition of the provinces was discussed in depth in the Armenian National Assembly. In one of the sessions the Armenian deputy, Krikor Zohrab, proposed that a government investigation commission be sent to the provinces to examine the situation. It was decided that the task of preparing a bill for the investigation commission to be presented to the National Assembly would be given to the Assembly’s Political Council. On October 17, the bill was submitted to the Armenian National Assembly, and Zohrab read it on behalf of the Political council. The bill recommended that the government send an investigation commission to the provinces, and, to this end, an official delegation headed by the locum tenens was to pay an official visit to the Grand Vezir Kâmil

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\(^{23}\) “Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey- (Received September 7), Therapia, September 1, 1908” in “Correspondence respecting the Constitutional Movement in Turkey, 1908,” Parliamentary Papers, 1909, p. 80.

\(^{24}\) In his newspaper Arvelk, Yervant Sermakeshkanlian wrote a long editorial entitled “Come and Help Us!: The Mush Plain is Ending.” The subtitle of the article was “hunger as a food and nakedness as a shirt.” Yervant Sermakeshkanlian, “Õgnut‘eann hasêk’: Mushi Dâshê gê Imennay,” [“Come and Help Us!: The Mush Plain is Ending”] Arvelk, September 30, 1908, #6901, p. 1. See also Dickran Varjabedian, “Musê Sovamah” [Mush starved] Arvelk, October 20, 1908, #6918, p. 3; Kevork Marzbeduni, “Tanjank‘i Vayrêrn,” [From the Place of Torment] Arvelk, November 5, 1908, #6932, p. 2.

It also recommended that the commission consist of honorable, honest, and liberal men of different nationalities under the authority of a Vezir or a Mushir who had not participated in the previous regime and who enjoyed public trust. After a long debate, a delegation was formed and paid a visit to the Grand Vezir. The Grand Vezir Kâmil Paşa promised that the necessary steps would be taken on the issue of the provinces but also emphasized the fact that the government was currently preoccupied with the issue of Rumeli.

A couple of months later, the issue of the provinces appeared on the agenda of the Armenian National Assembly again when some deputies inquired as to what happened to the report (takrir) that was presented to the government. Others argued that a new memorandum should be sent to the government. While Zohrab and Haladjian Effendis argued that the Armenian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament were already working in that direction and there was no need for a new report, others, like Daghavarian Effendi, insisted that it was extremely important to formulate a new one. Boyadjian argued that the government had too many problems to contend with and that there was no need to burden it with a new problem. He continued:

When the proposal of sending an investigation commission was presented to the government, they [the government] told us that no benefit would come from sending investigators, when the rulers of the country were not good people, and if the governors did not pursue the implementation of basic reforms. Be sure that implementing the means of reform in all the Ottoman provinces and Armenia are being thought of. Taking all of this into consideration, I would ask that the Armenian delegates to the Ottoman parliament stay out of the commission that is going to be formed.

Indeed, most of the Armenian Ottoman members of parliament in the Armenian National Assembly were very protective of the Ottoman parliament. The Assembly formed a committee to examine the necessity of sending a commission or not. While the debates about the condition of the provinces were taking place, the counter-revolution and the Adana massacres occurred and became a central subject in the post-counter-revolution debates in the Assembly.

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27 See Azgayin Ėndhanur Zhoghov, Nist Zhē [Session XVII], February 27, 1909, p. 257.
Armenian Political Parties in the Post-Revolutionary Period

The public sphere created after the Young Turk revolution opened the way for the Armenian political parties who were active in exile to return to the Empire. It is important to mention that some of these political parties had already had branches in the provinces, but all of them were underground and were considered by the government as illegal clandestine revolutionary groups that aimed at “destabilizing the serenity and peace of the Empire.” Their activities in the Empire were characterized as propagating revolutionary propaganda in the provinces, defending Armenian areas from Kurdish encroachments, and initiating sporadic attacks on the Turkish troops. After the revolution these parties became legitimate groups whose focus became politics rather than armed struggle. Most of the political prisoners were released from the prisons, and the revolutionary groups handed in their weapons.28 Thus, the revolution transformed these groups from revolutionary groups to political groups. However, the public sphere in which these groups acted would also contribute to a fierce and sometimes bloody competition between these groups over controlling intra-communal public opinion and the right to represent the Armenian nation. The center of activity of the revolutionary groups became Istanbul, from where orders were given to the provinces.29

Immediately after the revolution, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (A.R.F. Dashnaks) members in exile arrived in Istanbul, including Aknuni (Khachadur Maloumian), H. Shahrigian, Hrachya Tiryan-kian, H. Kalfayan, poets Siamanto, Daniel Varoujan, R. Zartarian, and Dr. G. Pashayan, among many others. The Dashnaks established their office on Sakiz Ağac street # 51, and Aknuni became the president of the Responsible Body [Pataskhanatu Marmin] that would oversee its activities in the Empire.30 The Responsible Body began to organize a series of lectures in order to enlighten the public on the political and economic dimensions of the political system that the party was envi-

28 See “Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey— (Received October 19), Therapia, October 9, 1908” in “Correspondence respecting the Constitutional Movement in Turkey, 1908,” Parliamentary Papers, 1909, p. 97.
sioning. The main policies of the party were to cooperate with the Ittihadists for the preservation and the protection of the constitutional regime, to re-establish all the branches of the party in the provinces, to create a powerful bloc in the Parliament, to return confiscated land, and to gradually implement a basic administrative-cultural decentralization. In the first public address of the A.R.F in Galata on the 23rd of August 1908, Aknuni explained the party line to a capacity crowd:

Companions, You are not Ottoman subjects anymore, rather you are free Ottoman citizens. You can be sure for the eternity of your freedom, there is not any fear of the reinstatement of the previous regime. The aim of Dashnaktsut' Ian became to create this freedom in despotic Turkey. From now on, its effort will be to preserve and spread this freedom at any cost: with canon, swords, arms, and powder. The different elements which cooperated with the Dashnaktsut' Ian at the Paris Congress agree to this idea. Dashnaktsut' Ian will seek to create for Turkey a free federated state on the basis of the principle of co-existential equality, whose different parts, being autonomous, will be supporters of the Ottoman Fatherland.

As part of its activity in the provinces, the party decided to establish new newspapers in Van, Erzurum, and Harput that would be their semi-official organs. It even suggested the creation of a French-language newspaper in Istanbul under the editorship of Pierre Quillard, the editor of Pro-Armenia. However, the party postponed establishing its official organ in the Empire until June, 1909, when it established Azadamard, which became the official organ of the A.R.F under the editorship of Rupen Zartarian.

The Young Turk revolution presented a major challenge to the Armenian revolutionary groups in the provinces. It created a class of revolutionaries whose existence became an “unnecessary thing, a rusted rifle left in a dark corner,” because the revolution had already been achieved.


A glimpse of this condition is provided by Rupen, who observed the crisis happening among these revolutionaries after the revolution.\(^{35}\) The Ittihadists argued that now that the constitution had been reinstated and freedom proclaimed there was no need for revolutionary groups. They should either be disarmed or enter into the ranks of the Ottoman army, as did Enver and Niyazi.\(^{36}\) This crisis was also reflected in the relationship between the Responsible Body sitting in Istanbul and the revolutionaries in the provinces. While the leadership in Istanbul, most of whom came from abroad, was positive about the situation, the leaders in the provinces were highly pessimistic about it. On August 8, 1908, representatives of the A.R.F from the six provinces in Anatolia convened a Regional Meeting that took place in Mush to discuss the post-revolutionary situation. The basic issues discussed in the meeting were:

1) What will the situation and the role of the *fedayees* be from now on?
2) In what way do they need to organize?
3) What will the aim of organization be?
4) What will their relation to freedom and the constitution be?\(^{37}\)

It was decided that the *fedayees* would be turned into regular citizens and would be occupied with their professions. On the issue of internal organization, it was decided that they would widen the inner circle and enlarge the number of the members. The aim of the organization would be to introduce reforms in the Armenian provinces. However, these reforms would be successful only through education and organization of the Kurdish tribes so that they would stop being tools in the hands of the government. The meeting emphasized continuing to pursue the demands and the accomplishing of the decentralization system in the provinces.\(^{38}\)

Dajad Melkonian (Karmen) and Kegham Der Garabedian (future deputy in the Ottoman parliament from Mush), representing the Armenian revolutionaries of the Eastern provinces, presented a list of demands that became the political platform of the provinces.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{36}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{39}\) For the 22 demands see Ter Minassian, *Hay Heghap'okhaki me Hishataknerē*, pp. 97-99. These demands included the return of all confiscated properties, the release of prisoners, the expulsion of the Kurdish or the Turkish refugees who had been positioned in Armenian villages, the abolition of certain taxes, the removal of the Hamidiye
tionary activist who was heavily involved in these developments, the Responsible Body was concerned that pursuing such a policy would harm their relationship with the Ittihadists and found the demands of the Regional Meeting contradictory and unrealistic. In November, the members of the Regional Committee met with the members of the central committee of the A.R.F in order to ask for clarifications about the situation. Rupen argued that those who participated in the Regional Meeting of the St. Garabed were “the true masters of Dashnaksutiun, previous fedayees, people previously sentenced to death, previous committees who have set the foundation to continue permanently to struggle for the sake of revolution.” The A.R.F intensified its propaganda, particularly during the period of the elections. The Dashanks seemed to have been in a real dilemma, and their cooperation with the Ittihadists appeared inconsistent with their platform.

The revolution also paved the way for other Armenian political groups to act in the Empire. After the revolution, the leadership of the Hunchak party returned to Istanbul and began organizing its branches in the provinces. Also among those who returned to Istanbul was Hampartssum Boyadjian (Mourad), one of the organizers of the Kum Kapu demonstration and the leader of the Sassoun uprising, and Sabah Gulian, the editor of Hunchak’s organ Henchak. The Hunchaks had a clear-cut policy: political autonomy for Armenia within the framework of a constitutional Empire. They were reluctant to enter into any cooperation with the Ittihadists. Upon their arrival in Istanbul, they conducted several meetings with representatives of the Ittihadists including Talat, Behaeddin, and Hagop Babigian to discuss issues pertaining to both parties, but these meetings yielded no results. The two principal aims of the Hunchaks

regiments, complete decentralization of the provinces, protection of all churches properties, etc.

40 Ibid., p. 97.
41 Ibid., p. 107.
43 The policy of the Hunchaks towards the Young Turks is laid out by Sabah Gulian in Sapah Gulean, Eritasard T’urk’ia [Young Turkey] (Paris: Publication of the Hunchakian Party, 1908); See also “Azgayin K’a’ghak’aganut’iwn: Hnchakean Kusakts’ut’iwnē ew ir tirkē,” [National Politics: The Hunchak Party and Its position], Puzation, September 12, #3627, p. 1. This is the Part I of Sabah Gulian’s speech. He was the editor of Hunchak newspaper. For Part II see “Azgayin K’a’ghak’aganut’iwn: Hnchakean Kusakts’ut’iwnē ew ir tirkē,” [National Politics: The Hunchak Party and Its position], Puzation, September 14, #3628, p. 1.
became establishing branches in the Empire and arming the people. Despite their differences, the Hunchaks and the Dashnaks entered into contact prior to the Parliamentary elections of 1908 in order to campaign on the same platform. But these meetings also did not yield any results, as the Hunchaks were very skeptical about the intentions of Dashnaktsutiun because of its close relationship with the Ittihadists. The Hunchaks were ready to cooperate and sign agreements with the Dashnaks on the condition that the latter openly declared that they had cut all their ties to the Ittihadists.45

The other important parties that became active in the Empire were the Armenian Constitutional Democratic Party (Ramgavars), found in Alexandria in October 31, 1908 and the Veragazmial Henchak Party.46 In its platform, the Ramgavar party propagated the people’s sovereignty, affirming that all the nations constituting the Ottoman Empire should preserve their national uniqueness and the extension of responsibility [tevsi’i mezuniyet] in the provinces based on administrative decentralization. In addition, it demanded the abolition of the Hamidiye regiments and the Ashiret system as well as bringing the Beys and the Aghas under the law.47 After the meeting, M. Damadian, K. Bozigian, L. Mgrdtchian, and V. Malezian moved to Istanbul in order to establish the party’s center there and to establish branches in the provinces.

The public sphere(s) developed after the 1908 revolution led to a fierce and sometimes bloody competition between these political parties, a conflict that was reflected in the partisan press, the Armenian National Assembly,48 and in the province of Van. The Hunchaks and the Ramgavars were extremely critical of the Dashnaks’ policy. In addition, they were skeptical of their relationship with the Ittihadists. After the massacres of Adana in 1909, the Dashnaks continued their close relationship with the Ittihadists. This caused considerable uproar among the Hunchaks

48 This tension began over the issue of Churches being used as spaces for political activities. This was known as the Problem of Open-Closed [bats’i gots’i khndire]. While the Dashnak deputies in the Armenian National Assembly advocated the use of churches as centers of political activities, Hunchaks and the Ramgavars refused to accept this.
and the Ramgavars. In addition to ideological differences, the real tension among the Armenian political parties was competition over power and leadership. The revolution supported the Dashanks, the only Armenian participant in the revolution. In addition, the inter-party tensions were nothing but the continuation of already existing tensions that were reflected in the activities of these parties in the exilic public sphere.

**Public Sphere and the Jewish Millet: Moshe Halevi, the banda preta vs. Rabbi Haim Nahum**

Thus it may well be said that the whole Turkish revolution is like the triumph of our ideas, ideas that are so moderate yet so liberal and solely inspired by love of the common good.

The impact of the Young Turk revolution on the development of the public sphere among Jews of the Empire should be analyzed from two perspectives. One perspective pertains to the micro-revolution that occurred inside the Jewish millet, and the other pertains to the increase in Zionist activities in Istanbul after the revolution. The public sphere(s) created after the revolution paved the way for the Jewish progressive movement in the Empire not only to start reforming its own communities but also to take an active part in the political and economic life of the Empire. However, unlike in the Armenian case in which the transition of power was relatively smooth, in the Jewish case, it was met by some resistance from people loyal to the previous order of Moshe Halevi, the locum tenens of the Chief Rabbinate of the Ottoman Empire.

The first task of the Jewish progressive movement was to wrest control from the hands of Moshe Halevi, who occupied the position of locum tenens without any formal appointment for more than 35 years and was under the influence of the banda preta (the black camarilla in Ladino), a

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group of Jewish notables who controlled him. Their first task was to organize the secular council (meclis-i cismani). They therefore sent a delegation of four people to the Hahambashi demanding that he convene the General Assembly (meclis-i umumi), which had the authority to elect the secular council. There were two potential candidates for the position of locum tenens, Rabbi Haim Nahum, a close ally of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and Rabbi Yaacov Meir, the chief Rabbi of Salonica. David Fresco, the editor of El-Tiempo, invited Haim Nahum to Istanbul in the name of the committee of four. Moshe Halevi resigned on the August 12, 1908, and on the 17th, Haim Nahum was chosen as the locum tenens. The government ratified the election on the August 20. Despite the fact that many telegrams arrived from the provinces congratulating Haim Nahum, his appointment also caused much anxiety among Jewish circles. This is especially evident in the conflict between the El-Telegrapho and El-Tiempo newspapers that “produced a painful impression among our coreligionist of the capital and that of the provinces.”

In reaction to these tensions, Seekers of Truth, (rodfey emet) supporters of Haim Nahum organized a huge demonstration in Istanbul on Sunday, October 18, 1908. The demonstration, which was attended by about

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52 “El Gran Rabino de Türkiyah,” El-Tiempo, July 29, 1908, #89, p. 1033.
53 Ibid. The delegation consisted of Nissim El-Nekva, Jack Effend Menashe, David Fresco, and Issac Effendi Taragano.
54 Born in Manisa in 1873, Rabbi Haim Nahum became one of the most important figures of the Sephardic Jewish community in the Empire. With the support of AUI he studied at the Rabbinical School in Paris and in the École Pratique des Hautes Études. While in Paris he came into contact with the Young Turks.
56 Nahum to J.Burgat (Constantinople 6 September, 1908) AAIU, Turkey, XXX E, in Benbassa (ed.) Haim Nahum, p. 147.
57 “Eleksyon del Kaymakam del Hakham Başi,” El-Tiempo, August 17, 1908, #96, p. 1117.
58 “La Konfermasyon Guvermental,” El-Tiempo, August 21, 1908, #98, p. 1137.
60 “La kriza de nostra komunidad,” El-Tiempo, October 14, 1908, #3, p. 39.
15,000 participants, took place in Hasköy, a “manifestation that does not have an equal in the annals of the Jewish community of Constantinople.” The government seems to have fully supported the candidacy of Haim Nahum for the locum tenens position of the Chief Rabbinate. In his first visit to the Sublime Porte, Rabbi Haim Nahum was received by Grand Vezir Kâmil Paşa, who promised him his support, saying:

I do not doubt that your first efforts will tend to remove any injustice committed by certain heads of the Jewish communities in the Empire. You will no doubt agree with me that we shall no more witness the sad spectacle of rabbis nominated provisionally for two or three months and charged to bring about elections for the nomination of a Chief Rabbi, who arbitrarily seizes power. All the efforts which you will make to improve the condition of the Jewish communities in the Empire will have my entire approbation and you may rely on my support.

In order to strengthen his position, Rabbi Haim Nahum paid a couple of official visits to important figures. On September 8, he paid a visit to Prince Sabaheddin and on the 10th he visited the ex-Patriarch of the Armenians, Archbishop Madteos Izmirliyan who “is a very liberal person, [and] suffered a lot during the ancien régime.”

The tensions emanating from the appointment of Haim Nahum as the locum tenens should also be viewed as the outcome of the tensions existing between the Zionists and the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The public sphere created after the revolution literally intensified this competition among these two organizations. In one letter, while commenting on the maneuvers by the German orthodox during the elections, Nahum clearly states: “In any case, if I am elected, it will really be a victory for the Alliance, because a very strong campaign is being conducted against our society.” This tension was caused by competition between Germany and France aligned with the Zionists and the Alliance respectively for influence over the Jews of the Empire.

61 “El Miting de elihad,” El-Tiempo, 21, October, 1908, #7, p. 64; “Turkey,” The Jewish Chronicle, October 23, 1908, #2064, p. 11.
64 “El Kaymakam Effendi Haim Nahum undi el ex-Patriarka Monsinyor Ismiriliyan,” El-Tiempo, September 11, 1908, #107, p. 1229.
65 Nahum to J. Bigart (11 January, 1909) AAIU, Turkey, XXX E. in Benbassa (ed.) Haim Nahum, p. 154.
On January 24, 1909 Haim Nahum was elected Hahahambashi with 74 votes.66 His opponents protested the election, arguing that only three fourths of the delegates participated in the election.67 For its part, *El-Tiempo* announced that the results of the elections were received with joy and happiness in all the provinces of the Empire, as evidenced by the numerous telegrams, letters and articles that the newspaper received.68 The government ratified the election on March 2, 1909.69 The system that Haim Nahum endorsed was a reorganization of the community of Istanbul and aimed at centralizing power by bringing the provinces under his grip.

After the accession of Haim Nahum as the *locum tenens* of the Chief Rabbinate, letters began to pour into the office of the Hahambashi from the provinces demanding the dismissal of their spiritual heads.70 “It is to be noted with regret,” argued *The Jewish Chronicle*, “that, with the exception of Salonica, which has a worthy spiritual chief at its head in the person of Rabbi Jacob Meir, all the Jewish communities in Turkey are administered by Rabbis who are not cultured, and are imbued with ideas of the past.”71

Demonstrations against their respective rabbis were held in the Jewish communities of Jerusalem, Damascus, and Sayda.72 In Jerusalem, letters were sent to the Grand Vezirate and the Ministry of the Interior demand-

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66 Raphael Shimon received 9 votes, Moshe Haviv 2, and Avraham Danon 1. For detailed information on the election see “La Eleksyon del Gran Rabani de Türkiyah: La junta del ayer del Mejlis ‘Umumi,” *El-Tiempo*, January 23, 1908, #48, pp. 461-64. For Haim Nahum’s reaction to the election in the ladino press in Palestine see “Rabbi Haim Nahum Gran Rabino de Türkiyah,” *El-Liberal* #1, 29 January 1909, pp. 3-4.

67 Eighty five delegates out of a hundred and twenty, from the provinces participated in the election.


70 For the letters sent to the Hahambashi see HM2 8639; HM2 8640; HM2 8641 in The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People Jerusalem (CAHJP).


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ing the removal of Rabbi Panigel, who had only been appointed provisionally. 73 In Damascus, the people demanded the removal of Rabbi Mirkado Albandari “who has a mentality and an education that is not at all compatible with the new order of things.” 74 In Sayda, the people demanded the removal of the Chief Rabbi, under “whose administrative tyranny the population suffered for many years.” 75 The governors of these locals also telegraphed the Sublime port arguing in support of the demonstrators. Following these acts, the Minister of Justice wrote to the locum tenens demanding that he take action without delay. On September 3, the Secular Council convened under the presidency of the Kaymakam Rabbi Haim Nahum and decided to dismiss these three Rabbis. 76 Of these dismissals, the question of the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem was the most important. The question of the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem is a good example that demonstrates how the public sphere that developed among the Jewish communities of the Empire after the 1908 revolution became the medium through which the different trends within the Jewish community competed and struggled against each other. 77 Like the Armenian case, the Question of Jerusalem was high on the agenda of the Chief Rabbinate of Istanbul.

An Opportunity that Could not be Missed: Zionist Activities after 1908

The new situation in Turkey has opened in front of us new and wide horizons, but in order to make use of this situation it is necessary that we have energy and tactic, and it is difficult to say what more: tactic or energy. 78

73 Rabbi Panigel was appointed provisionally and charged with convening an assembly of the heads of the community to plan elections in Rishon Le Zion within three month.

74 “Las Komonidhahis Israelitas de la Provinisya: Distutusyon de los grandis rabanos de Yeruslayim, de Damasko y de Sayda” El-Tiempo, September 2, 1908, #103, p. 1188.

75 Ibid.

76 “Las Komonidhahis Israelitas de la Provisnay: Yeruslaym, Damasko y Sayda” El-Tiempo, September 4, 1908, #104, p. 1194.


The 1908 revolution also provided important avenues for Zionist activities in the Empire and for the realization of the Zionist aims. However, prior to the revolution the Zionists felt that they need a permanent representative in Istanbul. The activities of the Zionists within the Empire began when David Wolffsohn, the president of the Zionist World Organization, established the Anglo-Levantine Banking Co. (ALBC) with the Mitirani Brothers prior to the revolution. The arrangement was that Mitirani would serve as head of the Bank, whereas the second president would be the representative of the Zionists in Istanbul. Dr. Avigdor Jacobson, a Russian Jew, director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank branch in Beirut and also Menahem Ussishkin’s brother-in-law, was chosen as the second director of the bank and charged with representing the interests of Zionism in the Empire. While preparations for opening the bank in Istanbul were under way, the Young Turk revolution took place, opening new horizons for Wolffsohn, who hoped that the Young Turks would not pursue the policies of their predecessors.

Jacobson arrived in the Empire on August 26, 1908. From Istanbul, he communicated with Wolffsohn two to three times a week, updating him about the situation. These correspondences, which are among the Zionist archives, indicate the importance that Wolffsohn attributed to developments in Istanbul. In one of his first letters to Dr. Jacobson, Wolffsohn described the ultimate role that Jacobson needed to play. Jacobson’s immediate tasks were to gather information about the political condition and to conduct a couple of important meetings with key figures among the Jewish community and Ottoman political figures without entering into negotiations. These included meeting with the leaders of the Jewish communities of Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica, including Emmanuel Karasso, Rabbi Haim Nahum, Nissim Mazliah, Nissim Russo, Bekhor


80 See the Contract of the Central Zionist Bureau with Jacobson, Central Zionist Archives Z2/6.

81 See the files Z2/7-12 in the Central Zionist Archives hence CZA.
Effendi, Mr. Fernando and Vital Faradji. However, Jacobson wanted to more actively promote the Zionist approach to the Jews of the Empire and enter into negotiation with the Ottoman authorities. Jacobson believed that such movements should be in accord with the Alliance and Ezra. One of the primary achievements of the Zionists in Istanbul was the mobilization of two Jewish parliament members, Nissim Mazliah and Nissim Russo, to represent their interests.

Indeed, one of the major tasks of Jacobson became the founding of a newspaper that would promote the ideas of Zionism. The Zionists understood that the best way to influence public opinion within the developing public sphere(s) in general and the Jewish public sphere in particular was through the medium of the press. The process of establishing a pro-Zionist newspaper in Istanbul began as early as 1909. At the end of 1908, Jacobson was already interested in establishing a newspaper in the Empire. In a letter dated October 21, 1908, he expressed his demands and proposals on this subject to Wolffsohn saying that: “It is the only way we will be able to instill the Zionist ideas in Turkish society.” Furthermore, he argued that the newspaper would touch on issues pertaining to the Jewish minority, autonomy, and problems of immigration, and that it is better that such a newspaper appear in French rather than Turkish. Jacobson proposed that a committee be formed in Istanbul to deal with the press, but it was not formed until after the counter-revolution. The members of the committee included David Jacobson, Zeev Jabotinsky, and Sami Hochberg, and they decided to publish a French newspaper in Turkey that would deal with the general issues of country, including Zionism. A Hebrew periodical by the name of Hamevasser was also founded, and support was given to four other newspapers in which Zionism would be promoted.

The other city in which the Zionists made a special effort to propagate their ideas was Salonica. The ground there was much more prepared

82 Emmanuel Karaso was an important member of the CUP in Salonica, Nissim Mazliah was the deputy of Izmir in the Ottoman Parliament, and Nissim Russo was the secretary of the Interior Ministry and a close friend of Talat Paşa. Isaac Fernandez was the head of the Regional Committee of AUI in Istanbul, and Vital Faradji was the Jewish deputy to the Ottoman Empire from Istanbul.

83 Jacobson to Wolffsohn (Constantinople, 10-9-1908) CZA Z2/7.
84 Jacobson to Wolffsohn (Constantinople, 21-10-1908) CZA Z2/7.
85 The paper was Jeune Turc, which Jacobson co-edited with Sami Hochberg.
86 These were Courier d’Orient, Tasvir-i Âjkär, Ittihad, Journal de Salonique and El-Tiempo.
than Istanbul. The Chief Rabbi of Salonica, Rabbi Yaakov Meir, who as we saw was the main candidate of the Zionists for the post of Hahambashi of Istanbul, was very sympathetic to Zionism, as were Joseph Naor, the mayor of Salonica, and Saadia Levi, the editor of *La Epocha*, the main Jewish newspaper in Salonica. In fact, when Ze'ev Jabotinsky was sent to propagate Zionism in Salonica, *La Epocha* covered his lectures on its front pages. In addition, *La Epocha* played the role of educating the people about Zionism. However, among them, Emanuel Karasso, the Jewish deputy of Salonica and a prominent figure of the Young Turk movement, was regarded as the greatest gain for the Zionist efforts in Salonica.

The Public Sphere(s) in the Arab Provinces: CUP vs. the Politics of the Notables

The impact of the Young Turk revolution on the Arab provinces should be viewed not only from the Arab provinces themselves, but also from the Imperial Palace, where the Sultan’s close confidants from the Arab provinces, who had played the role of intermediaries and kept a fine-tuned balance between the local notables and the Palace, lost their political power in the palace. These included his spiritual advisor Abü'l-Hudâ al-Sayyâdî from Aleppo, Ahâmad 'Izzat Paşa al-'Abid, his political advisor from Damascus, Taşsin Paşa, and Selim and Nejib Malhama from Lebanon. Indeed, at first sight, the revolution could seem to have caused serious changes in the dynamics of power in the Arab provinces. However, generalizing to the Arab provinces with regard to the impact of the revolution is rather misleading. The euphoric feelings and mass demon-
stratizations in the cities of the Arab provinces after the Revolution should not be perceived as the beginning of a mass movement: Each city was influenced in a different way than its counterparts. For example, the politics of the notables in Damascus were not the same as the politics of notables in Beirut, or Mount Lebanon, or Palestine. Hence, though all of them were influenced by the Young Turk revolution, the impact varied from district to district. In addition, examining the changes in the dynamics of power in the Jewish and the Armenian cases is less problematic because the Arab provinces were not subordinate to one political/spiritual center. There, the politics of the notables and the *ulema* were considerably more complex. For this reason, changes in the dynamics of power as an integral part of the development of the public sphere(s) in the Arab provinces should be viewed from the vantage point of this stratum of the society.

When news of the revolution arrived in the Arab provinces, local authorities received it with reservations and were unwilling to declare the constitution. Some were skeptical of the news of the coup d'état, while others feared that such a step would lead to the erosion of social stability. In addition to the local officials, the notables, and the *ulema* were also stunned by the news; some began to voice opposition to the activities of the junior officers. They were afraid that the revolution and the shift of the center of power away from the notables and the local authority to the CUP would endanger their traditional source of legitimacy. Indeed, after the revolution, CUP branches and clubs mushroomed in Syria. As we will see, these branches or clubs were begun as local initiatives but were subsequently taken over by the Central Committee of the CUP in Salonica. Thus, in the development of the public sphere(s) in the Arab provinces, two diverging forces began competing against each other controlling the power positions while preoccupying the political scene with varying degrees of intensity from one province to another. The CUP branches threatened the notables and the *ulema* as they temporarily became the *de facto* force in local politics in the Syrian districts during the post revolutionary period. In addition to the CUP branches in Syria, the revolution also resulted in the creation of Arab political movements, the first of which was the Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood, established by the dismissed Arab functionaries of the *ancien régime*. These functionaries


94 In order to protect their interests and keep their positions these Arab functionaries
of the local administrations were indeed greatly influenced by the revolution.

_Damascus_

Among the Arab provinces, Damascus was considered an important center for the activities of the _ulema_. With its Ummayad Mosque, it was a traditional place of Islamic learning. In addition the notables of Damascus, numbering around 50 families,

95 composed a powerful stratum running the political mechanism. The constitution became the ultimate threat to these families and to the _ulema_ class. With its slogans of constitutionalism, parliamentarism, freedom, and equality, the revolution meant that the existing orders of the _ancien régime_ would no longer be the centers of power. However, the transformation of the centers of power in Damascus was less successful than in other areas of the Empire. The traditional networks of the notables and _ulema_, although not unaffected by it, proved stronger than the current of the revolution. The revolution resulted in the emergence of new actors, both military and civilian and mostly members of the newly emerging CUP branches, on the political scene. As in other areas, the young military officers initiated the establishment of constitutional clubs in the name of the CUP. Members of the CUP branch of Damascus included Hussein Bey ʿAwnî, who was the director of education (mudīr al-maʿārif) in Damascus, Major Salīm al-Jazaʿirī, and Asʿad Bey, member of the general staff, who later became the chief of police of Damascus, and a certain Dr. ʿHaydar.

The temporary political vacuum that was created after the revolution was filled by CUP branches as they began running the affairs of the administration. 96 The first task of the CUP in Damascus was to get rid of the officials from the _ancien régime_ period. To this end, they pressured the Vali to dismiss the head of the Administrative Council of the Province, Muhammad Fawzî Paşa al-ʿAzm, the Mufti of Damascus, the chief clerk of the Shariʿa courts, as well as the kaimakam of Zabadani and


95 G. P. Devey, Damascus to Sir. G. Lowther Constantinople, 4 September 1908, FO195/2277.

96 “Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey- (Received September 7), Therapia, August 26, 1908” in “Correspondence respecting the Constitutional Movement in Turkey, 1908,” _Parliamentary Papers_, 1909, p. 73.
Busra Eski Sham, among several other district governors. These actions caused some discontent among the *ulema* class. The British Consul Devey reported on the 12th of August, “There is some discontent on the part of the *ulema* and certain leaders of the town, for the Union and Progress Society is going forward in its own way and removing officials without consulting them.” The discontent continued and resulted in the establishment of an association by the *ulema*.

The tensions in Syria were also reflected by events surrounding Rashīd Ridā’s tour in Syria after the Revolution. The Ridā incident is an important manifestation of the competition between the two diverging forces that were acting in the newly developing public sphere(s) in the Arab provinces. Ridā was a fervent supporter of the CUP, and in Autumn, 1908 he visited Syria and gave lectures in Beirut, Tripoli, and Damascus. Towards the end of October, Ridā arrived in Damascus and began a series of lectures in the Ummayad Mosque. During one of his sermons, Ṣaḥīḥ Sharīf al-Tūnīsī, one of the teachers of the Mosque, interrupted his talk and accused him of being heretical and of preaching Wahabism. This caused a public uproar against Ridā, forcing him to leave the Mosque. In his article, Ridā indicates that al-Tūnīsī was a preacher sent by Abū’l-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī. As a result, As’ad Bey, the Damascus deputy police chief and one of the prominent members of the CUP, arrested al-Tūnīsī. The tensions in Damascus reached an apex when thousands of people carrying weapons began gathering on the streets and in the markets. Many of them went to the Municipality, while others went to the government building to demand al-Tūnīsī’s release. Ridā argued that the real reason for this tension was the elections. The mob demanded the resignation of As’ad Bey and the dismantling of the CUP. Some protestors referred to

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the CUP as the committee of disunity and decline (jam‘iyyat al-tafrīq wa-al-tadannī). The mob attacked the building and took out al-Tūnisī, who was imprisoned there. They wanted to kill As‘ad Bey, who was the de facto ruler of Syria, but he escaped to Beirut. This was considered a success for the notables, who were thus able to defeat the representative of the new regime. With the transfer of As‘ad to Istanbul and Salīm Bey to Adana, the victory of the notables was complete.

**Beirut**

Immediately after the proclamation of the constitution, celebrations began to take place in Beirut in which many of the junior military officers positioned in Beirut took part. The Committee of Union Progress was established in Beirut and the local branch was composed of 100 officers and civilians who elected a committee of 12. The most active members of the committee were Major Jehād Bey, Captain Riḍā Bey, Mu‘īn Bey, President of the Commercial Court, and ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Bey Ḥamādī, a resident of Beirut. In his memoirs, Salīm‘Alī Salām mentions that Captain Riḍā Bey took over the committee and assumed all power, becoming the sole authority. The British consul H.A. Cumberbatch informed the British Ambassador in a confidential letter that the CUP of Beirut are in free communication with the Central Committee at Salonica and appear determined to “see things through.” The first task of the CUP was to dismiss the Vali, the Chief of Police, and the Commandant of the Gendarmerie, along with many other local officials.

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103 Barūdī, Mudhakkīrāt al-Barūdī, p. 70.
105 British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 1 August 1908 FO195/2277.
106 British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 8th August 1908 FO195/2277.
108 British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 8th August 1908, Confidential, FO195/2277.
Telegramms arrived ordering the removal of Kamāl Bey, the chief of police, 'Umar Bey, the commander of the gendarmes, and 'Ali Riza Bey, the head of the telegraph station. Local newspapers began a campaign against the administrative council of Beirut and asked for it to be reformed. The previous Vali of Beirut Muḥammad ‘Alī Bey, upon hearing of his dismissal, escaped to Alay. He planned to escape to Cyprus, where he would be under the protection of the British. However, the governor was notified of his plan, and Muḥammad ‘Alī was arrested. The next day, the Vali along with other dismissed officials, became spectacles of public humiliation. They were moved in a procession towards Haji Dawūd’s boat in the harbor. Thousands were on the streets watching the procession, cursing the Vali and his colleagues, the head of the telegraph agency, the chief of the police, and others. Before boarding the boat, the Vali was searched, and thirty-five Ottoman liras and some paper money were found in his pockets and stolen from him.

The Young Turk revolution also led to the emergence of the za‘ims, or communal bosses, who would dominate national politics in Beirut for the rest of the century. Jens Hanssen argues that the za‘āma differed from the politics of notables of the 18th and the 19th centuries in that the political authority of the za‘ims was characterized by a property-based electoral system and control over street politics. This helps to explain the rise of the Salams as one of the dominant za‘ims of Beirut.

Mutasarrifiyyah of Mount Lebanon

In Mount Lebanon, news of the reinstatement of the constitution was received with certain reservations, as society became split into two over whether or not the mountain should take part in the Ottoman parliament. The Maronite clerical circles opposed such a move, whereas the Druze,
the Greek Orthodox, and other minority sects were in favor of it. On the 20th of August the British Consul reported that the prospect of sending representatives to the new parliament grew stronger after the Maronite anti-clerical or liberal party joined the pro-parliamentary group. The Consul further reported that this group belonged to the adverse clerical party but was showing an inclination to associate itself with the liberals, many of whom were freemasons. The centrality of the Maronite Patriarchate is a key factor in understanding the impact of the revolution on Mount Lebanon. This indicates that the constitution not only created tension between the different sects on the Mountain, it also opened a new door for the anti-clerical Maronite movement, or, as Dennis Walker calls them, the post-Christian lumpen-bourgeois element, to attempt to rid itself of its own \textit{ancien régime} by including Lebanon in the Ottoman Parliament. By doing so, they would avert the authority of the Maronite Patriarch Ilyäs Butrus al-Ḫuwayyīk (1843-1931; Patriarch from 1899), who was not excited about the constitution. It is important to mention here that Patriarch al-Ḫuwayyīk shared a common caution with Abdūlhamid, and his group therefore opposed any social or political change. The Hamidian regime, which protected the autonomous status of Mount Lebanon, was crucial in guaranteeing the authority of Patriarch al-Ḫuwayyīk in the Mountain. Patriarch al-Ḫuwayyīk and his Church also secured their authority through the intercession of two key Maronite figures in the Palace of Abdūlhamid, Najīb and Salīm Malḥama. Furthermore, al-Ḫuwayyīk and Abdūlhamid had shared enemies: radical secularizing elements, parliamentarism, decentralization, and linguistic proto-nationalism. For Abdūlhamid and for Patriarch al-Ḫuwayyīk, the Young Turks and the post-Christian bourgeoisie Maronites both threatened the stability of the existing order. With the Young Turk revolution and the downfall of the Malḥama brothers, the anti-clerical movement on

\textsuperscript{116} British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 1 August 1908, FO195/2277.

\textsuperscript{117} British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 20th August 1908, FO195/2277.


the Mountain grew stronger, and their activities increased in order to “curtail the baneful influence of the Maronite Clergy and to introduce greatly needed administrative reforms.”

After much debate in political circles, the administrative council of the Mountain voted against representing Mount Lebanon in the Ottoman parliament. In a lengthy book entitled *Lubnān wa al-Dustūr al-ʿUthmānī* (Lebanon and the Ottoman Constitution), published in 1909, Būlus Mus’ād argued in depth, from both a legal and historical perspective, that Lebanon should not participate in the Ottoman parliament and should not give up its privileges. He heavily criticized the “radical liberals,” and their arguments. In the book’s conclusion, Mus’ād argued that the people of the mountain were faced with two choices with no middle ground possible between them. Either they give up all their rights and join the Ottoman Empire, or they preserve their independence “as the stingy man preserves his dinar,” and support their regime in every possible way. This was indeed a life-or-death issue for Mus’ād, “especially when we are in one of the gravest turning point (munʿataf min al-tārīkh) that endangers our national life and the slightest error that we commit will be recorded [in history] as disgrace and shame and move us backwards many years.”

In geographic areas in which intricate politics were characterized by the politics of notables, the revolution threatened to disrupt this finely-tuned balance and transfer power from the notables to the newly emerging actors on the scene, primarily represented by the CUP. It is evident, however, that these same new actors lacked the crucial tool that the notables enjoyed in the provinces, i.e., their traditional roles in their own indigenous societies and religion. To break this tradition, historicity, and religious sentiment was a difficult task. Ruth Roded has rightly argued that the Young Turk revolution did not cause any dramatic change in the power of the Syrian notables and that they maintained their dominance throughout

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120 British Consulate General, Beirut, to Sir. G. Lowther, Constantinople, 9th September 1908 FO195/2277.
121 The rejection first began in the second half of September in the Maronite dominated municipality of Dayr al-Qamar.
Ottoman posts and connections. They did so by adapting to the changing circumstances and connecting to the Ottoman establishment. In the case of the mutasarrifiyyah of Lebanon, the situation was more complex than in Damascus, Latakia, Nablus, or Beirut. For more than half a decade the Règlement organique created what Akarlı called “the long lasting peace.” Despite the fact that after the events of 1861 there was a long period of peace, some elements of Lebanese society remained discontented. The Young Turk revolution provided the ultimate chance for these elements to change the balance of power on the Mountain. The Administrative Council of the mutasarrifiyyah, which was more important than the administrative council in the other regions, became a battle zone between the notable families of the mountain, the Maronite church, and the laity.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion centered on the development of a multiplicity of public spheres among the Armenians, the Jews, and the Arabs of the Empire after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. This multiplicity of public sphere(s) became the main medium through which these ethnic groups internalized the Young Turk revolution. In the case of the Armenians and the Jews, it resulted in the occurrence of micro-revolutions, whereas in the Arab case, it led to the erosion of social and political stability. In addition, this article has contended that post-revolutionary ethnic politics in the Ottoman Empire should not be viewed solely through the prism of political parties, but also through ecclesiastical politics, a key factor in defining inter- and intra-ethnic politics. Interestingly, despite the fact that the revolution aimed at creating the modern secular Ottoman citizen whose loyalty would be to the state, it nevertheless strengthened the ethno-religious political centers of the ethnic groups. It did so by creating a multiplicity of interconnected public spheres over which fierce competition began among the different actors in these ethnic groups for control of power positions.

In the Jewish case, the center of power remained in the Hahambashlik. The election of Haim Nahum as the Chief Rabbi strengthened the Hamam-

124 Ruth Roded “Social Patterns Among the Urban Elite of Syria During the Late Ottoman Period, 1876-1918,” Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political and Economic Transformation, ed. David Kushner (Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, Jerusalem and E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1986), p. 158.
125 Ibid., p. 161.
bashi’s role as the ethno-religious representative of Sephardic Jewry, but this became increasingly difficult in a period during which new actors entered the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire. The Zionists, who aimed at winning over the public opinion of the Sephardic Jewry of the Empire for their activities, were considered an undesirable element in the Empire by the Chief Rabbinate and by many other prominent Sephardic figures. This was because the Sephardic Jews feared that the Zionist goal of creating a Jewish state in Palestine could arouse the Turkish and Arab elements of the Empire. However, the Chief Rabbinate’s predisposition against the Zionists was also the result of the ongoing competition between Jewish institutions (Zionists vs. Alliance Israélite Universelle).

In the Armenian case, the center of the power shifted smoothly from the Patriarchate to the Armenian National Assembly, which became the representative of the Armenian ethnic group in the Empire. Unlike the Jewish case, the ANA included representatives of most of the Armenian political currents. And in the post-Adana period it became a battleground between the different Armenian political groups. The main issue that preoccupied the Armenian public sphere in the post-revolutionary period was the condition of the Eastern Provinces, an issue that was “resolved” by the destruction of the Armenian communities of the Eastern Provinces during the Armenian Genocide of World War I. The revolution also paved the way for the strengthening of Armenian political groups in the Empire, most prominently the Dashnaks, who, by propagating their “grandiose role” in the great revolution, tried to strengthen their status in the Armenian circles. They used their close ties to the CUP to claim to represent the Armenian ethnic group in the Empire.

In the case of the Arab provinces, the revolution caused some erosion in political and social stability by challenging the politics of notables. While in some areas it succeeded in changing the dynamics of power by creating new political actors, such as the za’ims of Beirut, in other areas such as Damascus it was unsuccessful, as local notables and the ulema remained the most influential elements of society.

In all three cases, the revolution resulted in the re-organization of the local administrations. In the Armenian and the Jewish cases, centralization of the administration became the key factor in the policy of the ethno-religious centers, and it is not surprising that in both cases the question of Jerusalem was given high priority. In the case of the Arab provinces this reorganization, which was initiated by the local CUP branches, was met with fierce resistance by the people of the previous order.