

CONTESTED NATIONALISMS: TURKISH NATIONALIST PROPAGANDA IN
THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the Turkish nationalist propaganda carried out in the Sanjak of Alexandretta during the process of annexation to demonstrate that the Sanjak provides a special case for the study of Republican Turkish nationalism by showing its highly pragmatic and speculative political/ideological discourse in the 1930s. The ways with which the Sanjak region was integrated into the newly defined “Turkish nation” are examined by utilizing archival documents, secondary sources as well as oral history interviews. The special case of the migration of the conservative Sunni Turks to Damascus and the nationalist propaganda towards the Alawite population of the region are brought forward as examples for the pragmatically inclusive nature of Kemalist nationalism.

Key Words: Sanjak of Alexandretta, Hatay, Turkish Nationalism, Kemalist Reforms, Annexation of Hatay, Nationalist Propaganda

ÖZET

MİLLİYETÇİLİKLERİN REKABETİ: İSKENDERUN SANCAĞI'NDA TÜRK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ PROPAGANDASI

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Bu tez, İskenderun Sancağında ilhak sürecinde yürütülen Türk milliyetçilik propagandasını inceleyerek 1930'larda Sancak'ta kullanılan faydacı ve spekülatif Türk milliyetçiliği politik diskurunun Sancak konusunu Türk milliyetçiliği çalışmaları kapsamında özel bir vaka haline getirdiğini gözler önüne sermeyi amaçlar. Sancak bölgesinin yeni tanımlanan "Türk milleti"ne nasıl entegre edildiği arşiv materyalleri, ikincil kaynaklar ve sözlü tarih görüşmeleri kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Muhafazakâr Sünni Türklerin, Kemalist reformların bölgede uygulanmasına bir tepki olarak, Hatay'dan Şam'a göç etmesi ve bölgede yaşayan Alevilere yönelik uygulanan milliyetçilik propagandası Kemalist milliyetçiliğin faydacı/içermeci yapısına örnek olarak verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İskenderun Sancağı, Hatay, Türk Milliyetçiliği, Kemalist Reformlar, Hatay'ın İlhakı, Milliyetçi Propaganda

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
ÖZET	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 A Brief History	12
1.2 Sources and Methodology	16
1.4 Literature Survey	25
1.5 Structure	29
CHAPTER 2: THE TRANSITION FROM THE BILAD AL-SHAM TO THE PROVINCE OF HATAY	32
2.1 Ottoman Reign (1517-1918)	34
2.2 The Region in the Post World War I Era	42
2.3 The Emergence of the Sanjak as an International Issue	50
2.4 Conclusion	65
CHAPTER 3: CLASH OF TWO NATIONALISMS: ARAB AND TURKISH NATIONALISMS IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA	67
3.1 Theoretical Approaches to Nationalism	69
3.2 Origins of Turkish Nationalism	73
3.2.1 Ottomanism	77
3.2.2 Turanism	78
3.2.3 Turkish Nationalism-Turkism	80
3.2.4 Kemalist Nationalism	83
3.2.4.1 Kemalist Nationalism and Ethnicity	86
3.3 Origins of Arab Nationalism	89
3.4 Emergence and Evolvment of Arab Nationalism in Syria	93
3.4.1 An Intellectual and an Educator: Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883)	94
3.4.2 Intellectual Life in Syria	100
3.4.2.1 Salafis and Arabists	101
3.4.2.2 Syria and the World War I	106
3.4.2.3 Establishment of the Syrian Kingdom	108

3.5 Arab Nationalism in the Sanjak: Zaki Al-Arsuzi and his Thought.....	109
3.5.1 Ambiguous Situation of the Sanjak and Al-Arsuzi's Reaction.....	110
3.6 Conclusion	115
CHAPTER 4: TURKISH NATIONALIST PROPAGANDA IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA.....	118
6.1 Propaganda Strategies to Convince the Sanjak People.....	121
6.1.1 The Print Media.....	122
6.1.1.1 Yenigün	123
6.1.1.2 Print Media in the Republic	132
6.1.2 Propaganda by Other Means	134
6.1.2.1 Selamet-i Belde Cemiyeti	135
6.1.2.2 Gençspor Kulübü	136
6.1.2.3 Bekir Efendi Kütüphanesi	137
6.2 Kemalist Reforms in the Sanjak.....	138
6.2.1 The New Alphabet	139
6.2.2 Reactions to the New Alphabet.....	142
6.2.3 Hat Reform.....	143
6.2.4 Reactions to the Hat Reform	144
6.3 Ideology, Historiography and Language: the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory	151
6.3.1 Institutionalization of Turkish Historiography.....	154
6.3.2 Türk Tarih Tezi [Turkish History Thesis].....	155
6.3.3 Reform in the Language.....	162
6.3.4 Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory in the Sanjak.....	165
6.3.4.1 "Alawites are Turks and it is Unnecessary to Claim the Opposite"	168
6.3.4.2 Seeking Historical Connections in Geography	171
6.3.4.3 Tying the Sanjak Region to Hittite History.....	173
6.4 Conclusion	177
CHAPTER 5: DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA	179
5.1 The Notables	183
5.1.1 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Notables	187
5.1.2 Reactions of the Notables to the Reforms and the Turkish Nationalist Propaganda.....	188
5.2 The Alawites	195
5.2.1 Missionaries and the Alawites	198
5.2.2 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Alawites	201
5.2.3 Reactions of the Alawites.....	206
5.3 The Armenians	208
5.3.1 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Armenians.....	212

5.3.1 Reactions of the Armenians	213
5.4 Conservative Sunni Turks	216
5.4.1 150likler	217
5.4.2 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Conservative Sunni Turks.....	225
5.4.3 Reactions of the Conservative Sunni Turks	226
5.5 Registrations for the Elections	229
5.6 Becoming Part of the Turkish Republic.....	235
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	239
BIBLIOGRAPHY	247
APPENDICES	265
APPENDIX A	265
APPENDIX B	273
APPENDIX C	275
APPENDIX D	277
APPENDIX E.....	278
APPENDIX F	279
APPENDIX G	282
APPENDIX H	284
APPENDIX I.....	290
APPENDIX J.....	292

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the Turkish nationalist propaganda carried out in the Sanjak of Alexandretta during the process of annexation. This study demonstrates that the Sanjak provides a special case for the study of Republican Turkish nationalism by showing its highly pragmatic and speculative political/ideological discourse in the 1930s. The ways with which the Sanjak region was included in and integrated, or more correctly theoretically/discoursively dissolved into the newly constructed “Turkish nation” via propaganda efforts through the rewriting of the history of the region to prove its historical ties with Turkey are analyzed. Turkish nationalist propaganda also identified Alawites¹ of the region *Eti Türkü* [Hittite Turks]² as well as trying to convince

¹ Alawite is the term used to define a certain group living in the Sanjak of Alexandretta and its environs. Differently from the Alevis of Anatolia, this community speaks Arabic and has a different religious belief. They are historically known as Nusayris, a name that they do not prefer to be called. Detailed information about this community can be found in the last chapter of this study.

² Although it would be more appropriate to translate *Eti Türkü* as Hattian Turks, since Hatti civilization appeared earlier than the Hittites, but Turkish History Thesis defined Hatti and Hittite civilizations together and called them all the ancestors of the Turkish nation. Furthermore, earlier studies on the region also translated Eti as Hittite. See Seda Altuğ, “Between Colonial and National Domiations: Antioch under

them about the religious freedom and economic prosperity that they will experience as part of the Turkish nation, and, lastly, emphasized the secular and modern character of the new nation over any ethnic or religious identity, to win over several segments of society.

In order to explain the above-mentioned characteristics of Kemalist nationalism³ as experienced in the Sanjak of Alexandretta, the roots of nation and nationalism should briefly be highlighted. There are two main approaches in explaining the formation of the nations: political and cultural. The political approach states that nations are political unities (and/or ideological construction), while the cultural approach stresses the role of sentiments and feelings within a nation that has unique cultural characteristics. These two approaches are borne out of the question of the origin of the nation. Among many scholars working on the origins of the nation, Ernest Gellner accepts the nation as a political artifact. For him, it is always nationalism that creates the nation.⁴ On the other hand, Anthony Smith emphasizes culture and ethnicity as foundations of modern nations. In order to trace these foundations, he underlines cultural forms of sentiments, attitudes and perceptions, as these are expressed and codified in myths, memories, values and symbols.⁵ Benedict Anderson⁶ provides meaningful analytical frameworks

French Mandate, 1920-1939” (MA Thesis. Boğaziçi University, 2002) and Sıtkıye Matkap, “Reconsidering The Annexation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta Through Local Narratives.” (MA Thesis. Middle East Technical University, 2009) for examples of this usage.

³ Hereafter “Kemalist nationalism” is used interchangeably with “Turkish Nationalism” in this thesis for the sake of fluency.

⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 7.

⁵ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 15.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1984).

that analyze political and cultural processes simultaneously by focusing on the constructed nature of nationalism as a political process supported by cultural and technological developments to enable imagination of a political community.

While the political and cultural classification of approaches to nationalism work well with European cases, explaining the path of the Turkish nation's formation would not convincingly conform to these categories. According to Ayhan Akman,⁷ countries that were non-Western but at the same time not subject to direct colonial rule such as China and Turkey had a different experience of nation formation. Political and social challenges shaped the Turkish nation by including some groups, excluding others and creating new visions of political communities.⁸ Taking Turkish nationalism into account within its own terms requires examining the modernization process from the late Ottoman Empire to the early Turkish Republic. When the Empire was challenged by nationalism, Ottomanism was among the ideas proposed to unite disparate subjects of the Empire together and a series of reforms were undertaken to modernize the social and political structures.⁹ Şerif Mardin also approaches Turkish nationalism through the process of the efforts of modernization and states that progress was at the center of Young Turks' ideas and modernizing the nation was their main concern.¹⁰

⁷ Ayhan Akman, "Modernist Nationalism: Statism and National Identity in Turkey," *Nationalities Papers* 32, 1(March, 2004): 32.

⁸ Fatma Müge Göçek, "Introduction: Narrative, gender and Cultural Representation in the Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East," in *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, Fatma Müge Göçek ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 2.

⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 443.

¹⁰ Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 16.

Approaches to Turkish nationalism seem to concentrate around two main views. The first group accepts that the history of Turkish nation formation begins in the late seventeenth century Ottoman Empire and continues until the establishment of Turkish Republic without any ruptures and complexities. Lewis¹¹ and Lerner,¹² as the pioneers of this idea, suggest that the Ottoman modernization efforts were the first steps that led to Turkish nation formation.

On the other hand, there are historians identifying the passage to Turkish ethnic nationalism as a different process. Hanioglu,¹³ Karpas,¹⁴ Shaw,¹⁵ and Berkes¹⁶ assert that the idea of Ottomanism was abandoned in favor of Turkish nationalism and was the beginning of a new process. Leaving aside Ottomanism meant that the idea of saving the Empire with all of its subjects was no longer possible. The traumatic results of the Balkan Wars affected the ruling elite so much that they lost their belief in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious Empire and turned to the Turks within the Empire.¹⁷

¹¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1961).

¹² Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958), 77.

¹³ Şükrü Hanioglu, "Turkish Nationalism and the Young Turks 1889-1908," in *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Kemal Karpas, "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 6, 3(1975): 276-299.

¹⁵ Shaw, Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 301.

¹⁶ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1999), 464.

¹⁷ Şerif Mardin, "The Ottoman Empire," in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building: the Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, ed. Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen (Westview Press, 1997), 117.

As one of the leading scholars of Turkish Republican history, Kemal Karpat argues that, common religion was the main instrument in the last decades of the Ottoman rule to nationalize the mixed population living on the Turkish Republic's lands.¹⁸ On the other hand, Stanford Shaw, the author of a comprehensive book on the history of the Ottoman Empire, argues that during the World War I, Turkish nationalism emerged as an ethnic and secular nationalism.¹⁹ Taking the claim about Turkish nationalism being ethnic and religious a step further, recent studies argued that during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Turkish nationalism was even racist. The monolingual "Turkish only" education system and campaigns such as "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" were suggested as proofs of this claim.²⁰

In this study, the nature of Turkish nationalism is explained through the example of the Sanjak of Alexandretta especially in the late 1930s. Despite the fact that there are various studies concerning the nature of Turkish nationalism in the aforementioned era, the kind of propaganda utilized in the Sanjak has not been studied to reveal the flexible pragmatism of the nationalist discourse during the early republican period.

By studying the Sanjak as a case in point, this study shows that Turkish nationalist propaganda targeted every existing ethnic and religious group within the region. Armenians, Alawites, Christian and Muslim Arabs were all accepted as part of the larger unity under both the a-historically large concept of the "Turk" through

¹⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, "Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, (1972), 243-281.

¹⁹ Shaw and Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire*, 340.

²⁰ Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 16 and Leyla Neyzi, "Fragmented in Space: The Oral History Narrative of an Arab Christian from Antioch, Turkey," *Global Networks* 4, 3(2004), 285-297.

common historical ties reaching as far back as the Hittites and in the Turkish Republic in order to get their support in the registrations for the Sanjak elections that will determine the population of each community. The Republic's modern and secular characteristics were emphasized in addition to common history and ethnic ties in order to form a national identity based on opposition to everything related to the Ottoman Empire.

"Turkishness" was identified as an abstract concept in the Sanjak case and different communities were called to become part of the Turkish nation as elements, sharing a common history and thus belonging to the Turkish ethnic identity despite speaking different languages and practicing various religions. Contrary to what could have been expected, Republican nationalist propaganda aimed to include the Alawites of the region within the Turkish nation while the Sunni Turks of more conservative regions of the Sanjak were considered quite pragmatically to be ignorable by the republican nationalists when the latter chose to leave the Sanjak region.

The ethnically mixed structure of the population in the Sanjak where non-Turks and non-Muslims made up a significant proportion of the population triggered the all-inclusive ethnicist propaganda of Kemalist nationalism to win as many people as possible on the way to the registrations for the Sanjak elections. As part of the national identity formation process in the Sanjak, religion and language were of secondary importance while all residents of Anatolia were declared to be of Turkish ethnicity sharing a common history. In addition to common ethnic and historical backgrounds, all those choosing to be part of the Turkish nation were included by reshaping their

“national” identity according to the newly defined “Turkish” identity through the ethno-historically defined people of Hittites.

The Turkish History Thesis, which took the idea that “all the autochthonous residents of Anatolia are Turks” as its main argument, was among the propaganda tools; Sanjak history was rewritten in the light of this thesis to claim that the peoples of this region shared an ethnically defined common history as “Turks” beginning as early as the Hittite era. Ottoman past was totally ignored by the proponents of this idea and Ottoman rule was blamed as the main (if not the sole) cause for the “wrong” categorization of the peoples of the Sanjak.

The existence of religious diversity in the Sanjak region caused Kemalist nationalist propaganda to highlight the secular and modern character of the new nation especially towards the Alawites of the region. One of the most important and symbolic example for the emphasis on the secular character of the nation was the change of the alphabet. The Arabic alphabet was one of the main elements connecting the Turkish nation to the rest of the Muslim world. The adoption of the Latin alphabet was the expression of Kemalist rule’s orientation towards the West. In addition, hat reform served a similar purpose. European style headgear and the European alphabet were the practical as well as symbolic means of cutting the new nation’s ties with everything that was not modern and not secular.

Nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak targeted every ethnic and religious group and was carried out carefully. Policies were developed for the Sanjak, in communication with Turkish Republic, to convince the population to become part of the new nation. One of the most important policies was the usage of print media both in the Sanjak and

in the Turkish Republic. Print media was used to a great extent to influence the diverse population of the Sanjak as well as the Turkish public in Turkey. Articles concerning the Turkish character of the region and the divisive policies of the French and the Syrian rulers filled the pages of the newspapers. Furthermore, public places such as youth clubs and libraries were used for the same purpose. The youth was organized under these public places to act for the Turkish cause.

To sum up, it is possible to analyze Turkish nationalist propaganda at two levels; the first level being rigidly ethnicist in terms of defining every element living in the Sanjak region as “Turks”, even the Armenians. At a secondary level, Republican nationalist propaganda presented a flexible and inclusive nature the in the Sanjak during the annexation process to quite pragmatically include as many people as possible within the new nation. In other words, it can evidently be stated that the urgent need to materialize such a goal in the international conjuncture of the 1930s by providing or producing a “historical” justification to such a political claim appears to have led the ideologically motivated and the politically determined policy makers and ideologues of that period to an ethnicist position as they claimed everyone in the Sanjak to be Turkish in the first place. To elaborate it further, this was a peculiar case of imposing constructed notion of a “nation” based on the pre-determined ethnic identity, i.e. the “Turk”. The emphasis on the Turkishness here was essentially different from a much-utilized later rhetoric in Turkey on the “non-ethnic character of the ‘Turk’” as defined in the Turkish Constitutions. Also, the reference to a “common ethnic origin as *Eti Türkü*” seems to be one of the constituent elements of the Turkish nation formation process throughout the Republican era in Anatolia and the Sanjak.

Kemalist nationalists of the 1930s used, in the Sanjak, a very pragmatically defined type of ethnic identity and again quite arbitrarily delineated common history from among common ethnicity, common language, common religion and common history that can be accepted among the universal elements of “nation building.” Common religion and common language were ignored and even degraded in this special case of Republican Turkish nationalism to convince the non-Turkish, non-Sunni population of the Sanjak to accept to be part of the new nation while ignoring the migration of the conservative Sunni Turks from the Sanjak to Damascus.

1.1 A Brief History

Syria and Antakya were incorporated to the Ottoman rule during Selim I's campaign to Egypt which lasted from 1515 to 1516. These cities were transferred into a sanjak under the Province of Aleppo. The region stayed under Ottoman control during the uninterrupted Ottoman rule from 1515 till its occupation by the Allied forces in 1918.²¹

At the end of the World War I, Great Britain and France put into effect the secret treaty of Sykes-Picot in 1916 according to which the Ottoman lands were supposed to be shared between the two countries. The Sanjak was left to France as part of Syria. When the French armies--mainly consisting of Armenian soldiers--arrived in the border cities of Dörtyol and Hassa, *çetes*²² resisted the occupation and a guerilla war began. French

²¹ Adem Kara, *19. Yüzyılda bir Osmanlı Şehri Antakya* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2005), 18.

²² Name given to the guerilla fighters of the southern region of Anatolia and the Sanjak against the occupation.

forces were repulsed by the *çetes* of the Sanjak, France requested an armistice, and the Franklin Bouillon Agreement/Ankara Agreement was signed between the Ankara government and France on October 20, 1921.²³ This agreement ended the war with France in the southern part of Anatolia and the Sanjak was thus to be governed by an autonomous regime within the French Mandated State of Syria under the guardianship of both France and Turkey.²⁴

The Sanjak of Alexandretta was established in 1918 by the French Mandate as an autonomous administration. The dispute over the status of the Sanjak began by the signing of the Franco-Syrian Treaty of Alliance on September 9, 1936 guaranteeing the independence of Syria within 3 years with Sanjak as part of this country. Turkish government officially demanded from France to give independence to the Sanjak, just like Syria, after the abolition of the mandate regime.²⁵ When France rejected the request for independence, the Sanjak issue was brought to the League of Nations to be settled internationally. The Sanjak was first declared as a “distinct entity” within the Syrian lands and a new Statute and Fundamental Law was prepared for it by the League of Nations.

As a reaction to the decision of the French government Atatürk decided in 1936, as part of a planned campaign, that the Sanjak would, from then on, be referred to as

²³ İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Anlaşmaları, 1920-1945* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1983), 506.

²⁴ League of Nations, *Treaty Series No. 1285*, Vol 54, 1926-1927, 177-193. See Chapter 2 for detailed explanation of the process leading to the establishment of the mandate rule.

²⁵ Prime Ministry Republican Archives (BCA), 030.10/224.510.12

“Hatay” with reference to its Turkish background.²⁶ It was after 1936 that propaganda process began in Turkey and the Sanjak.

After the decision of the League of Nations Commission, in 1937, to register the population of the Sanjak under the pre-set categories²⁷ in order to decide how many seats would be given to each community in the new parliament,²⁸ Turkish Republic as well as the Syrian Arabs tried to convince Alawites²⁹ to be registered on their side. During the process, Republican ideology was creating new visions of national community by resourcefully using remote historical references. The Turkish Republic declared Alawites in the region as *Eti Türkleri* who had lost their original identity at the academic/ideological level. At the practical level, Turkish national identity was constructed along political rather than ethno-religious lines in the Sanjak and all those accepting to be part of the modernist/westernized and secular republican ideology were counted to be the members of the republican Turkish nation. Although Alawites were declared as *Eti Türkü* in the printed press both in Turkey and in the Sanjak, the Turkish nationalists approached them at the local level from the point of economic welfare and religious freedom.

²⁶ Nuri Aydın, *Hatay Meclisinin Son Toplantısında Söylenen Nutuklar*, (Antakya: Yenigün Basımevi, 1939), 9. and *Cumhuriyet*, December 28-29, 1936.

²⁷ These categories were defined as: Turks, Alawites, Arabs, Armenians, Greek Orthodox, Kurds and Others.

²⁸ Sarah Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 171.

²⁹ Alawites were among the most populous groups of the Sanjak. French documents give the number of the Alawites as 62,026 in 1936. As of the same year, the total population of the Sanjak is recorded as 219,079. MAE, CP 567, Population Statistics, 1936.

The changing political conjuncture in Europe influenced France's attitude concerning the Sanjak and a new statute and constitution was prepared.³⁰ After the decision of France and Turkey in June 26, 1938 to control the elections together as a joint requirement of the statute and the constitution, Turkish soldiers came to the Sanjak in July 5, 1938.³¹

The elections took place on August 1, 1938 and the number of representatives from each community was as follows: 22 Turks, 9 Alawites, 5 Armenians, 2 Sunni Arabs, and 2 Greek Orthodox.³² After its establishment, the Sanjak Parliament changed the country's name as the "The State of Hatay" and with Turkish and Arabic as the official languages. The Turkish national anthem was also chosen as Hatay's national anthem. In June 23, 1939, the Treaty of Hatay was signed between Turkey and France, ceding the Sanjak to Turkey.³³ With this treaty, French forces were to leave the Sanjak within one month. In the meantime, Hatay Parliament unanimously accepted to join Turkey.³⁴

This study examines the historical flow of events in the Sanjak by focusing on the period beginning with the signing of Franco-Syrian Treaty in 1936 and ending with the annexation of Hatay in order to reveal the effects of the pragmatically ethnicist

³⁰ P Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 513-514.

³¹ Serhan Ada, *Türk-Fransız İlişkilerinde Hatay Sorunu, 1918-1939* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005), 171.

³² Avedis K. Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): A Study in Franco-Turco- Syrian Relations" (PhD Diss. University of Michigan, 1956), 181.

³³ Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta A Study in Turkish-French-Syrian Relations* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2001), 355-359. (This book is the revised version of Güçlü's PhD dissertation presented at University of Helsinki in 1994)

³⁴ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Anlaşmaları*, 541-542.

nationalist propaganda on the various communities by utilizing census information and registration results.

1.2 Sources and Methodology

Historical sources concerning the Sanjak can be gathered through the national archives of several countries because the question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta had become an international issue after Turkish Republic brought it to the League of Nations in 1937. For a complete study of the process of annexation, Turkish national archives, Syrian national archives, French national archives, and the archives of the League of Nations are the main sources. I have examined Turkish and French national archives as well as the archives of the League of Nations. Unfortunately, conducting research in the Syrian national archives and national library in Damascus was not possible for this study due to the civil war in Syria started in 2011. For this reason, neither Syrian official documents nor Syrian newspapers of the late 1930s were used in this thesis. In addition to these archives, I have examined online documents of British and American archives particularly the period prior to the official declaration of the French Mandate Regime in the region. Although not all of the documents were available online, the ones I had accessed to were beneficial to get an idea about the British and American view of the issue.

In this study, the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and Turkish Republican Archives in Ankara were used as tools that shed light on the Turkish policies and strategies concerning the Sanjak issue. Research in the Ottoman Archives proved

especially important in understanding the social structure of the region. Archival material concerning the history of the Alawites and the other ethnic and religious groups offered an opportunity to better grasp the inter community relations in the region. Treaties signed between France and Turkish Republic are kept in these archives, but more importantly, correspondence between the Turkish representatives in Aleppo and Damascus presented the issues at stake for the Republic concerning the Sanjak. On the other hand, lack of access to the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey limited the amount of information gathered through the diplomatic correspondence. Another important source of information about the Turkish political approach to the Sanjak issue are the Minutes of the Turkish National Assembly, which I was able to reach online through the National Assembly's website. The proceedings of the Assembly made it possible for me to grasp the political atmosphere during the meetings of the Parliament to discuss the issues relevant to the Sanjak of Alexandretta in addition to providing information about the policies developed by the Turkish Republic.

The archives of the French Mandate High Commission were the most important sources on the French Mandate in Syria. These archives are held in the Centre d'Archives Diplomatiques in Nantes as part of the archives of the Ministère des Affaires étrangères. These archives are incomplete because the Commissioner's reports on political affairs especially in 1930s were intentionally destroyed by the Vichy High Commissioner, Dentz, when the Free French and the British forces approached France

in 1941. Several other documents were lost during the French withdrawal at the end of the mandate.³⁵

I have done research in the French and Turkish national archives, especially the intelligence reports, for information concerning the migration of the conservative Sunni Turkish population of the Sanjak and their relations with Turkey as well as France and Syria. There was no reference to these emigrating groups in the Turkish documents most probably due to their opposition to the new regime and its reforms. For this reason, despite the limited number of references to the relevant group, French archives proved to be more beneficial in terms of obtaining information about those opposing the Kemalist nationalism in the Sanjak. Moreover, archival material had been useful in understanding the French policy concerning the Sanjak issue. High Commissioner reports also provided data about the change in the French approach to the Turkish requests and complaints about the Sanjak in line with the changing political conjuncture in Europe.

Online British and American archival documents concerning the Sanjak issue were also examined for additional information regarding the social life during the mandate regime, Kemalist nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak, and the conservative Sunni Turkish population of the region who migrated to Damascus. As was the case with the Turkish archival documents, no references exist to these people in the correspondences between the French and the British representatives in the region and their ministries.

³⁵ Benjamin Thomas White, *Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2012), 5.

Another group of sources, as important as the national archives, is the newspapers published in 1920s and 1930s. For this study, both Arabic and Turkish newspapers were a significant source of information due to the amount of data they provide about the nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak and in Turkey. The most important newspapers were the local newspaper *Yenigün* in the Sanjak and the national newspapers *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan*, and *Ulus* in the Turkish Republic. I was able to reach the collections of these national newspapers in the archives of the National Library and Turkish Historical Society Library in Ankara. Access to the local newspaper *Yenigün* was not as easy, however. There was no collection of this local newspaper in the National Library and as a result of a fire in the 1960s; the Antakya Library did not have a complete collection. I was however able to access the issues that were available in the personal archives of local historians.

Memoirs of the important political actors of the Sanjak offered an insight to the annexation process. Tayfur Sökmen, the leading supporter of the Kemalist nationalism in the Sanjak and the president of the Hatay State, published his memoirs under the title “Struggles to Save Hatay” [*Hatay’ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*].³⁶ His work mainly explains the road to the annexation from a Kemalist nationalist perspective. A similar approach was used by Abdurrahman Melek, one of the significant members of the urban notables in the Sanjak and the prime minister of the Hatay State, in his memoirs “Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu.”³⁷ Another prominent figure among the Kemalist nationalists of the Sanjak and an important journalist, Selim Çelenk’s memoirs provided

³⁶ Tayfur Sökmen, *Hatay’ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar* (Istanbul: Yenigün Yayıncılık, 1999).

³⁷ Abdurrahman Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu* (Istanbul: Yenigün Yayıncılık, 1999).

detailed information about the cadres gathering around the local newspaper *Yenigün*. The role this newspaper played in the Sanjak for the Turkish cause could clearly be understood through Çelenk's memoirs.

In addition to primary sources, secondary sources on the history of the Sanjak were utilized to a great extent for this study, most of which identify the annexation of the Sanjak purely as a political process and give detailed information about the issue at the state level.³⁸ The archives of France and Turkey were thoroughly used by most of these authors. Sarah Shields' work³⁹ also provides information about the same period by including the perspective of the League of Nations. Her book was of great importance for this study, because it includes information about the social structure of the region as well as the flow of political events. More recent studies include PhD dissertations and master theses prepared at different universities in and out of Turkey. Other relevant works are Fulya Doğruel's book⁴⁰ and Seda Altuğ's thesis.⁴¹ These theses also contain information about the social life in the Sanjak during the annexation period and use oral

³⁸ See Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta-A Study in Turkish-French-Syrian Relations* (Ankara, Türk Tarih kurumu Basımevi, 2001), Serhan Ada, *Türk Fransız İlişkilerinde Hatay Sorunu, 1918-1939* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005) (This book is the revised version of his PhD dissertation presented at Ankara University in 2004), Adil Dağıstan and Adnan Sofuoğlu, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay: Atatürk'ün Dış Politika Zaferi* (Ankara, Phoenix Yayınevi, 2008), Hamit Pehlivanlı, Yusuf Sarınoy and Hüsamettin Yıldırım, *Türk Dış Politikasında Hatay, 1918- 1939* (Ankara, Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001) and Mehmet Tekin, *Hatay Tarihi* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2000).

³⁹ Sarah Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Fulya Doğruel, *İnsaniyetleri Benzer İnsaniyetleri Benzer: Hatay'da Çoketnili Ortak Yaşam Kültürü* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005). (This book is the revised version of her master thesis presented at Middle East Technical University in 2002).

⁴¹ Seda Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National Domiations: Antioch under French Mandate, 1920-1939" (MA Thesis. Boğaziçi University, 2002).

history interviews for this purpose.⁴² These theses were also used to a great extent in this study.

Studying the emergence of nationalism in the region requires consultation of another group of primary and secondary sources. The works of late Ottoman intellectuals such as Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp serve to form the basis of the part on Ottomanism and early Turkish nationalist ideology. Their use of the concepts *vatan*, *medeniyet*, and *hars* were examined in order to understand the concepts upon which the Turkish nationalism was built. Moreover, ideas presented in the Turkish History Congresses comprise a significant part of the nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak. Turkish History Thesis was first shaped in the first two of these congresses; therefore, the Turkish History Congress proceedings provided valuable information about the molding of the Kemalist nationalist ideology in this study. Secondary sources on the emergence of Turkish nationalist ideology written by important historians including Şerif Mardin, Kemal Karpat, Şükrü Hanioglu, and Stanford Shaw were consulted to better understand the changes in this ideology.

The dearth of information about the migration of conservative Sunni Muslims from the Sanjak to Damascus and the effects of Kemalist nationalist propaganda on various communities have resulted in the extensive use of oral history in the relevant part of this thesis. Oral history interviews were conducted with the people from the more conservative regions of the Sanjak to understand their reasons for emigration. Furthermore, other interviews were conducted with individuals from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. In addition to the interviews I have conducted, Sarah Shields

⁴² A detailed discussion of relevant sources is given under “Literature Survey”

kindly allowed me to use the collection of oral history interviews recorded by Süha Ünsal for her comprehensive study. Although these interviewees were not asked about the Sunni Turkish migration from the Sanjak, their explanations helped me to better understand the nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak and the reactions of different groups.

Primary and secondary sources are available when the political life in the Sanjak is concerned and they were both utilized to a great extent in this study. On the other hand, the social life in the Sanjak constitutes a greater part of this work and as an important element of the social structure in the region, the unique case of the conservative Sunni Turks is paid special attention to; however official documents found in the archives do not mention this group. Nor do the secondary sources prepared by using the archival material mention this group. Due to the limited number of primary and secondary sources concerning the social life in the Sanjak during the annexation process, oral records and personal interviews conducted by myself and others constitute a significant part of this thesis, particularly the parts about the emigration of the Sunni Turks and the inclusion of Alawites within the Turkish nation.

As mentioned earlier, there was no mention of the emigrating Sunni Turks from the Sanjak region to Damascus during the annexation of the Sanjak,⁴³ in the official documents of Turkey. For this reason, I have conducted oral history interviews to

⁴³ Although it is not possible to give exact numbers about the emigrating Sunni Turks due to lack of documents, through the interviews conducted in the relevant villages, an approximation of 7,000 people can be made. Also a local historian, Dr. Mehmet Silay, has made an approximation of 6,000-7,000 in M. Yaşar Durukan, "Sakıncalı Türkler: Ankara'ya Söyleyin Bizi Vatandaş Yapsınlar." *Aksiyon*, February 16, 2004 based on the socio-cultural researches he has conducted in Hatay and in Damascus where there is a neighbourhood with at least 50,000 population consisting of immigrants from Turkey.

understand the situation at the local level. The first group of interviews was conducted in 2008, before the break of the civil war in Syria. My interviewees were people living in the regions of Hassa and Iskenderun where the majority of the emigrants used to live. Relatives of the migrants gave useful information about the situation at the time of the migrations and the reasons behind these migrations.

In 2013, I conducted a new set of interviews, this time, going to the villages of Abacı, Ceylanlı, and the sub district of Hassa, where the conservative Sunni Turkish population lived. The emigrants concentrated mainly in these three regions. Originally, I was planning to conduct some of the interviews in Syria, with the migrants, but due to the civil war taking place in Syria since 2011, most of the Turkish migrants returned to Turkey. For this reason, I conducted oral history interviews with the migrants in Hatay mostly at their relatives' houses because the interviews were conducted in the first years of the civil war during which time the respondents possessed the hope of returning to Syria when the war would end. By the end of the third year, they seemed to have lost hope and all, during follow-up conversations, were appeared prepared to settle in Hatay.

In addition to my interviews conducted in 2008 and 2013, I had the opportunity to utilize a wide range of interviews conducted by Süha Ünsal as part of the book project of Sarah Shields. These interviews were mainly about the social life in the Sanjak from the perspective of the members of various ethnic and religious groups. They were asked about education system and political life in the Sanjak under the French mandate regime. Memories of these interviewees supported the information gathered through the archival material as well as suggesting some unheard claims and ideas, which were analyzed throughout the thesis. Interestingly, none of these interviewees mentioned

Sunni Turkish emigration to Syria. These interviews provided useful information about the nationalist propaganda and the political life in the Sanjak.

Oral history interviews that I have conducted in the current city of Hatay provided a new perspective to Kemalist nationalism, revealing that it developed a pragmatically ethnicist approach to include all the different ethnic and religious communities while disregarding, when necessary, the bearers of Sunni Islamic and Turkish ethnic identity. This necessity was to convince as many people as possible to be part of the Turkish nation in the Sanjak to prove to the international community that the majority of the population in the Sanjak was Turkish. The definition of Turkish nation at this point was both ethnic and based on willingness to adopt Kemalist reforms and change one's lifestyle accordingly. Therefore, the Kemalist nationalists felt no need to convince the migrating Sunni Turks to stay because they opposed the obligations of the new national identity. With the purpose of winning as many supporters as possible, the regime had to act in a flexible manner, approaching different groups with different arguments and stressing the modernist aspects of Kemalist nationalism to attract as great a portion of the population as possible. On the other hand, the new regime was ready to lose the support of the conservative Sunni Turks who were opposing the reforms.

Theoretical discussions in this study are inspired mainly by Max Weber⁴⁴ and Pierre Bourdieu.⁴⁵ The relevance of Weber's theories to this study stems from his concept of social status when explaining the internal cleavages of societies and the acts

⁴⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Vol 2 (California: University of California Press, 1978).

⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed., J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986).

of dominant groups to eliminate differences within a society. In the case of the Sanjak, there were various ethnic and religious communities active in the politics of the Sanjak and the cleavages among them were multi layered. As the ruling group, in Weberian terms, Kemalist nationalists envisioned a nation and decided on whom to include or exclude. In addition, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and economic capital served as supplementary notions to explain the behavior of various groups in the Sanjak.

1.4 Literature Survey

The great number of master theses and PhD dissertations shows that the issue of the Sanjak of Alexandretta attract the attention of researchers who concentrate on different aspects of the subject. Comprehensive theses written by Turkish scholars are Yücel Güçlü's *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta- A Study in Turkish-French-Syrian Relations*,⁴⁶ Seda Altuğ's *Between Colonial and National Dominations: Antioch under the French Mandate (1920-1939)*,⁴⁷ Zeynep Özgen's *Uneasy Balance of Contested Identities: Politics of Multiculturalism and the Case of Hatay*,⁴⁸ Fulya Doğruel's *İnsaniyetleri Benzer: Hatay'da Çoketnili Ortak Yaşam Kültürü* [Dynamics of Living Together and Abstaining from Conflict],⁴⁹ Bige Yavuz's *Kurtuluş Savaşı*

⁴⁶ Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta- A Study in Turkish-French-Syrian Relations* (Ankara, Türk Tarih kurumu Basımevi, 2001).

⁴⁷ Seda Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National Dominations: Antioch under French Mandate, 1920-1939" (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2002).

⁴⁸ Zeynep Özgen, "Uneasy Balance of Contested Identities: Politics of Multiculturalism and the Case of Hatay" (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2005).

⁴⁹ Fulya Doğruel, *İnsaniyetleri Benzer: Hatay'da Çoketnili Ortak Yaşam Kültürü* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005).

Döneminde Türk- Fransız İlişkileri, Fransız Arşiv Belgeleri Açısından 1919-1922 [Turco-French Relations During the War of Independence, From the Perspective of French Archival Documents 1919-1922]⁵⁰ and Serhan Ada's *Türk Fransız İlişkilerinde Hatay Sorunu (1918-1939)* [The Issue of Hatay in Turco-French Relations (1918-1939)].⁵¹

The main aim of Yücel Güçlü's thesis is "to explain the reasons for the emergence of the Sanjak issue and clarify how it was solved." Güçlü is an important representative of the Turkish nationalist historiography and his study clearly reflects the Turkish projection of the Sanjak issue. His work provides a complete picture of the Turkish approach to the issue via the Turkish and French Archives. In the same manner, Serhan Ada relies on archival material and secondary sources written about the political history of the region. Ada, on the other hand, approaches the issue more as an international question and he examines the economic dimension of the Sanjak problem by placing the subject within the Franco-Turkish relations. The works of Yücel Güçlü and Serhan Ada are important to understand the annexation process as a purely political issue, but they neglect the social aspect of the annexation process.

My study also makes extensive use of archival material, the scope of the study is not confined to archives. The Sunni Turkish migration, mentioned frequently in the oral history interviews, is searched thoroughly and the social structure of the region and the

⁵⁰ Bige Yavuz, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Döneminde Türk- Fransız İlişkileri, Fransız Arşiv Belgeleri Açısından 1919-1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994) (This book is the revised version of Yavuz's PhD Dissertation presented at Ankara University in 1989).

⁵¹ Serhan Ada, *Türk Fransız İlişkilerinde Hatay Sorunu, 1918-1939* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005) (This book is the revised version of his PhD dissertation presented at Ankara University in 2004).

political atmosphere leading to the departure of the conservative Sunni Turkish population are analyzed together in this study.

Seda Altuğ's thesis aims to demonstrate different communities' memories of the French mandate rule. Zeynep Özgen looks at the Sanjak issue as a venue of identity politics in her thesis. Bige Yavuz's thesis analyzes Franco-Turkish relations during the Turkish War of Independence through French archival documents. Some of the other important academic studies about the Sanjak issue written by non-Turkish scholars are Avedis Krikor Sanjian's PhD dissertation presented in 1956,⁵² Walter Charles Bandazian's PhD dissertation presented in 1967.⁵³ Bandazian emphasizes the power relations of the pre World War II international conjuncture and Sanjian handles the issue as a conflict between Syria and Turkey. He views the Armenian migration from the Sanjak to Syria and Lebanon, after the settlement of the issue, as the beginning of a long-term uneasiness between the two countries.

Other important studies on the topic includes the recent study of Sarah Shields; *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II*.⁵⁴ Shields focuses on the Sanjak issue as part of European diplomacy in the region and utilizes the League of Nations' archives in addition to French, Turkish, British, and American documents. She uses memoirs as an important group of sources to reflect on the first hand views about the subject. Abdurrahman

⁵² Avedis Krikor Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): A Study in Franco-Turco-Syrian Relations" (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 1956).

⁵³ Walter Charles Bandazian, "The Crisis of Alexandretta" (PhD Diss., American University, 1967).

⁵⁴ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*.

Melek's *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*,⁵⁵ Tayfur Sökmen's *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*⁵⁶ and Selim Çelenk's *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Anıları*⁵⁷ are worth mentioning. Hamit Pehlivanlı, Yusuf Sarıay and Hüsamettin Yıldırım's *Türk Dış Politikasında Hatay (1918- 1939)*⁵⁸ contains facsimiles of some documents from the Turkish republican archives. Adil Dağıstan and Adnan Sofuoğlu's *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay: Atatürk'ün Dış Politika Zaferi*⁵⁹ approaches the issue as Atatürk's foreign policy victory and uses Turkish archives to a great extent. While thoroughly using Turkish archival material, the last two studies mainly list the events relevant to the Sanjak issue and lack analysis of these sources.

This study differs from earlier studies on the Sanjak of Alexandretta by focusing on the unique case of Sunni Turkish migration from the Sanjak to Syria through oral history interviews and archival material as well as analyzing the nature of Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak during the annexation process. Many of the secondary sources mentioned above and the works of local historians⁶⁰ consider the Sanjak issue as a political process and mostly ignore the effects of this process on the social life of the people living in the region. Seda Altuğ, Zeynep Özgen and Sarah Shields employ a more social approach. Urban notables are the main focus of Altuğ's

⁵⁵ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*.

⁵⁶ Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*.

⁵⁷ Selim Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Anıları* (Antakya Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1997).

⁵⁸ Hamit Pehlivanlı, Yusuf Sarıay and Hüsamettin Yıldırım, *Türk Dış Politikasında Hatay, 1918- 1939* (Ankara, Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001).

⁵⁹ Adil Dağıstan and Adnan Sofuoğlu, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay: Atatürk'ün Dış Politika Zaferi* (Ankara, Phoenix Yayınevi, 2008).

⁶⁰ See the works of Mehmet Tekin, *Hatay Tarihi* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2000). and Mehmet Mursaloğlu, *10 Ay 16 Gün 8 Saat: Sancak, Devlet, Vatan* (Antakya: Antakya Ticaret Borsası Kültür Yayınları, 2010).

thesis; she employs oral history interviews to reveal different groups' memories of the French mandate rule in the Sanjak. She analyzes these interviews together with archival material from a class-based perspective and puts emphasis on the economic background of the people in the Sanjak for their acts. Sarah Shields focuses on the French policy in the region in the interwar period. She also mentions social life in the Sanjak while analyzing the region as the venue of political rivalry through archives of the League of Nations, France and the United Kingdom as well as oral history interviews. When all these works are considered, it is possible to state that more references to social life in the region are needed to better grasp the Sanjak issue. This study tries to fill this gap by using archival material and oral history interviews to analyze the nature of the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the region by focusing on the scope of this propaganda and the reactions of the Sanjak population to it.

1.5 Structure

This thesis is organized in four main chapters first of which delineates the history of the region beginning from the late Ottoman era and concentrating predominantly on the period between the two World Wars. The first chapter aims to give the reader the necessary historical background before delving into more specific issues within the general history of the region. Moreover, first chapter demonstrates how a relatively small area of the Ottoman Empire⁶¹ had become a central issue in the international agenda.

⁶¹ Although Antakya and other regions included within the Sanjak of Alexandretta always existed during the Ottoman rule, Aleppo and Damascus developed more as the administrative and economic centers.

Second chapter is about the clash of Turkish and Arabic nationalisms in the region. This chapter has three parts; the first part offers brief information about theoretical approaches to nationalism in order to place Turkish and Arabic nationalisms within these theories. In this section general information about the types of nationalist theories is given with a special focus on constructivists since the type of nationalist approach adopted in the Sanjak during the annexation process is believed to reflect constructivist characteristics both on the Turkish and Arabic sides. In the second part of this chapter, the origins of Turkish nationalism are clarified and formation of a new national identity through various means is explained. The third part is about Arab nationalism in Syria. First, the roots of Arab nationalism are explained briefly. Secondly, Butrus Al-Bustani's nationalism is explained in detail, because he was an important figure in Ottoman Syria supporting Ottomanist ideology as well as defining himself as an Arab nationalist. The intellectual life in the region after Butrus Al-Bustani is the next part in this chapter and the change in the intellectual realm of Syria is revealed through examples from prominent Arab nationalists of the region. Finally, Zaki Al-Arsuzi and his ideas are discussed to display effects of Arab nationalism on the Sanjak.

Third chapter analyzes the Turkish nationalist propaganda towards the people of the Sanjak to prove that they were all originally Turks who shared a common history and to convince them to accept to register under the category of "Turks". Firstly, the strategies of the Kemalist nationalist propaganda to convince the people of the Sanjak to be part of the new nation are described in detail. The second part details how the Kemalist reforms are adopted by the Sanjak residents, followed by information about

the opposition that arose towards these reforms. Next section examines the relation between ideology, historiography and language via the examples of Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory as they were applied in the rewriting of the history of the Sanjak. Nationalisms utilize history when constructing their notions of nation; therefore, historiography is an important tool for the creation of nations. In the case of the Sanjak, the Turkish Republic also employed history and historiography towards its political aims. One of the main claims of Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak was that the region and its peoples were Turkish. This claim was supported by Turkish History Thesis, which is the embodiment of the relation between ideology and history in the Turkish case. Faik Türkmen's classical work on the history of the Sanjak and the results of some ideologues' linguistic and historical studies are examined from the perspective of the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory in this chapter.

The impact of the nationalist propaganda on various communities of the Sanjak is analyzed by dividing them into categories based on their role as political actors or populational importance in the last chapter. The results of the pre-election registrations are analyzed at this point to show how influential the nationalist propaganda on the Sanjak people. Inclusive propaganda towards the Alawites and the readiness to lose the conservative Sunni Turkish population that chose to leave the Sanjak based on the opposition to the Kemalist reforms is presented as valid examples that Kemalist ethnic nationalism was pragmatic when the Sanjak case is considered. Finally, the policies of the Kemalist nationalists, especially towards the non-Muslim and non-Turkish population of the Sanjak, after the annexation are presented to show the limits of the all-inclusive nationalist propaganda.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRANSITION FROM THE BILAD AL-SHAM TO THE PROVINCE OF HATAY

The Sanjak of Alexandretta was a collage of linguistic and religious groups in which different communities interacting to form multiple religious, cultural and ethnic identities and loyalties.⁶² They lived in a peaceful economic interdependence throughout the region's long history. The Ottoman Empire, which controlled the region for four centuries from 1517 to 1918, had a multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure throughout its territories, and the Sanjak was even more cosmopolitan compared to the Ottoman standards. There were five languages spoken in the region: Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish, Circassian;⁶³ and sixteen religious traditions were observed in the following groups and sub groups: Sunni Muslims, Alawites and Ismailis, Arab Jews, Arab and

⁶² Robert B. Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict: Communal Interdependence in the Sanjak of Alexandretta 1920-1936," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, April (1986): 154.

⁶³ For Bazantay's linguistic map see Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 154.

Armenian Christians: Armenian Gregorians, Greek Orthodox, Protestants, Syrian Jacobites, Chaldeans, Nestorians, Roman Catholics, Caldean Catholics, Maronites, Syrian Catholics, Greek Catholics and Armenian Catholics.⁶⁴ According to Satloff, even the combination of a few groups among the diverse religious and linguistic groups would not constitute a clear majority.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the Turkish Republic claimed that the Turks formed the majority in the region and based their political discourse concerning the Sanjak of Alexandretta on this assertion. The nature of Turkish Republic's approach to the Sanjak issue is important to understand the flow of political events related to the Sanjak both at the local and international level.

Although the San Remo resolution of 1920 put the Sanjak district under the French Mandate, Turkey objected to any discussion concerning the Sanjak's future as part of a Syrian state from the very beginning on the grounds that the majority of the population was Turkish. Turkey's claims regarding the region's population structure were based on the prediction that both Armenians and the Alawites of the Sanjak, in addition to the Turkish-speaking residents, would profess their ethnic identity as Turkish.⁶⁶ Turkey highlighted the strong linguistic affiliation with the people of Sanjak⁶⁷ by claiming that even the Armenians of the Sanjak spoke Turkish⁶⁸ (albeit as their second language). Thus, according to Turkey's claims, Turkish speakers made up the

⁶⁴ Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 155.

⁶⁵ Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 154.

⁶⁶ Sarah Shields, *Fezzes in the River* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

⁶⁷ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 7.

⁶⁸ Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 154.

majority.⁶⁹ In the Sanjak, thus, their rights must be preserved, probably separately from the rest of Syria.

1936 is a turning point in terms of nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak because it was after the signing of Franco-Syrian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance in the same year that the Turkish Republic increased its propaganda activities in the region. In addition, it was also in 1936 that the Sanjak issue was taken to the League of Nations by the Turkish Republic, thus taking the subject matter to the international level.

In what follows the history of the region is taken into consideration beginning with the Ottoman reign, with brief information about the pre-Ottoman era, continuing with the region after the World War I and finally the emergence of the Sanjak as an international issue.

2.1 Ottoman Reign (1517-1918)

Before giving detailed information about the Sanjak under the Ottoman control, background data concerning the ancient history of the region would be beneficial to better explain the strategic position of the Sanjak region.

The region upon which the Sanjak of Alexandretta was established had served as an ancient center of trade due to the advantage of the Belen Passage, connecting Anatolia to Syrian lands as well as the Port of Payas where ships were loaded for the

⁶⁹ Editorial, *Tan*, November 29, 1937, 1.

great eastern trade.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Battle of Issus, between Darius and Alexander the Great, took place in 333 BC in the Issus plain between Payas and Iskenderun, resulting in Alexander's advance to the Middle East.⁷¹ The geographical position of the Amanus Mountains provided protection for the Payas and Iskenderun ports throughout the history of the region. In the 11th century, the Princedom of Antioch established by the Crusaders, was protected by these mountains.⁷² The coastal region near the Amanus Mountains was scarcely inhabited throughout the ages. The Mountains, on the other hand, had always been a place of refuge for the Christians and the non-Sunni Muslims of the region during later ages. The Amik plain was unsuitable for settlement due to its swampy nature, but was used as winter quarters by the Turkmen tribes during the Ottoman reign, beginning in the sixteenth century.

Antakya had been a *kaza* [district] of the sanjak [sub-province] of Aleppo since its conquest in 1517 after Selim I's victory at the Battle of Mercidabık in 1516 during his campaign to Egypt.⁷³ The sanjaks of Aleppo and Urfa comprised the *vilayet* [province] of Aleppo. The Province Regulation of 1867's revision of the frontiers of the *vilayet* of Aleppo left Antakya and Iskenderun as the two of the ten *kazas* of the Sanjak of Aleppo.

⁷⁰ Port of Payas is used in the Mideaval ages and it is known as the port, in which Marco Polo stayed in 1272 on his way to China. See Stefanos Yerasimos, *Milliyetler ve Sınırlar: Balkanlar, Kafkasya ve Orta Doğu* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 173.

⁷¹ Mehmet Tekin, *Hatay Tarihi* (Ankara: AYK Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2000), 4.

⁷² Stefanos Yerasimos, *Milliyetler ve Sınırlar*, 175.

⁷³ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi, Volume 3* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988), 394.

Although the administrative structure changed later, the Ottoman Empire followed a general administrative policy towards the notables of the region. Land owning Turkmen and Arab notables were left undisturbed⁷⁴ and the Ottomans ensured these notables' loyalty to the Empire by appointing them to administrative posts.⁷⁵ The inclusion of local power groups within the system was the general political strategy followed by the Ottomans, especially in the newly conquered areas.⁷⁶

The seventeenth century witnessed a fast change of Pashas--amounting to eighty--in the Syrian provinces, resulting in the absence of control by any of the Pashas in their short appointment period,⁷⁷ the consequence of which resulted in the need to settle Janissary garrisons in the provinces in the late seventeenth century. As the Janissaries remained in these regions, they became permanent residents of the cities. They were even called the *Yarliyya* stemming from the word *yerli* [local].⁷⁸ In Damascus, they evolved into part of the city merchant class and patronage groups were formed around them.⁷⁹ The power struggle between the Janissaries and the *ashraf*, consisting of the notables of the city, in Aleppo began with the establishment of the garrison and

⁷⁴ Müneccimbaşı Ahmet Dede. *Müneccimbaşı Tarihi*, V 2. trans. İsmail Erünsal (Istanbul: Kervan Kitapçılık 1974), 528.

⁷⁵ Ömer Osman Umar, *Osmanlı Yönetimi ve Fransız Manda İdaresi Altında Suriye, 1908-1938* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), 10.

⁷⁶ Halil İnalcik and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17-20.

⁷⁷ P.M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, 1516-1922* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 106.

⁷⁸ Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 108.

⁷⁹ Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 56.

continued into the eighteenth century. During the eighteenth century, Ottoman Empire let the local notables administer the region, as part of the general approach of the Empire towards this region, a state of affairs, which ended in the nineteenth century due to the changing political atmosphere.

The increasing Ottoman interest in the Sanjak region in the nineteenth century was a result of the centralization efforts of the Empire as part of the reform movements. The settlement of the nomadic Turkmen tribes in their *kışlak* [winter quarters], beginning with 1825, also constituted part of these efforts. Mahmud II faced great opposition from the local notables against his centralization efforts that limited the role of the local notables in the administration of the region. His efforts were greatly interrupted by Mehmet Ali Pasha's invasion of Syria in 1831.⁸⁰

The Greek War in 1827 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29 so occupied the Ottoman army that the forces that could fight against Mehmet Ali Pasha were few in number.⁸¹ With this invasion, the provinces of Syria were left completely out of reach of the Ottoman rule and Ottoman reforms until the withdrawal of the Mehmet Ali Pasha's forces in 1840.⁸² Mehmet Ali Pasha, on the other hand, applied his own reform program in Syria as he was already doing so in Egypt. It was during Mehmet Ali Pasha's rule that the local economy became more related to the European economy, during which the

⁸⁰ Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and The Making of Modern Egypt*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 52.

⁸¹ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, Vol 5* (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988), 200-201.

⁸² Şinasi Altundağ, *Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa İsyanı : Mısır Meselesi, 1831-1841* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945), 37. and Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine*, 6-8.

Muslim population of the region suffered.⁸³ Low tariffs and encouragement of the non-Muslim merchants put the Muslims in an unfavorable situation.⁸⁴ On the other hand, although non-Muslims enjoyed some privileges especially in trade, they were afraid that Mehmet Ali Pasha's military reforms would reach them and that they would also be conscripted. In addition, the local leadership opposed the reforms of Mehmet Ali Pasha's son, Ibrahim Pasha, because he did not appoint them as local administrators, which they considered undermined their authority.

After the withdrawal of Mehmet Ali Pasha's forces from Syria in 1841, Ottoman efforts at centralization gained pace. During the Fırka-i Islahiye [Reform Division]⁸⁵ expedition in 1865,⁸⁶ the towns of Hassa, Islahiye, and Reyhaniye were established.⁸⁷ While the Turkmen tribes were settled on the Amik Plain, they were granted title deeds by the state, which marked the beginnings of the formation of large estate owners, known as the Amik *Beys*. Settlement of the nomadic tribes on the Amik Plain changed the social structure of the region within a few decades. Tribal leaders had become owners of huge lands, while the local Alawites worked as sharecroppers on these lands.

⁸³ Asad Jibrail Rustum, "The struggle of Mehmet Ali Pasha with Sultan Mahmud II and Some of its Geographical Aspects," (Notes Prepared for the International Geographical Congress of Cairo, Cairo, April 1925), 5.

⁸⁴ Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 187.

⁸⁵ Fırka-i Islahiye was an expedition led by Derviş Pasha and Cevdet Pasha, in which 9,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 6 pieces of artillery were used and most of the Turkmen and other nomadic tribes of Southern Anatolia were taken under government control. See Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, Vol 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), 107-136.

⁸⁶ Andrew Gould, "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7 (1976): 497.

⁸⁷ Tayfur Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*, 17-18.

Abdulhamid II continued the reforms with a more emphasis on centralization of the region, which actually ended the *de facto* autonomy of the local notables in the provinces of the Ottoman Syria.⁸⁸ In the era between the first and the second constitutional periods, talented Pashas were appointed as governors in Syria including Ziya Pasha, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, and Mithat Pasha. In addition to the reform efforts of these Pashas, Abdulhamid II carried out pan-Islamist propaganda in the region to keep the Arabs loyal to the Empire. According to Justin McCarthy, Abdulhamid II's pious image was influential on the Arabs of Syria and he faced little expression of separatism.⁸⁹

Increasing missionary activity towards the Alawite population of Antakya and Lazkiye [Latakia] in 1890s⁹⁰ led the Ottoman administration to undertake a series of policies, including the opening of schools and mosques in the Alawite neighborhoods of Antakya.⁹¹ Abdulhamid II was cautious about his policies towards the various ethnic and religious communities of the region due to the potential of foreign intervention, but the 1908 Constitutional revolution initiated by the Young Turks ended Hamidian regime as well as changing the state policies towards the Alawites and other communities.

1909 Armenian events in Adana and its environs as well as the 1915 mass deportations further changed the social structure of the region. A new *ashraf* group

⁸⁸ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27-28 and 79.

⁸⁹ McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples*, 80.

⁹⁰ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Döneminde Periferik Nüfus Grupları," *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (Winter 1999): 186.

⁹¹ See Chapter 4 for further discussion of the relation between the Ottoman administration and the Alawites.

supporting the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) emerged and rivaled the traditional notables of the region.⁹² While all these events and social changes were taking place, there was, however, no change in the administrative structure. Iskenderun, Beylan, Antakya, and Reyhaniye were still part of the *Vilayet* [Province] of Aleppo while Payas and Hassa were part of the *Vilayet* of Adana.

The social life and the political situation in the Sanjak region changed dramatically with the break of the World War I, because the region was also part of the agreements made before and during the war.

Three important agreements during the World War I formed the modern Middle East: The first one is a series of communications between Sharif Husain and the British High Commissioner of Egypt, McMahon, from July 1915 to March 1916. It was through these secret correspondences that Britain promised the formation of a great Arab Empire, the northern borders of which stretched to Mersin and Adana.⁹³ The second one is the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916 between Britain and France, later to be approved by Russia. The two countries divided the Middle East into regions under their direct or indirect rule.⁹⁴ Accordingly, Western Syria, Lebanon, Cilicia, and the middle of the Southern Anatolia were under French control with Iskenderun, Latakia, Trablus, Beirut, and Sayda included in this region. Britain and France agreed to support any Arab state or confederation of states to be established in the zone between the

⁹² Yerasimos, *Milliyetler ve Sınırlar*, 177.

⁹³ Mehmet Akif Kireçci, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Arap Milliyetçiliği* (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2012) 76-77.

⁹⁴ Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The MacMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations, 1914-1939* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 142.

French and British territories. Alexandretta was left as a free port for the Allied use.⁹⁵ The third agreement, which shaped the Middle East after the World War I, is the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Through the Balfour Declaration, the British Government promised a home to the Jews of Europe in Palestine, which started endless set of conflicts between the Arabs and the Jews. Although the Balfour Declaration is important especially for the formation of Arab nationalism, the San Remo Conference of 1920 is more relevant to the Sanjak affairs and the content of the Balfour Declaration was inserted into the conference decisions.⁹⁶

The Arab Revolt which also influenced the Sanjak region had always been a controversial issue in Arab and Turkish historiographies. In 1916, Sharif Husain and his son rebelled against their Ottoman rulers with British encouragement and support.⁹⁷ Sharif Husain's son Emir Faisal was in charge of the Northern Arab Army that marched from Hejaz through Palestine to the Syrian lands. In 1918, the Anglo-Arab army entered Damascus and there Emir Faisal declared the formation of an independent Arab state in the name of his father, King Husain. After Damascus, the army went into Aleppo and Antakya.⁹⁸

All of the above-mentioned events that took place during the World War I directly influenced the Sanjak region both at the state and social levels. Being part of the

⁹⁵ Ada, *Hatay Sorunu*, 17.

⁹⁶ Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1961), 559-604 as cited in Kireççi, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 83.

⁹⁷ Mary Wilson, "The Hashemites, The Arab Revolt, and Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 204- 221.

⁹⁸ Mehmet Tekin, *Hatay Tarihi* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2000), 191.

partition plans of the Allied forces, the region turned into an area of power conflict. The Arab revolt was also quite influential on the region ideologically as well as politically.⁹⁹

2.2 The Region in the Post World War I Era

The extent of the occupation of Antakya by the Anglo-Arab Army continues to be a highly debated issue for both Turkish and Arab historiographies, but George Antonius states that after the occupation of Antakya by the Arab army, Ibrahim Hananu declared the Sharifian government and the army occupied Beylan and Iskenderun.¹⁰⁰ While the Arab army was still in the region, the Mudros Armistice was signed between Turkey and the Allied Forces on October 30, 1918. The French wanted to occupy the Sanjak region as was promised in the Sykes-Picot Agreement.¹⁰¹ Although the British General Allenby ordered the Sharifian army to withdraw from Antakya and its environs, his orders were ignored by the armed bandits enlisting volunteers and supplying arms to the people. It was in 1919 that the last officials of the Sharifian government, Ibrahim Hananu and Ibrahim Edhem, left the Sanjak region ending the Arab occupation only to start the French occupation.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ The Arab Revolt and the establishment of the Syrian Kingdom are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ George Antonius, *Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1939), 239- 240.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syrian and Lebanon under French Mandate*, (Beirut, Librairie du Liban, 1968), 75.

¹⁰² Seda Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 29.

The occupation of the whole Sanjak region took longer than the French anticipated, because in addition to the establishment of the Arab State by the British, the occupying forces faced resistance by the local *çetes* [militia]. One of the reasons that triggered the organization of the *çetes* was the existence of a French legion consisting of Armenians who were hostile to the Turks for the deportation. The first armed struggle of the local militia forces against the French occupation was seen as early as December 1918 in Dörtyol, where the deported Armenians from Anatolia were settled. Young people from Dörtyol and its environs gathered in Özerli and attacked the French legion; this attack was followed by other battles in the Dörtyol-Hassa line.¹⁰³ In April 1919, local militia forces raided French forces in Harim on the Amik Plane. It was after these attacks that the local forces of the Sanjak region contacted the militia of Antep, Maraş, and Adana.¹⁰⁴

Various communities of the Sanjak fought side by side against the French occupation in 1918, but in the following years the power struggle among them in the political sphere influenced the social life in the region. According to Nuri Aydın Konuralp, who played an important role in the resistance against the French occupation, the traditional notables of Antakya were divided into two groups: supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress and the supporters of *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* (Freedom and Accord Party- FAP); with the latter one was in cooperation with the “*Al-Ahl ul-Arabi*” Society [People of the Arab Cause].¹⁰⁵ This society was defined as

¹⁰³ Abdurrahman Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu* (İstanbul: Yeni Gün Yayıncılık, 1999), 29.

¹⁰⁴ Abdurrahman Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 32.

¹⁰⁵ Nuri Aydın Konuralp, *Hatay, Kurtuluş ve Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Tarihi* (İskenderun: Hatay Postası Basımevi, 1970), 4.

consisting of Turkish and Arab members in support of the Arab cause by another author from Hatay, Hamdi Selçuk.¹⁰⁶

By the end of 1919, the Sanjak region was under French occupation and a determined resistance arose against the occupation by the local forces in relation with the Anatolian militia forces. In the following year, the Ottoman Parliament accepted the *Misak-ı Milli* [National Oath] document¹⁰⁷ in its last session. According to this document, the Sanjak region was included within the borders of the new state and Tayfur Sökmen and the other nationalists of the Sanjak based their claims on this document after confirming that the Sanjak was included within the *Misak-ı Milli*.¹⁰⁸

During the ongoing struggle between the occupiers and the local militia in Anatolia, western powers were debating the future of the region in Europe. Although the British had earlier left the control of the Sanjak to the French, the French took the official right of mandate at San Remo on April 28, 1920 where an international meeting took place with the goal of preparing the conditions for the Sevres Agreement and the partition of the Ottoman lands.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Hamdi Selçuk, *Bütün Yönleriyle Hatay'ın O Günleri* (İstanbul: M. Sucuoğlu Matbaası, 1972), 44.

¹⁰⁷ This document consisted of the principles listed in line with the views of the representatives from all over Anatolia and was accepted in the parliament in 1920. Due to the expression of determination to protect the above-mentioned principles; it was the reference point of the Anatolian movement throughout the War of Independence. After the Treaty of Lausanne, it became a document, which contained the main principles that shaped Turkish Republic's foreign policy.

¹⁰⁸ Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu İçin Harcanan Çabalar*, 60-61.

¹⁰⁹ Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (MAE), Cabinet Politique (CP), No: 174, Report on the borders of the mandate, (November, 10, 1921), 257.

After the San Remo meeting, France began to work on identifying the borders of the Sanjak region. Border drawing was an important issue, because borders influenced the structure/composition of the population. Inclusion of more Turkish villages within the Sanjak borders meant more Turkish population; the opposite was relevant for the Arab population. On March 10, 1921 the Turco-French Political, Military and Economic Agreement on Syrian Borders, or as commonly known as the Bekir Sami Bey Agreement, was signed.¹¹⁰ This agreement was the first agreement with which the southern borders of Turkey were delineated as “starting from a point south of Payas village goes on a straight line to Ekbez plain”¹¹¹ leaving out the Sanjak. The southern border of the Sanjak was not clearly defined and this situation led to manipulations both on the Turkish and the Arab side. Both sides blamed the French to change the border to include more Turks or Arabs.

Although the Bekir Sami Bey Agreement was important in terms of showing the divergence between France and Britain, the Ankara Treaty or Franklin Bouillon Agreement, signed on October 20, 1921, was one of the turning points in the history of the Sanjak due to its articles requiring a special administration in the Sanjak and the protection of the Turkish culture. The Turkish population was accepted as a minority group living under the mandate rule and given the right to celebrate their national holidays as well as use Turkish as medium of education.¹¹² Furthermore, this treaty

¹¹⁰ MAE, CP 170, 241-242.

¹¹¹ MAE, CP 174, 257.

¹¹² Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu İçin Harcanan Çabalar*, 60-61.

actually signified the end of the French occupation, because a new government under the French mandate was established in the Sanjak.¹¹³

The Ankara Treaty was celebrated in Turkey as a victory. Although the Turkish government could not succeed in defining Turkish as the sole official language of the Sanjak, as was aimed from the beginning, the Turkish press reflected the Treaty as an improvement for the Turkish population of the Sanjak.¹¹⁴

The Mandate regime of the Sanjak was approved by the League of Nations in 1923.¹¹⁵ After the approval, Atatürk and the Turkish government were more involved with the Sanjak issue; Atatürk, for example, travelled to Adana where he met with Sanjak Turks.¹¹⁶ The League of Nations' approval of the French Mandate was important in the sense that from this date onward, the League, as a monitoring and advisory body, actively took part in the issues concerning the Sanjak.

The Signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923 was an important event not only for its nature as a peace treaty, but also as a treaty that confirmed the articles of the Ankara Treaty concerning the Sanjak issue.¹¹⁷ This agreement put the Sanjak's Turkish population's rights given with the Ankara Treaty under international protection.

¹¹³ Sofuoğlu, and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 29-30

¹¹⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, October 21, 1921.

¹¹⁵ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 16.

¹¹⁶ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 32.

¹¹⁷ Yücel Güçlü, "The Controversy over the Delimitation of the Turko-Syrian Frontier in the Period between the Two World Wars," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42(2006): 643.

The French mandate regime made administrative changes in 1925, making the Sanjak part of the Syrian Mandate State despite the Turkish Republic's reservations.¹¹⁸ This change of administration caused disappointment among the Turkish population both in the Sanjak and in Turkey. Turkish reaction against this decision was reflected in the national newspapers as an unfair treatment.¹¹⁹ The ruling of Sanjak by the government under the Syrian Mandate was unacceptable for the Turkish Republic, because this situation could well pave the way to the joining of the Sanjak to Syria. If such a decision were to come into being, it was impossible for the Turkish government to become involved in the Sanjak issue. While the Turkish government was trying to change the political situation in the Sanjak for its own benefit, there were other political groups, such as the autonomists, who were actively trying to establish an independent Sanjak.

The various communities of the Sanjak had been living in harmony not only because they were used to living in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious environment, but also their economic activities resulted in their interdependence. Each group had a dominant place in one of the economic activities carried out in the region. The Sanjak economy was relatively better than the rest of Syria. Therefore, the idea of being under the Syrian Mandate Government control was not beneficial for the Sanjak residents. From another perspective, the Turkish Republic's approach to the Sanjak was not economically favorable, because the established wealthy people of the region were

¹¹⁸ *Tan*, September 24, 1936.

¹¹⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, October 2, 1936.

challenged by the newly emerging Kemalist elites of the Sanjak who were supported by Turkish Republic.¹²⁰

A group of Sanjak residents consisting of members of various ethnic and religious communities suggested the formation of a state in the Sanjak of Alexandretta that would be under direct control of the High Commissioner of the Mandate Regime.¹²¹ This autonomist group declared independence in 1926. The new state established within the borders of the Sanjak of Alexandretta was called the State of Northern Syria and it was established directly under the High Commissioner and approved by him.¹²²

The High Commissioner appointed Mahmud Adalı¹²³ as the Sanjak deputy after the establishment of the new state, but he was not favored by all of the autonomists. Avedis Sanjian claims that Mahmud Adalı was not acting on behalf of the whole Sanjak population but supporting Kemalist ideals.¹²⁴ On the other hand, historians supporting the Turkish cause evaluated this movement as the desire of the Turks for independence rather than living under the control of the Syrian government.¹²⁵ According to Sofuoğlu

¹²⁰ Philip S. Khoury, "Syrian Urban Politics in Transition: The Quarters of Damascus during the French Mandate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16(1984): 519.

¹²¹ Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 164. and Avedis K. Sanjian, "*The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): A Study in Franco-Turco-Syrian Relations*" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1956), 45-48.

¹²² Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 164.

¹²³ Mahmut Adalı was a member of one of the elite families of the Sanjak. Adalı family was active in political life even during the Ottoman reign and they kept their politically privileged position during the French Mandate rule.

¹²⁴ Sanjian, "*The Sanjak of Alexandretta*," 47. Although Sanjian blames Mahmut Adalı for acting on behalf of the Turkish nationalists, Turkish nationalists blamed him for being a traitor by accepting such a post.

¹²⁵ See the discussion on the declaration of autonomy in Adnan Sofuoğlu and Adil Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katilima Hatay*, 31.

and Dağıstan, the French Mandate regime acted on the side of the Arabs and changed the suggested name, the “State of Alexandretta” to the “State of Northern Syria;” even from the very beginning unfair treatment existed against the autonomists of Turkish origin. Therefore, this autonomous state did not survive and was reconnected to the administration in Damascus in the same year.¹²⁶

Both the Turks and the Arabs propagated against the French for their actions in the Sanjak. Both sides claimed that the French favored the other group. The French tried to ameliorate their relations with the Turkish Republic due to concerns about the international environment, which seemed to be headed towards another major war. In line with this policy of the French government, the Turco-French Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighborly Relations or De Jouvener Treaty was signed in 1926.¹²⁷

In 1930, the French mandate rule confirmed that the Sanjak was administratively and economically a special entity within the Syrian State.¹²⁸ In line with this decision, in 1931, the Sanjak population was expected to vote in elections, which would result in the choices of representatives sent to the Syrian Parliament. The Turkish population of the Sanjak decided not to vote in the elections for the Syrian parliament but send representatives to the administrative council of the Sanjak. Abdülğani Türkmen and Abdurrahman Melek were elected as representatives for the administrative council.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 35.

¹²⁷ Güçlü, “*The Controversy*,” 645.

¹²⁸ Ada, *Hatay Sorunu*, 85.

¹²⁹ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 52-53.

2.3 The Emergence of the Sanjak as an International Issue

The Sanjak issue took on an international character after the Turkish Republic took the subject to the League of Nations in 1936, arguing that the problem should be settled through this international body. In addition, the year 1936 proved to be a turning point in terms of local politics. After the agreement between France and Syria, the Turkish Republic initiated a strong campaign in the Sanjak by using various means including the print media to disseminate the Turkish cause.

The June 4, 1936 elections and the change of government in France was an important event for the Sanjak, because the new government under the leadership of Léon Blum was of the idea that France should change her international policy according to the changing conditions in Europe. In line with this idea came a different way of looking at relations with Syria and Lebanon. This change of attitude was reflected in the Turkish press as “the new government regards mandate regimes as out dated.”¹³⁰ Since the changing political situation in Europe was signaling a new war, France was not as eager as it was earlier to keep Syria, the Sanjak, and Lebanon as mandates.

The first visible action in line with the new French government’s declarations about the mandate regime was seen in 1936 when the Franco-Syrian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed.¹³¹ This treaty stated that Syria will be independent

¹³⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, December 28, 1936.

¹³¹ *Cumhuriyet*, October 1, 1936.

within three years and when the French withdrew from the region, the Sanjak was to be included within Syria.¹³²

The Syrian delegation stopped by Turkey on their way back to Damascus. Their arrival found great coverage in the Turkish press. When the delegation was asked about the Sanjak, their response concerning the statement that the Sanjak would be left to Syria upon its independence caused a lot of reaction in Turkish press.¹³³ The Syrian delegation's assurance about the rights given to the Turkish population of the Sanjak was insufficient. According to the press, this decision was the embodiment of France's betrayal to Turkey. Furthermore, although Turkey had always supported Syria's independence,¹³⁴ Syria in making such an agreement with France was also betraying the Turkish Republic.¹³⁵

Atatürk paid special attention to the Sanjak issue and made his personal interest known in a conversation with a French ambassador.¹³⁶ He even declared that he would fight for the Sanjak if necessary. In addition to references to military intervention, Atatürk was well aware of the importance of history when claiming a piece of land to be

¹³² For the content of the Treaty see *Cumhuriyet*, October 1, 1936.

¹³³ *Tan*, September 24, 1936.

¹³⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, September 24, 1936.

¹³⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, September 24, 1936.

¹³⁶ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Atatürkçülük Nedir* (Istanbul: Pozitif Yayıncılık, 2006), 44.

the motherland of a certain ethnic group. For this reason, Atatürk called for historians to prove that the Sanjak region was actually Turkish.¹³⁷

Atatürk himself informed Tayfur Sökmen and the other leaders of the Kemalist Turks that he named the Sanjak region as “Hatay” in November 2, 1936.¹³⁸ This name was derived from the ancient civilization of Hittites who were claimed to be Turkish by Turkish ideologues of the Republican era. According to this claim, since the Hittites also lived in the Sanjak region, its inhabitants are their great grandchildren who were also Turks.¹³⁹ This propaganda targeted especially the Alawites of the region. Their support for the Turkish cause was very important because the Kemalist Turks always claimed that the Alawites were on their side and this claim strengthened their confidence in claiming that the majority of the Sanjak was Turkish.¹⁴⁰ The fact that the Alawites of the Sanjak spoke Arabic was explained as their assimilation under Arab rule for many centuries in addition to blaming the Ottoman Empire for their estrangement.¹⁴¹ In order to get their support, the Alawites’ visa procedures when entering Turkey were simplified. Some Alawi leaders were taken to see the conditions in Turkey by the government with the aim of convincing the Alawites of the freedom of religious practice

¹³⁷ İsmail M. Mayakon, “Hata- Hatay,” *Cumhuriyet*, October 22, 1936, 3.

¹³⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, December 28-29, 1936.

¹³⁹ Mayakon, “Hata-Hatay,” 3.

¹⁴⁰ *Cumhuriyet* claiming that there were 300.000 of the population was Turkish, October 1, 1936 and *Tan*, October 20, 1936.

¹⁴¹ Faik Türkmen, *Cumhuriyet*, December 28-29, 1936 and January 2, 1937.

under the Turkish regime. In addition, the Ankara government decided to elect an Alawite representative to the Turkish Parliament in 1937.¹⁴²

Other types of activities implemented in the Sanjak by the Kemalists to obtain the support of other groups and Turkish people included the opening of institutional branches of Turkish banks, hospitals, and a consulate.¹⁴³ Furthermore, individuals borne in the Sanjak and living in Turkey were sent to the Sanjak and the Turkish state continued to pay the salaries of the civil servants who were sent there.¹⁴⁴

1936 was the year of elections for the Syrian Parliament. Since the Sanjak was administratively part of Syria, the region was expected to send delegates to the Parliament and to vote in the elections. However, Kemalist Turks of the Sanjak decided not to take part in the 1936 elections.¹⁴⁵ Participation in the elections would imply their approval of the Syrian regime.¹⁴⁶ Kemalist Turks were completely against the idea of the Sanjak under Syrian rule. On the other hand, as stated earlier, not all the Turks of the region were of the same idea. Some voted in the elections and there were even some Turkish delegates elected to represent the Sanjak in the Syrian Parliament.¹⁴⁷ Turkish press claimed that those Turks who had voted in the elections primarily constituted

¹⁴² AY, Interview by the author, November 2008 and Elizabeth Angell, "Inventing Hatay: Turkish Nationalism, Minority Politics, and the Sanjak of Alexandretta Dispute," (Master's thesis, St. Anthony's College, 2005), 21.

¹⁴³ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstanlı, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 72.

¹⁴⁴ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 40.

¹⁴⁵ MAE, CP 516, Telegramme from Akverdi to the French Commissioner, 1936. See Appendix for a sample of the telegramme.

¹⁴⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, October 2, 1936 and *Tan*, October 1 and 6, 1936.

¹⁴⁷ The delegates were from the Adalı and Kuseyri families

officials serving in the Syrian government who had voted with the fear of losing their jobs. Furthermore, Turkish delegates were blamed for being spineless and those who were selling out the nationalist cause.¹⁴⁸ There were even statements that they were forced to vote by the French.¹⁴⁹ The Turkish delegates were claimed to be traitors by the Kemalist nationalists; huge demonstrations took place in front of their houses right after the declaration of the election results.¹⁵⁰

Although the Turkish population of the Sanjak enjoyed certain rights the Turkish Republic wanted more than minority rights for the Turkish population of the Sanjak,¹⁵¹ because the majority of the population was claimed as to be of Turkish origin.¹⁵² After futile negotiations between France and Turkey concerning a better administration in the Sanjak, the issue was taken to the League of Nations in 1936.¹⁵³

The League of Nations appointed Mr. Sandler as the rapporteur for the Sanjak issue.¹⁵⁴ He prepared a preliminary report on December 16, 1936 with suggestions for the parties involved. He recommended that Franco-Turkish negotiations continue while a committee of observers formed by the League of Nations go to the field and comment

¹⁴⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, November 22, 1936 and *Tan*, October 14, 1936.

¹⁴⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, December 2 and 6, 1936, January 4, 1937 and *Tan*, November 16, 1936 and December 2, 1936.

¹⁵⁰ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 35. and *Tan*, December 5-7, 1936.

¹⁵¹ *Tan*, September 23, 29 and 30, 1936.

¹⁵² Armenians and Alawites were claimed to be on the Turkish side and this claim was supported by the number of people wearing brimmed hats symbolizing the Kemalists. *Cumhuriyet*, November 1 and 15, 1936. October 5, 12, 14, 16 and 24, 1936 and *Tan*, November 17, 1936.

¹⁵³ *League of Nations Official Journal*, December 1936.

¹⁵⁴ *League of Nations Official Journal*, December 16, 1936.

on the final situation in the Sanjak.¹⁵⁵ Sandler's suggestions and the preliminary report were accepted by Turkey, France and the League of Nations.¹⁵⁶ During the negotiations with the French, the Turkish side suggested forming a confederation, which will include the Sanjak and Syria. However, it was not accepted by the French.¹⁵⁷

The arrival of the committee of observers was met with excitement in the Sanjak because different groups of the region regarded it as an opportunity to show their numbers and demonstrate their religious or ethnic identities.¹⁵⁸ With the Committee of Observers' help, rapporteur Sandler finalized his report on January 27, 1937 and this provided the opportunity for the Turks and the French to reconcile. The Sanjak was established as a "distinct entity" with Turkish as the official language. The status of "distinct entity" was invented specially for the Sanjak case and approved at the League of Nations in May 1937.¹⁵⁹ In addition to these recommendations, a Committee of Experts would be formed to prepare the new statute and the Fundamental Law of the Sanjak.¹⁶⁰

The Committee of Experts arrived at the Sanjak in February 1937.¹⁶¹ According to the new Statute and the Fundamental Law prepared by the League of Nations, new

¹⁵⁵ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 53.

¹⁵⁶ TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Volume 13, 160. and *League of Nations Official Journal*, January 27, 1937.

¹⁵⁷ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Arşivi, A:IV-18:C, D:74-I, F: 22-9 and *Cumhuriyet*, December 23, 1936.

¹⁵⁸ *Tan*, December 22, 1936. and Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 69 and 78.

¹⁵⁹ Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 66.

¹⁶⁰ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 78.

¹⁶¹ *League of Nations Official Journal*, February 25, 1938.

borders were set for the Sanjak and the regions of Bayır, Bucak, and Hazne were left out of the Sanjak. Since these were areas where mainly the Turkmen tribes lived, the Turks blamed the League of Nations and the French for altering the population ratio of the Sanjak.¹⁶²

After the approval of the Sandler Report in the League of Nations, the next step was the Sanjak elections. As a distinct entity, the Sanjak was going to have its own parliament consisting of certain numbers of deputies that were fixed according to the number of voters who registered in each community. The elections would take place after the registration of the voters by religious and ethnic group was completed.¹⁶³

The idea behind such kind of a registration rooted from the Western understanding that every person has a single identity. The League of Nations suggested that it would be easy to categorize people according to their religious or ethnic background. The aim of the registrations was to categorize the population according to their historic community.¹⁶⁴ Mother tongue, beliefs, and ethnic belonging were assumed to be singular for everybody. However, this one-dimensionality was never the case for Middle Eastern countries where many kinds of identities overlap in one person.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, both ethnicity and religion were listed separately in the identity groups

¹⁶² Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 69.

¹⁶³ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 171.

¹⁶⁴ Angell, "Inventing Hatay," 19.

¹⁶⁵ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 9.

assumed of the Sanjak.¹⁶⁶ Such categorization was going to be made by the registration personnel who would decide on an individual's community.

Turkish Republic asked for a change in the electoral regulations suggesting that each voter should choose his community regardless of affiliations and documentation. The Turkish delegate to the League of Nations denied the fact of mutually exclusive groups and claimed that language would not be reliable evidence in distinguishing different communities, because many residents of the Sanjak were bilingual. Furthermore the Turkish delegation refused to allow the presence of an electoral commission to decide on people's identities and wanted the local population to declare their identity to the commission without evidentiary documentation. The Committee of Experts was convinced that each person should have the right to choose his own community.¹⁶⁷

The existence of both "Alawite" and "Turk" categories was found to be problematic by the Turkish authorities, as this duality would make choosing difficult for the Alawites who were assumed to be supporting the Turkish cause. In the same manner, the existence of the categories 'Sunni Muslim' and 'Turk' was not suitable, because non-Kemalist Turks were seen to register under the 'Sunni Muslim' or 'Others' category rather than the 'Turk'.¹⁶⁸ The French were blamed by the Arabs to be acting on the Turkish side and forcefully bringing non-Kemalist Turks, who did not want to register,

¹⁶⁶ Suggested groups were Turks, Alawites, Arabs, Armenians, Greek Orthodox, Kurds and Others.

¹⁶⁷ *League of Nations Official Journal*, February 1938: 93-95.

¹⁶⁸ Sanjian, "*The Sanjak of Alexandretta*," 156.

to the registration offices and registering them as ‘Turk’ rather than ‘Sunni Muslim’ or ‘Others’.¹⁶⁹ Another request of the Turkish government was that the groups who could be registered under the category of ‘Others’ should be made clear and only Circassians, Jews, Catholics, Maronites and other small communities should be allowed to register under this category, so that non-Kemalist Turks would not be registered as ‘Others’.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, the Turkish press was writing news reports describing all Turks acting together in line with the Kemalist ideals.¹⁷¹

It was not only the Kemalist Turks who were trying to manipulate the population to change the results for their benefit. Arab nationalists who were aspiring to unite the region with greater Syria were united under the League of National Action led by Zaki Al-Arsuzi. They were for the idea of an independent Arab state and tried to convince the Sanjak Alawites to support their cause. They fiercely opposed the Kemalist Turks and destroyed the hats of the Alawite Turkophiles, because wearing such brimmed hats was the symbol of the Kemalists.¹⁷² Al-Arsuzi was an Alawite, but he did not want a separate Alawite state. On the contrary, he worked for the unification of the Arabs of the region irrespective of their religion. Although a separate category of ‘Alawite’ existed, he insisted that the Alawites were Arabs and should register under the ‘Arab’ category. Similar to the case of the Turks of the Sanjak, not all of the Alawites supported Al-

¹⁶⁹ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 176-177.

¹⁷⁰ Satloff, “Prelude to Conflict,” 159.

¹⁷¹ *Cumhuriyet*, October 3, 1936.

¹⁷² Sofuoğlu and Dağıstan, *İşgalden Katılıma Hatay*, 70.

Arsuzi, because they blamed him for declaring himself as belonging to the Arab rather than the Alawite community and found him unsuitable as their representative.¹⁷³

On the other hand, Kemalist Turkish nationalists claimed that the Alawites were originally Turks and should register under the category 'Turk'. In addition to such claims appearing in the national and local printed media, when directly contacting the Alawite population of the Sanjak, Turkish nationalists were promising better living conditions and religious freedom. Their leaders were made sure that they would practice their religion freely and they were even taken to Anatolia to see the conditions that Anatolian Alevis were living in. Turkish propaganda was not limited to Alawites of the region; attempts were also made to convince the Circassians and Kurds to be registered as Turks. There was news on the Turkish newspapers that the Kurds were afraid of the Arab rule, because this would be their end.¹⁷⁴

When the registrations ended on May 22, 1937, the people who were registered under the category of "Turk" was 47%.¹⁷⁵ The Turkish Republic blamed the French for not providing the secure environment for the voters to register as Turks. Therefore, these results were not acceptable and the Ankara government openly stated that under such conditions, Franco- Turkish relations would worsen at the eve of a new war.

The international environment was also effective on how the French answered Turkish claims concerning the Sanjak issue. Since Europe was in the eve of a new war,

¹⁷³ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 179.

¹⁷⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, November 20, 1936.

¹⁷⁵ Sarah Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 192.

any kind of support from a country having sole control over the straits and a very strategic geo-political position would be invaluable. For this reason, the French High Commissioners were given the orders to get along well with Turkey.¹⁷⁶ According to Sanjian, it was later to be confirmed by the French official Bennet¹⁷⁷ that France made a secret agreement with Turkey, referred also as “de Tessen-Menemencioğlu Accord, on March 10, 1937-long before the registration procedure was completed- assuring the Turks that the majority of the seats in the Sanjak Parliament will be kept for them.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, Turkish nationalists blamed the French and the Arabs for not letting people freely choose their identity during the registrations. Therefore, the results of the registrations in 1937 did not reflect the truth at all.¹⁷⁹

The radical groups of both Turks and Arabs were trying to get the majority of the votes even if such attempts required the use of force over the voters through street fights or raids on the opposite group.¹⁸⁰ This medium of threat and violence was becoming too much for the residents to handle. Because the tension in the region was brewing and the negotiations between France and Turkey were not going well, the mandate regime declared martial law on June 3, 1937.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Roger Garreau as cited in Sanjian, “*The Sanjak of Alexandretta*,” 282.

¹⁷⁷ Sanjian, “*The Sanjak of Alexandretta*,” 171.

¹⁷⁸ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 194.

¹⁷⁹ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 89.

¹⁸⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, December 2, 1936.

¹⁸¹ *Cumhuriyet*, December 9, 1936.

According to Shields, when the Syrian government and the population learned of a secret agreement signed between Turkey and France concerning the majority of the seats of the Sanjak parliament, the Syrian government was surprised and the population believed that the French had betrayed them. Different groups of the Sanjak were also disappointed and around 100 people moved out of the Sanjak with the fear of a Turkish invasion. They were accepted as refugees in Aleppo and some of them went to the Italian consulate and asked for Italian intervention.¹⁸² According to the mandate's director of security in Beirut, these individuals were Armenians, Christians, and Muslims.¹⁸³

The activities of the Electoral Commission were criticized by the Turks and the Arabs of the Sanjak. Both sides blamed them for working for the benefit of the other group. Furthermore, violence continued in the Sanjak in relation to the registration process. Under these harsh conditions, the Electoral Commission decided to end registration operations until things would be settled.¹⁸⁴

Following the Electoral Commission's departure, Turkey and France made a military agreement to end the violence in the Sanjak. The Franco-Turkish Military Agreement, signed on July 4, 1938, enabled Turkish troops to enter the Sanjak.¹⁸⁵ The ongoing rumor of Turkish invasion was thought to be realized by most of the Sanjak population and many people left the Sanjak. Those who emigrated were Christians,

¹⁸² Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 206- 207.

¹⁸³ MAE, CP 518, June 10, 1938.

¹⁸⁴ Sanjian, "*The Sanjak of Alexandretta*," 169.

¹⁸⁵ Ada, *Hatay Sorunu*, 171.

Alawites, Armenians and many other communities together with the Turks who rejected the Kemalist ideology.¹⁸⁶

The French Mandate government appointed Abdurrahman Melek as the mayor of the Sanjak. At the beginning this appointment caused great opposition by the Kemalist groups, because Melek was perceived to be collaborating with the French. However, after the declaration of the Sanjak's consul general that he played a role in this appointment, the Kemalists were swayed.¹⁸⁷ There were other changes in the important posts of the Sanjak and the French and Turkish governments decided to continue and finalize the registrations after a long break due to the continuing violence in the Sanjak.

The results of the registrations were announced on August 2, 1938 as 35,847 Turks, 11,319 Alawites, 5,504 Armenians, 1,845 Arabs and 2,098 Greek Orthodox.¹⁸⁸ The Turkish population constituted 63% of the entire population and the sharing of the seats was as follows: Turks 22, Alawites 9, Armenians 5, Arabs 2 and the Greek Orthodox 2.¹⁸⁹

On September 2, 1938, the Sanjak Assembly opened its first session with Mehmet Adalı, the oldest member. Abdülğani Türkmen was elected as the President of the Assembly with the two Vice Presidents: Sheikh Maruf (Alawite) and Vedi Münir

¹⁸⁶ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 82. and Satloff, "Prelude to Conflict," 176.

¹⁸⁷ Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*, 101-102. and Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 49.

¹⁸⁸ Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta," 181.

¹⁸⁹ Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*, 14.

(Turkish). The President of the Sanjak was unanimously chosen as Tayfur Sökmen.¹⁹⁰ The Cabinet was appointed and consisted entirely of Turks.¹⁹¹ The first action of the Assembly was to adopt the name “Hatay” for their state. Following that, the Turkish national anthem was accepted as the national anthem of Hatay and the Hatay State’s flag was accepted as the Turkish flag with a slight change where the inner part of the star was red. Turkish criminal and penal codes were adopted in January 1939. Turkish lira was adopted as the currency; postage stamps were also imported from Turkey.¹⁹²

An important point was that both the president and the prime minister of the Hatay State continued to have seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Tayfur Sökmen even stated in the local newspaper *Yenigün* that in the position of the President of the Republic of Hatay, he was capable of executing the orders of Atatürk and İsmet İnönü.¹⁹³

The changing conditions in Europe signaled the world’s heading towards another war; in the event of such an outcome, France was more interested in obtaining Turkey’s support. The issue of the Sanjak was very important for the Turkish government and the solution of the issue in favor of Turks was put forward as a prerequisite for the requested Turkish support. Throughout the process, Turkey was more or less able to turn the events concerning the Sanjak to her benefit. On June 23, 1939 the final step was taken

¹⁹⁰ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 62.

¹⁹¹ For the whole list of the Cabinet please see Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 65.

¹⁹² Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 66-78.

¹⁹³ *Yenigün*, September 3, 1938.

and the Franco-Turkish Agreement Ceding Hatay to Turkey was signed between France and Turkey.¹⁹⁴

After the Franco-Turkish Agreement ceding Hatay to Turkey, the Hatay Assembly held its last session on June 29, 1939 and decided unanimously to dissolve itself to join Turkey as its 63rd province.¹⁹⁵ This decision was officially the end of the Hatay State. In the summer of 1939, approximately 50,000 refugees including 22,000 Armenians, 10,000 Alawites, 10,000 Arab Sunnis and 5,000 Christians of various denominations left Hatay for Syria and Lebanon.¹⁹⁶ The total population of the Sanjak was recorded as 219,000 in 1936.

The Agreement signed between France and Turkey on June 29, was a declaration that no barriers were left to stop Turkey from joining Hatay into its borders. Although there had been much opposition from other countries on this agreement, Turkey annexed Hatay on July 23, 1939.¹⁹⁷ After the annexation, the Anglo-Franco-Turkish Mutual Assistance Treaty was signed on October 19, 1939.¹⁹⁸ On the eve of the World War II, Turkey, France and England reached their aims while Syria still waited for the French to ratify the Franco –Syrian Treaty of Alliance which would usher in its independence.

¹⁹⁴ Yücel Güçlü, “The Controversy over the Delimitation of the Turco-Syrian Frontier in the Period between the two World Wars,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, No 4, (July 2006): 654.

¹⁹⁵ Ada, *Hatay Sorunu*, 204.

¹⁹⁶ Keith Watenpugh, ““Creating Phantoms”: Zaki al-Arsuzi, the Alexandretta Crisis, and the Formation of Modern Arab Nationalism in Syria,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, No 3, (1996): 377.

¹⁹⁷ Resmi Gazete, 11.07.c 1939, No: 4255 (Code No: 3711).

¹⁹⁸ Satloff, “Prelude to Conflict,” 176.

2.4 Conclusion

Analyzing the Sanjak history from the Ottoman reign until the annexation shows us that the administrative system during the Ottoman Empire was established in order not to damage the multi-ethnic and multi religious structure of the Sanjak region, but the same region had become the periphery of the international capitalist network beginning with the invasion of Mehmet Ali Pasha's forces. Therefore, the international actors accepted the region to be an area that should be penetrated in the pre- and post- World War I projects due to social variety it contained. The situation after the World War I can be interpreted as the reactions and adaptations that the residents of the region developed to these penetration efforts.

During the Ottoman reign, local notables enjoyed political and economic privileges. The Ottoman rulers cooperated with the local elites; later when their privileges were revoked, rebellions took place. In addition, the position of the non-Muslims had become an important subject when the international conjuncture changed and Western powers began to be interested in the Sanjak region.

It was at the eve of the World War I that the Allied Forces benefited from the weak position of the Ottoman Empire in applying their plans in the Sanjak region. The increasing importance of the region due to its strategic position as well as serving as a source of goods and men for the Allied Forces brought this remote area of the Ottoman Empire to the international agenda.

The “national character” of the Sanjak of Alexandretta had become a problem between the Turkish and Arab nationalists. Both Arab and Turkish nationalists believed that the statistical information about the national character of the region would clearly state its belonging. If the registration results show that the majority of the population was Turkish or Arab, this majority would have the right to decide for its own future with the approval of the international actors. Therefore, the two parties were in a serious struggle to prove their dominance in terms of population in the Sanjak.

The people of the Sanjak were exposed to nationalist propaganda by both the Turks and the Arabs, each trying to convince the local inhabitants to choose a side in their struggle. The failed attempt of some of the Sanjak residents for the establishment of autonomy in the region and the indoctrination about their ethnic origins show that the Sanjak region actually became an area where various political and economic interests clashed. When the final results of the pre-election registrations are considered, non-Turkish population also registered as Turks, but it is not possible to come up with exact numbers. It is questionable whether the nationalist propaganda, the content of which will be analyzed in Chapter 4 below, affected them and they chose to register as Turks or the changing political conditions and the rising power of the Turkish Republic in the region obliged them to take side on the winning party.

CHAPTER 3

CLASH OF TWO NATIONALISMS: ARAB AND TURKISH NATIONALISMS IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA

Both Turkish and Arab nationalist propaganda influenced the Sanjak due to its geographic position between these two emerging nationalisms. In order to explain the unique case of the Sanjak within the general study of Turkish nationalism, explanation of the history of Turkish nationalism is required as well as its encounter and clash with Arab nationalism within the borders of the Sanjak.

Transition from an empire to a nation state was a process that obliged the definition of a new national identity. In multi-ethnic and multi-religious regions such as the Sanjak, defining a nation, based on a single ethnic or religious identity, posed more difficulties for the nation builders than doing so anywhere else, because a mixed population does not enable identifying individuals with one ethnic or religious identity. Therefore, this thesis claims that the kind of nationalist propaganda carried out in the

Sanjak aimed to include as many people as possible within the new nation by using a flexible, if not pragmatist, approach. The specific characteristics upon which the Turkish nationalists constructed the nation, this study argues, were discursively ethnicist and pragmatically inclusive.

In order to better explain the nature of Kemalist Turkish nationalism, theories of nationalism are briefly explained with a focus on Benedict Anderson, Ernest Renan, and Ernest Gellner. These scholars adopted constructivist approach to nationalism, which would explain the formation of the Turkish nation better. Following the theories of nationalism, the origins of Turkish nationalism beginning from the late Ottoman period are clarified. Ottomanism, Turanism and Turkism are explained to give a brief information about the way in which a nationalist idea was shaped within the Empire. This study emphasizes the emergence of Kemalist nationalism due to the critical role it played in the Sanjak through propaganda activities. The formation of a new Turkish national identity and the way in which education was used are the next issues discussed in this chapter. After explaining the evolution of Turkish nationalism, the emergence of Arab nationalism in Syria is taken into consideration. Arab nationalism was effective in a broad area in the Middle East, but its evolvement in Syria is more relevant than any other part for this study. Therefore, the examples are chosen among the nationalists of Syria including Butrus al-Bustani and his nationalist ideas to trace the transition from Ottomanism to Arab nationalism in this part of the Middle East. The manner in which Arab intellectuals changed their minds from believing in the possibility of the multi-ethnic Ottoman nation to the idea of a need to form an Arab nation is explained by focusing on the intellectual life in Syria. Lastly, the effects of Arab nationalism in the

Sanjak are discussed with a special reference to Zaki Al-Arsuzi as one of the most active Arab nationalists of the Sanjak of Alexandretta.

3.1 Theoretical Approaches to Nationalism

There are three different approaches to nationalism in terms of positing the origins of a nation: the first is the primordialist conception; the second, the ethnicist conception; and the third, the constructivist conception. Advocates of primordialism accept nations and ethnic communities as historical elements and inseparable parts of the human experience.¹⁹⁹ According to this viewpoint, nations and nationalisms have always existed and they are natural.²⁰⁰ Ethnicists are similar to the primordialists in their approach towards ethnicity as the historical core of a nation, but unlike primordialists, this group believes that ethnicity is perennial.²⁰¹ The formation of a nation from ethnicity, for them, is a new phenomenon. Constructivists, on the other hand, assume that a nation is a political and cultural construct.²⁰² According to them, neither ethnicity nor nations are natural historical units. Nationalism creates the elements of ethnic myths and also constructs what is called the national language. Therefore, it is nationalism that creates both ethnicity and nation.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 37.

²⁰⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 12.

²⁰¹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 35.

²⁰² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1984), 15.

²⁰³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6.

Theories concerning the origins of a nation need special attention in order to explain the emergence of Turkish nationalism. In addition, when the target and the methods of Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak are taken into consideration, the constructivist approach proves to be more relevant to the Turkish case. The ideas of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Ernest Renan on the constructed nature of nations matter for this study, because the methods of Turkish nationalists resemble mostly the ideas and methods of nation formation revealed by these scholars. In what follows are the ideas of the above-mentioned scholars on nations and nationalisms.

19th century French scholar, Ernest Renan (1823-1892) suggested that nation is “a spirit and a spiritual principle” and there are two elements making this spirit: the first one is the common legacy of memories and the second one is the desire to live together under current conditions and the desire to keep the value of the above-mentioned legacy. Renan emphasizes the role of history, common victories, sufferings, mistakes and sentiments in the formation of the nations. Common history is important, but the desire to live together in the present and in the future is as important for the formation of the nation. Therefore, the nation is an “everyday plebiscite”.²⁰⁴

Ernest Gellner (1925-1995) accepts nation to be a political artifact. It is always nationalism that creates the nation. According to him, nationalism prepares the political framework for the nation to form. The process of formation of the nation state starts with the rise of nationalism. The main condition for the nations to rise is the ‘great

²⁰⁴ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, trans. Martin Thom, ed. Homi Bhabha (New York: Routledge Books, 1990), 11.

divide,' which is the transition from pre-industrial to industrial societies, because for him, nationalism is mainly a result of industrialism.

Gellner explains how nationalism forms the nations by producing a common culture. According to him, "culture means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating."²⁰⁵ Gellner mentions two types of culture; one is a wild culture and the other is a garden culture: the first one emerging on its own while the second one needs literacy and special personnel to maintain it.²⁰⁶

According to Gellner, garden culture consists of two cultures. One is high culture and the other is low. High culture refers to the culture particularly of pre-industrial elites. They are the ones who produced it and this culture was not accessible by all. High culture did not depend on political power but the cohesion of the ruling elite. Low culture is the popular, universal culture and plays an important role in the emergence of the nations because it is actually the culture of a certain group that is made into a popular culture as an outcome of the process of nationalism. Nationalist elites work in such a way that the people are made to believe that they all share this new culture. It is even suggested to be the culture of their ancestors. Change and the homogenization of the language is just one of the steps to construct a common culture.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 7.

²⁰⁶ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms*, 8-9.

²⁰⁷ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms*, 12.

Benedict Anderson (1936-) suggests that nation is an “imagined community” and it is the best thing to fill the gap of meaning that was given to people by religion earlier.²⁰⁸ Anderson suggests that there are mainly three conditions for imagined communities to arise: the first is the emergence of capitalism as a socio-economic form; the second is the development of the modern printing press and the third condition is the existence of vernacular languages some of which are wiped out for the sake of the “national language.”²⁰⁹ All these factors reshape the culture and form a new identity so that people feel a sense of belonging to the same community.

A very similar process with what is suggested by Gellner was observed in the Sanjak when the Kemalist nationalists worked for the formation of a Turkish nation. Instead of the high culture of the traditional elites of Antakya, the low culture of the Amik Beys was supported and disseminated among the Turkish population of the Sanjak. Amik Beys had the land and the money; however they were not accepted among the elites of the Sanjak by the traditional elites. When Turkish nationalist propaganda increased to influence the Sanjak population, the Amik Beys were the first supporters. They saw the possibility of the formation of the new elite of the Sanjak by supporting the Kemalist ideals. The Ottoman heritage that created the earlier elites was suddenly renounced for the sake of the new opportunities, which may arise with the new national identity that the Kemalist nationalism tried to form. Correspondingly, Kemalist nationalism chose Amik Beys as their representatives in the Sanjak due to their potential

²⁰⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1984), 16.

²⁰⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 46.

as supporters of the new ideology and their “low culture” was suitable for the people of the Sanjak.

After discussing Gellner, Anderson and Renan’s theories of nationalism, it is possible to state that Kemalist nationalist propaganda used many aspects mentioned in these theories. The formation of a common culture for the people belonging to different ethnic and religious backgrounds was the main action and the dissemination of this culture was accomplished by using many of the tools indicated in these approaches including the printing press and education.

3.2 Origins of Turkish Nationalism

The emergence of Turkish nationalism is a process that needs to be explained in detail before delving into its activities in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. The Sanjak issue had come to occupy Turkish politics beginning with the 1920s and it became a central issue in the late 1930s. By the time Turkish nationalist propaganda gained momentum in the Sanjak, this propaganda evolved from Ottomanism to Kemalist nationalism. In the following part, the evolution of Turkish nationalism will be explained beginning with Ottomanism, and then Turanism, and finally Turkish nationalism/Turkism and Kemalist nationalism. The emergence of these ideas did not necessarily follow a historical sequence, but for the sake of clarity they are taken into consideration one after the other so as to demonstrate what kind of ideas were suggested to form a new nation from the remains of the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of Kemalist nationalism is explained including the earlier ideas that influenced it and the discussions concerning Kemalist

nationalism's relation with the concept of race. Finally, the national identity formation process of Kemalist nationalism and the role of education as a means of disseminating the nationalist ideology are clarified.

As the focus of studies on nationalism shifts from Europe to other parts of the world, identifying and categorizing the roots of nationalism were transformed. Since the idea of nationalism originated from France, different countries showed various reactions to it; in our case, the Turkish Republic adopted it “as a revolution from above” in order to survive its impact. Studies on nationalism in different parts of the world i.e. Asia and Turkey have emerged in the last two or three decades. Partha Chatterjee,²¹⁰ for instance, discusses the experience of nationalism in the post-colonial world. In his work, the dichotomy of Western and non-Western models of nationalism is clarified as he argues that the post-colonial countries divide institutions and social practices into two domains: the material domain of the “outside” and the spiritual domain of the “inner.” Accordingly, Western science and technology make up the outside while cultural characteristics of the post-colonial country form the inner domain.²¹¹

Namık Kemal²¹² supported a similar division when looking for ways for the survival of the Ottoman Empire: the cultural values of the Empire should be saved while

²¹⁰ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 58-60.

²¹¹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World*, 59.

²¹² Namık Kemal (1840 Tekirdağ-1888 Chios) was a writer, journalist, statesman, poet and a member of the Young Ottoman movement and counted among the pioneers of Turkish nationalism due to his influence over the founders of the Turkish Republic including Atatürk. Moreover, Namık Kemal was the first thinker to use the word “Vatan” to define the country.

the technological advancements of the West are implemented. Ziya Gökalp²¹³ was inspired by Kemal's idea of separating culture and technological advancements. Gökalp²¹⁴ perceives “*medeniyet*” as an international culture. *Medeniyet* included technological advancements for the sake of humankind. On the other hand, he discusses the notion of “*hars*” consisting of cultural characteristics specific to Turkish society. When championing to adopt nationalism, Gökalp argues that Turkish people should also enter into “the circle of Western civilization.” To maintain certain characteristics of the Turkish people, however, Turkish *hars* should carefully be preserved, cultivated, and advanced.²¹⁵

Taking Turkish nationalism into account within its own terms requires examining the modernization process from the late Ottoman Empire to the Early Turkish Republic. The classical Ottoman political theory was based on the idea of Circle of Justice and the *Millet* system, aiming a harmonious social order whose guardian was the state. In Halil İnalcık's²¹⁶ words, “harmony among men living in society was achieved only by statecraft, which kept each individual in his proper place.” As the Ottomans faced a serious challenge from the West, progress or modernization became inevitable for the survival of the state. The state was still the main actor, but this time as the applier

²¹³ Ziya Gökalp (1876 Diyarbakır- 1924 İstanbul) was writer, sociologist, poet and politician. He served as a parliamentarian both in the First Turkish Parliament and the Grand National Assembly. He is among the founders of Turkish nationalism and his ideas were influential on Republican nationalists.

²¹⁴ Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 302.

²¹⁵ Akif Kireççi, *Decline Discourse and Self Orientalization in the Writings of Al-Tahtawi Taha Husayn and Ziya Gökalp*, (PhD Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 2007), 151-156.

²¹⁶ Halil İnalcık, “The Nature of the Traditional Society: Turkey,” in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. R. Ward and D. Rustow, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 3.

of modernization and provider of progress instead of being the maintainer of the existing order.²¹⁷ In order to keep different subjects of the Empire together around the idea of Ottomanism, a series of reforms were made to modernize the social and the political structure.²¹⁸

For a complete understanding of the Turkish nationalism as it is today, one has to look at the Ottoman Empire, its social structure, political context and the development of intellectual thought. A series of political events produced significant results in the establishment of a national identity.²¹⁹

The traumatic results of the Balkan Wars (1912- 1913) affected the ruling elite negatively and they lost their belief in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious Empire and turned to the Turks within the Empire.²²⁰ All the defeats and the criticism that came after them would produce a discourse that would make the Turks regain self-esteem, prove their greatness, show their centuries old existence in Anatolia, and their ability to establish great states similar to the neighboring nations such as those of the Greeks and the Armenians.²²¹

²¹⁷ Akman, "Modernist Nationalism," 34.

²¹⁸ Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-party System*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 443.

²¹⁹ Kemal Karpat, "Historical Continuity and Identity Change," in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 22.

²²⁰ Mardin, "The Ottoman Empire," 117.

²²¹ Etienne Copeaux, *Ders Kitaplarında (1931- 1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 15.

The wide range of dramatic events and threatening situations such as the Crimean War (1854-1855), Treaty of San Stefano and Berlin Conference (1878), and finally the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) all created permanent marks on the collective memory of the people of the Empire. As a reaction to the repercussions from Europe, Turkish nationalism rose as a political ideology.²²² With a coup d'état in 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) became the ruling group and started representing Turkish nationalism²²³ vis-à-vis the non-Turks of the Empire.²²⁴ However, the birth of Turkish nationalism was not a sudden reaction. Other ideologies such as Ottomanism and Turanism developed during the late 19th century. None of these ideologies gained enough support thereby making the Turkish nationalism only viable ideology.

3.2.1 Ottomanism

In the Ottoman system, a common religious background was much more important than ethnic or racial commonality. With the increasing effect of nationalism in the nineteenth century, national identity surpassed religious affiliations at least among the non-Muslim groups first. In the Ottoman Empire, the failure to reform the millet system resulted in the adoption of a new secular ideology: Ottomanism.²²⁵ It was the

²²² Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 170.

²²³ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 27.

²²⁴ Ahmet Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene?* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), 30-36.

²²⁵ Hanioglu, "Turkish Nationalism," 85.

first time in the Ottoman Empire that nationalist thought has been politically articulated. Instead of emphasizing religious differences, the appropriate action seemed to be collecting all religious and ethnic groups under the umbrella of being an Ottoman. Within this Ottomanism ideal, Turkish nationalism remained as a cultural and linguistic area of interest.

Ottoman intellectuals, including Namik Kemal, had a strong belief in the Ottoman state and their ideas were all based on the continuity of the Ottoman state.²²⁶ The source of inspiration of Ottomanism was the continuation of the Empire based on the free will of different races, nations, languages, and religions to unite.²²⁷

3.2.2 Turanism

Pan-Turanism, Turanism or Pan-Turkism²²⁸ was first introduced by the Turkic immigrants from Russia. However, the leaders of this group including Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hüseyinzade Ali Turan, had accepted that the post-Balkan Wars situation in Anatolia was not suitable for a “Turani” nation that would involve all the

²²⁶ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), 283.

²²⁷ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 67.

²²⁸ Although it is hard to make a distinction among the concepts of Turanism, Turkism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism due to their interchangeable use by their founders, Turanism is mainly synonymous with pan-Turanism and can briefly be defined as a movement based on Turkish race on a geography so wide to determine its limits including the Finnish and the Hungarians in addition to all the Turks living around the world. Inclusion of the Finns and the Hungarians is based on the work of Leon Cahun, who claimed in 1896 that Finns and Japanese are also from the Turan race and together with Mongolians the Turans formed a bridge between the Chinese, Iranians and the Europeans for the transmission of civilization to Europe.

Turkic people.²²⁹ On the other hand, during the Balkan Wars Tekin Alp,²³⁰ stated that “Turkish irredentism had become a social and political necessity” and “a Turkish Union which would include all the Turks around the world, would create a strong nation which is worth having an honorable place among other nations. According to Tekin Alp, if this union would not be established, Ottoman Turks, who were not able to be the rulers of their own country, would face the threat of being divided by foreign powers.”²³¹

Turanism was more than just a cooperation among Muslims; it was a national or ethnic consciousness. Within this framework, Turanism was a sense of belonging to a strong and virtuous race.²³² Turanism, therefore, was a revivalist ideology to increase the Turkish nation’s belief in its capacity.²³³

Agreements signed between the Turkish Republic and Soviet Russia during the Turkish War of Independence and in 1925 totally banned Turanism. The Turkish Republic decided later to develop economic ties with other Turkic nations.²³⁴

²²⁹ Günay Göksu Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, 1931-1946* (Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 79.

²³⁰ Tekin Alp was an ideologue of the CUP.

²³¹ Jacob M. Landau, *Tekinalp, Turkish Patriot, 1883-1961*, (Leiden: Dutch Institute on Near East, 1984), 27.

²³² Copeaux, *Ders Kitaplarında*, 23.

²³³ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 75.

²³⁴ Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a*, 83.

3.2.3 Turkish Nationalism-Turkism

Turanism and Turkism were the most important ideologies that emerged in the Ottoman Empire after the Balkan Wars when the Ottoman intelligentsia realized that it was no longer possible to save the Empire, as a multi-national system. These two ideologies were quite similar, only having slight differences in terms of content. Both aimed at creating consciousness among the Turks living in and out of the Empire. However, Turkism did not have irredentist drives as did Turanism and served to strengthen the identity of the Ottoman Turks rather than claim the unity of Turkic race both in and outside the Empire.²³⁵

Turkish nationalism developed in close relationship with Turkish historiography. Nationalist thinkers were mostly involved in history writing. Yusuf Akçura was among the politically active Turkic nationalists in Russia opposing the Russian policies on the Turks of the region. He claimed in his well-known article “*Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*” (1904) that Turkism was among the strong possibilities. He based his claims on German style nationalist ideology, suggesting that race is the founding block of a nation. After discussing other possibilities, Akçura concluded that Turkism could be the ultimate ideology that would save the Ottoman Empire.²³⁶

Akçura used “unity of Turkic race” to emphasize the common cultural/ethnic heritage shared by the Turkic people around the world no matter their religious backgrounds. Akçura saw Turkism as a politically practical tool that can be used to

²³⁵ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 73.

²³⁶ Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, 33-34.

strengthen the Ottoman Empire.²³⁷ The romantic element for Turkist ideology was offered by Gökalg who popularized the legendary idea of “Turan.”²³⁸

Ziya Gökalg, whose works were very much effective on Turkish nationalism, supported Ottomanism during the early years of his intellectual career. As was mentioned earlier, in the early nineteenth century, many of the Turkish thinkers believed in the possibility of the revival of the Empire if Ottoman subjects would unite. However, there seems to be a “rupture” in Gökalg’s thought²³⁹ as he did not refer to the idea of Ottoman revival in his later works. He joined the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1897. After the 1908 Revolution, Ziya Gökalg was invited to Salonika to attend a CUP Congress, and after having been elected as a member of the Central Council, he stayed there until 1912.²⁴⁰

In his works, *Türkleşmek*, *İslamlaşmak*, *Muasırlaşmak* [Turkification, Islamization and Modernization] 1918 and *Türklüğün Esasları* [Principals of Turkism] 1923 Ziya Gökalg put forward some ideas that would later be seen in the official history discourse. The first of these is the representation of all political Turkic groups of Central Asia as organized states. Another idea shaped by Gökalg was the envisioning of a completely Turkic Eurasia. The last but not the least idea of his was the continuing

²³⁷ Yusuf Akçura, *1928 Yılı Yazıları* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), 5.

²³⁸ Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a*, 72-73.

²³⁹ Kireççi, “Decline Discourse,” 151.

²⁴⁰ Kireççi, “Decline Discourse,” 149.

existence of Turkic states from the Huns onwards.²⁴¹ These ideas were popularly used later by Kemalist ideologues as part of the official Turkish historiography.

According to Gökalp, the nation was the most developed social group and what held this group together were common language, religion, ethical, and aesthetic values.²⁴² Gökalp preferred the concept “ethnie” rather than race as the building block of nations because he believed that race has biological connotations while nation is a social group, which does not overlap with race. In Gökalp’s view, nationalist understanding based on ethnie-- resulting in the voluntary participation-- would form a larger political alliance.²⁴³ Gökalp suggested that Turkism was actually “bringing to mind what is already kept in subconscious,” meaning that the Turkish culture or ethnic identity existed before Ottoman and European values came to influence the Turkish people.²⁴⁴

Ziya Gökalp was influenced deeply by Durkheim who suggested that education is both a method of socialization as well as nationalization²⁴⁵ and thus it is possible to socialize people into a nation. Similar to Durkheim, Ziya Gökalp divides history into two strands: one an objective, impartial history and the other, national history. National history has the purpose to orient people. This kind of historiography is teleological and

²⁴¹ Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, ed. and trans. Niyazi Berkes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), 45.

²⁴² Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (Istanbul: Salkımsöğüt Yayınları, 2010), 16.

²⁴³ Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism, The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp* (London: Luzac, 1950), 17.

²⁴⁴ Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, trans. Niyazi Berkes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), 284-285.

²⁴⁵ Marion Mitchel, “Emile Durkheim and the Philosophy of Nationalism,” *Political Science Quarterly* V, 46 (1931): 96.

it contains values and has pedagogical characteristics. While objective history is the memory of the people, national history is their conscience.²⁴⁶

In addition to Durkheim, Gökalp is thought to be influenced by Herder in his ideas about language as one of the core elements creating the nation [*Volk*]. According to Herder, the nation is an organic cultural unit. Similarly, Gökalp believes that ethnic belonging could best be explained as sharing the same language and culture. The most important function of language is to transfer cultural heritage to the next generation through education.²⁴⁷ Gökalp even stated clearly that national education would turn every citizen-- even if they were of Albanian or Arabic origin and did not speak Turkish-- into Turkish and all those who define themselves as Turk should be accepted as Turks.²⁴⁸

3.2.4 Kemalist Nationalism

Kemalist nationalists of the early republican period were influenced by Ziya Gökalp's ideas on nationalism and historiography. From the two types of history that Gökalp put forward, they chose to emphasize national history in a very pragmatic way. Actually, Kemalist nationalism had an organic connection to CUP and Ziya Gökalp. Kemalist nationalism contained positivism and secularism as its philosophical basis.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Ziya Gökalp: İttihat ve Terakki ve Meşrutiyet Tarihi* (İstanbul: I. Berkalp Kitabevi, 1943), 213-214.

²⁴⁷ Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a*, 74.

²⁴⁸ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, 24-26.

²⁴⁹ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 90.

The rise of Turkish nationalism continued into the First World War. Empire's defeats by the Allies, collected people together under the umbrella of Turkish nationalism. As Ziya Gökalp states, in times of great political disasters, national feeling gains utmost ascendancy.²⁵⁰ The notion of sharing a common past and territory spread after the World War I among the Turkish-Muslim ethnies of the Empire.²⁵¹

When Mustafa Kemal started organizing a nationalist campaign against the occupying powers after the World War I in Anatolia, most of the upper echelons of the imperial military joined this struggle.²⁵² The leading group of this struggle united the Anatolian people by emphasizing their common religion, shared history and common territory. Leaders of the national struggle used the same notions as the guiding principles of the independence movement.²⁵³

After the successful completion of the World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal emerged as the sole leader of the new nation. So far Islam had united the Anatolian Turkish Muslims, but Mustafa Kemal designed a secular Turkish nationalist ideology.²⁵⁴ After 1924, Kemalist nationalism dropped references to Islam in its definition of the nation. The secular structure of Turkish nationalism was emphasized. Now having turned its back on Islam, the Ankara government came up

²⁵⁰ Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, 67.

²⁵¹ Mardin, *The Genesis*, 118.

²⁵² Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic," *World Politics* 11(4), (July 1959): 512–52.

²⁵³ Justin McCarthy, "Foundation of the Turkish Republic: Social and Economic Change," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19(2), (April 1983): 146.

²⁵⁴ Shaw and Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire*, 340. and Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 24.

with a new definition of the nation.²⁵⁵ Turkish territory was emphasized as the base of the nation. Sharing a common past, interest and desire to live together were stressed as the common denominator of the nation.²⁵⁶

The newly-established republic constructed a new identity for its citizens based on the perception of history that Anatolian civilizations were formed by the people who came from Central Asia. Attempts were made to link a direct connection between the Republic of Turkey and Central Asia so as to eradicate all the ideological and cultural accumulation of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish History Thesis was developed to prove that the Turks had a glorious history before Islamic and Ottoman eras and that the Turks shared the same civilization with the Western nations during antiquity. Old Turkish pagan symbols based on legends and fairy tales were used extensively to form connections between Central Asia and the Turkish Republic.²⁵⁷

Inspired by Ziya Gökalp's ideas, in the 1920s Kemalist nationalism emphasized unity in language. All citizens were expected to speak Turkish in order to be part of the Turkish nation. Territory, voluntarism, and language emerged as the markers of Turkishness.²⁵⁸ However, the ethnic diversity of the country showed that although

²⁵⁵ Kemal Karpat, "The Republican People's Party," in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Jacob Landau (London: Tauris, 1991), 50.

²⁵⁶ Afet İnan, *Medeni Bilgiler ve Atatürk'ün El Yazıları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1969), 364.

²⁵⁷ Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a*, 44.

²⁵⁸ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi* (Ankara, 1927), 5.

Turkish was among the common languages, there were several other languages that were widely spoken in the country in 1927.²⁵⁹

3.2.4.1 Kemalist Nationalism and Ethnicity

Kemalist nationalists of the early republican era were influenced both by French and German type of nationalisms in adopting a political identity together with a national-cultural identity based on Turkish language and the common past of the people living in the new state. Nationalists hoped that by bringing the fear of separation to the forefront, different subcultural identities would be assimilated under the new national identity.

The nature of this new national identity caused discussions among the scholars of Turkish nationalism. Some scholars²⁶⁰ claimed that the new national identity was based purely on Turkish ethnicity; such examples can be seen in the applications such as Turkish-only education system and a ban on ethnic identification²⁶¹ to facilitate the amalgamation of Anatolian Muslims into the Turkish nation.²⁶² During the late 1920s, a public campaign obliged people to speak only Turkish. The campaign was titled *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş* [Citizen Speak Turkish] and inaugurated on April 26, 1927 by

²⁵⁹ Fuat Dündar, *Türkiye Nüfus Sayımlarında Azınlıklar* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1999), 49.

²⁶⁰ Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a*, 296. and Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 16. and Leyla Neyzi, "Fragmented in Space: The Oral History Narrative of an Arab Christian from Antioch, Turkey," *Global Networks* 4, 3(2004), 285-297.

²⁶¹ Dündar, *Türkiye Nüfus Sayımlarında Azınlıklar*, 55-56

²⁶² Erik Jan Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists," in *Modern Turkey and Ottoman Past*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 179.

İnönü's speech at the annual convention of the Turkish Hearths stating that the government was going to transform all those who live in Turkey into Turks "no matter what happens".²⁶³ According to these scholars, the 1930s witnessed a growing ethnic based nationalism especially on the side of the Republican People's Party (CHP). Its by-laws, adopted at the 1931 Congress, stated that membership to the party was open to ethnic Turks and non-Turks who were assimilated.²⁶⁴

Scholars claiming Kemalist nationalism to be based on ethnicity suggested that the new nation was imagined to be an ethnically unified nation speaking only Turkish. Campaigns such as "Citizen, speak Turkish!" were perceived as the state's struggle to form a nation which is as unified as possible in terms of ethnic and linguistic structure. Accordingly, all other ethnic and religious groups were excluded from the new nation, as envisioned by the Kemalist nationalism.²⁶⁵

Physical and anthropological researches were conducted during the early years of the Republic as part of the efforts for racial unification. Such researches were represented as struggle to form causal relations between race, language and culture. According Taner Timur, Kemalist nationalism was ethnic based, if one speaks Turkish, s/he was considered Turkish or vice versa; this was the main idea behind Kemalist

²⁶³ Soner Çagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 25.

²⁶⁴ Çagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism*, 45.

²⁶⁵ Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a*, 17.

nationalist blueprint.²⁶⁶ Ethnic Turkishness was accepted as the new identity that took over Ottoman and Muslim identities.

Some other scholars²⁶⁷ of Turkish nationalism, on the other hand, argued that Kemalist nationalism was not racist, because what Kemalists tried to do was not the unification of an ethnic group but formation of a political group under a new ideology. All political opposition was banned and the founders of the Republic believed that a single politically defined national identity would be a great step towards the solution of problems in social, economic, and cultural areas.²⁶⁸ Westernization was presented as the single goal that the Turkish nation should focus on rather than discussing over their differences in ethnicity, religion, or language.²⁶⁹

Turkish nationalist acts, such as İsmet İnönü's speech about transforming all those living in Turkey into Turks, suggest the new national identity is based on Turkish ethnicity and the Nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak provides a special example for the inclusive and pragmatic ethnicist nature of Turkish nationalism that at one level tries to unite all communities under the constructed notion of Turkish ethnicity, while at another level degrades common linguistic and religious background.

²⁶⁶ Taner Timur, *Osmanlı Kimliği* (Istanbul: Hil Yayınevi, 1986), 102- 106.

²⁶⁷ See the works of Ayhan Akman, "Modernist Nationalism: Statism and National Identity in Turkey," *Nationalities Papers* 32, No 1, (March 2004), 32. and Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 98.

²⁶⁸ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 91-92.

²⁶⁹ Akman, "Modernist Nationalism," 12.

When the target of the nationalist propaganda²⁷⁰ is taken into consideration, the members of the Turkish nation were envisioned to be all those who accept to be part of the new nation. All of the local residents of the Sanjak were declared to be Turkish at first just like the ethnic nationalist approach in Anatolia, but the propaganda in the Sanjak also had a special aspect making it flexible and even pragmatist: the aim of convincing as many people as possible to register under the category of Turkish and towards this political aim, conservative Sunni Turks who chose to leave the Sanjak were accepted to be ignorable. Becoming part of this nation required accepting the reforms put forward by Atatürk and thus accepting the secular and modern lifestyle that these reforms brought about. Unlike strict racist nationalisms, the Sanjak example showed that if a person chose to be a “Turk”, based on the new definition, s/he was accepted to be a “Turk” by the Republican elite; and the person’s declaration was enough, but this approach did not change the ethnicist nature of the Turkish nationalist propaganda declaring everyone to be “Turks” by going as far back in history as the Hittites.

3.3 Origins of Arab Nationalism

When the Ottoman Empire came to dominate the region today known as the Middle East in 1517, Syrian and Egyptian lands were controlled by two different Mamluk families. The Ottoman Empire justified its control over the region by eradicating the Mamluk family in Syria while incorporating the Egyptian Mamluks into

²⁷⁰ See Chapter 4 of this thesis for the details of the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak.

the Ottoman system and letting them rule under the centrally appointed governor as long as they remained loyal to the Ottoman Sultan.²⁷¹

There are different views on the birth of Arab nationalism: the first one suggests that Arab nationalism emerged during the Ottoman rule beginning as early as the 18th century while the second one claims that Arab nationalism emerged as a reaction to the nationalist policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the early 20th century. A third approach criticizes these two approaches and holds both the CUP policies and the following imperialist intervention responsible for the emergence of Arab nationalism.

The orientalist approach accepts Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 as the beginning of a reform movement in the Arab world.²⁷² They claim that it was through Napoleon's invasion that the Arabs raised against the Turkish yoke. In addition, according to them, Napoleon taught the Arabs the enlightenment ideas of the French Republic, which led the Arabs to return to their own culture. Furthermore, it was through the exploration of the ancient Egypt by the orientalist, who came with Napoleon that enabled the Egyptians to meet their glorious pre-Islamic past.²⁷³

The followers of this approach accept Mehmet Ali Pasha to be a reformist who follows the footsteps of Napoleon. According to them, the reforms of Napoleon,

²⁷¹ David Ayalon, "The End of the Mamluk Sultanet: Why did the Ottomans Spare the Mamluks of Egypt and Wipe Out the Mamluks of Syria?" *Studia Islamica* 65, (1987), 125-148.

²⁷² See for instance J. Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 1984), 8-10.

²⁷³ M. Akif Kireççi, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Arap Milliyetçiliği* (Ankara, Grafiker Yayınları, 2012), 61.

continuing with Mehmet Ali Pasha, paved the way to the birth of Arab nationalism. They even claim that Mehmet Ali Pasha's rebellion against the Ottoman rule should be considered as part of Arab awakening.²⁷⁴

Another approach concerning the birth of Arab nationalism during the Ottoman rule suggests that Arab nationalism began with the Wahhabi revolts of the early 19th century. Wahhabis believe in the need of Arabs to go back to the pure version of Islam, practiced in the time of the Prophet Mohammed, from which they have alienated.²⁷⁵ Wahhabi revolts are counted among the reformist movements leading to Arab nationalism together with Mehmet Ali Pasha's rebellion.²⁷⁶ On the other hand, Wahhabi movements are also regarded as being borne in opposition to the reform and centralization efforts of the Ottoman Empire.²⁷⁷

The second view on the birth of Arab nationalism suggests that it emerged as a reaction to the policies of the CUP. According to this perspective, after the 1908 revolution and the dethronement of Abdülhamid II by the members of the CUP, the policies of the CUP resulted in the Arabs' secession from the idea of Ottomanism.²⁷⁸ According to the supporters of this approach, members of the CUP discriminated against

²⁷⁴ Kireççi, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 61-62.

²⁷⁵ For a detailed information about the Wahhabis see John S. Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910- 1930* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

²⁷⁶ George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London, 1938), 36-43.

²⁷⁷ Kireççi, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 62.

²⁷⁸ See Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; Sati' al-Husri, *Al-Bilad al- 'Arabiyya wa'l-Dawla al- 'Uthmaniyya*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dar al- 'Ilm li'l-Malayin, 1960); Amin Sa'id, *Al-Thawra al- 'Arabiyya al-Kubra*, 2 vols, (Cairo: 'Isal al-Babi al-Halabi, 1935-6); Sulayman Musa, *Al-Haraka al- 'Arabiyya: al Marhala al-Aula* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1970).

non-Turks. In addition, their secular ideas caused Muslim Arabs to dislike their policies. As a result of these policies, Arabs returned to their roots and looked for ways to separate themselves from the Ottoman rule.²⁷⁹

The view suggesting that Arab nationalism was born against the policies of the CUP was also criticized by more recent studies that could be accepted as a third approach. For instance, C. Ernest Dawn states that Arab nationalism was only a movement of a minority until 1918; but the Arab revolt, Britain's alliance with Sharif Husain and Ottoman Empire's defeat in the World War I left the notables of Syria and Iraq with no alternative but Arabism.²⁸⁰

These approaches to Arab nationalism take the period before the World War I into consideration and build their views within this era. The second phase of Arab nationalism began after the World War I, with the Ottoman Empire leaving the region to Britain and France. Therefore, World War I triggered a series of events leading to the evolvement of Arab nationalism. Although it would not be appropriate to talk about a nationalist movement supported by the whole population of the region, reactions against the occupiers could well be accepted as the beginning of a nationalist movement.²⁸¹ It was after the Allied Forces' defeat at Çanakkale that the British led Sharif Husain for an

²⁷⁹ Kireçci, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 65.

²⁸⁰ C. Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih and Reeva S. Simon (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991), 23.

²⁸¹ Kireçci, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 73.

Arab revolt by promising an independent state. Meanwhile, secret agreements concerning the partition of the region were signed by the Allied countries.²⁸²

3.4 Emergence and Evolvement of Arab Nationalism in Syria

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was faced with the challenge of nationalism on its lands. The ideas of nationalism had influenced Muslim as well as non-Muslim groups of the Empire. Nationalist discourse started to be increasingly used in the Arab lands by the Arab nationlists. Ottomanism was gradually giving way to Arab nationalism.

The transition from Ottomanism to Arab nationalism resulted from a series of political and social events that occurred within a time period that this study examines. Arabs in Syria, as an important part of the empire, did not act with nationalist themes from the very beginning. On the contrary, intellectuals such as Butrus al-Bustani were very hopeful about the reforms and wanted to continue membership in the Empire while prospering culturally. Political agenda followed first by the Committee of Union and Progress and later under the French mandatory rule radicalized the Arabs. Such an agenda led to the emergence of pan-Arabist Arab nationalism, which later was supplanted by more regional national movements.

²⁸² See Chapter 2 of this thesis for detailed information about these secret agreements.

3.4.1 An Intellectual and an Educator: Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883)

Parallel to the change of ideology at the center in the 19th century, Ottomanism found support in Syria. Among the strongest enthusiasts of Ottomanism and the Sultan was, a Lebanese scholar, Butrus al-Bustani. He was a western educated Christian Arab from Beirut. Butrus al-Bustani was born in 1819 in a village in Mount Lebanon. He was from a Maronite family.²⁸³ He was employed as a dragoman of the British forces.²⁸⁴ While he was in touch with the missionaries he accepted the Protestant faith,²⁸⁵ but with the change in his political views, he became increasingly disconnected from the missionaries. He believed in the need for a uniting power for the Syrian people and saw Hatt-ı Humayun (1839)²⁸⁶ as a great step for the integration of the entire Ottoman subjects to the political life. Having had close connections with the missionaries as well as being under the Ottoman rule for many years, he was able to compare the two in terms of their approach to the Arabs of the region. Ardent supporters of Ottomanism among the Christian Arabs were rare in the relevant region. Al-Bustani's thoughts, therefore, deserve a closer examination.

²⁸³ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 99.

²⁸⁴ Butrus Abu-Maneh, "The Christians Between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, No. 3 (May, 1980), 289.

²⁸⁵ Adnan Mohammed Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine During the British Mandate* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973), 4.

²⁸⁶ Also known as *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* and *Tanzimat Fermanı*. This document was declared on November 3, 1839 during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid and it contained regulations concerning the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. Equality in military recruitment and economic and social affairs were among the most important issues taken into consideration in this document.

Butrus al-Bustani was one of the very prominent thinkers of the nineteenth century Syria. Within the lively intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire at the time, Butrus al-Bustani was influenced by the ideas debated in Istanbul, the other parts of the Empire, and the West.

The effects of the Egyptian occupation in 1831 could be seen both in political and social areas of Syria. New economic, political, and social ideas left such great marks on the minds of the Syrian intellectuals that some of them began to put forward ideas that portrayed Syria as a fatherland inhabited by a single and united society. Beirut was one of the leading cities in which these ideas were voiced. As an educator and a thinker, Butrus al-Bustani saw the need for the Syrian society to unite and abandon sectarianism and religious fanaticism. According to him, the umbrella under which different groups of this society could unite was Ottomanism.

He was convinced that the Ottoman reform would bring integration first within the non-Muslim groups and then amongst the Muslims. On the other hand, he believed that the missionaries' methods would not help to unite the Syrians but further disintegrate them.²⁸⁷ When the reforming acts of the Ottoman government and missionaries' negligence of the Arab culture were compared, the choice seemed clear for al-Bustani. Other Christian Arabs did not hesitate to follow him. This brought al-Bustani's political turn to Ottomanism.

With the changing structure of the millet system and as a result of western intervention, the "Reform Edict" of 1856 was put into use and al-Bustani perceived this

²⁸⁷ Abu-Maneh, "The Christians," 289-290.

document as the declaration of freedom for the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. He even expressed his gratitude and loyalty to Sultan Abdulmecid, in his journal *al-Jinan*, for granting this freedom.²⁸⁸ As an intellectual of the 19th century, al-Bustani was aware that religion was no longer the cement that could hold people together and patriotic solidarity took over as “the spirit of the age.”²⁸⁹ Religion could no longer be regarded as the uniting power, because nationalism had taken over.²⁹⁰ According to al-Bustani, the kind of Ottomanism that Ali and Fuad Pashas introduced defined the Ottoman subjects based on secular ideals. This kind of a definition should be embraced by the Arabs of the Empire, because only within a secular definition of identity could Syrian patriotism flourish.

Al-Bustani published advice sheets named “*Wataniyyat*” in which he argued for the need for unity and love among the different groups of Syria in order to build peace and security in the region.²⁹¹ Although al-Bustani’s ideas may seem akin to nationalism, he was not supporting the unity of the Syrian Arabs as a separate political entity. On the contrary, he saw the Ottoman rule as a balancing force both among different sects and a protection from foreign intervention and domination.²⁹² The common denominator for him was *Watan* [Homeland]; which included Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Trans-

²⁸⁸ Abu-Maneh, “The Christians,” 290.

²⁸⁹ Besam Tibi, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, trans. Taşkın Temiz (Istanbul: Yöneliş Yayınları, 1998), 205-206.

²⁹⁰ Abu-Maneh, “The Christians,” 296.

²⁹¹ Stephen Paul Sheehi, “Inscribing the Arab Self: Butrus al-Bustani and Paradigms of Subjective Reform,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no 1 (May 2000): 9.

²⁹² Ussama Makdisi, “After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, (2002), 604.

Jordan.²⁹³ These regions were called “Bilad al-Sham” or “Barr al-Sham” by the inhabitants.

In 1860, a bloody conflict between the Druze and the Maronites took place in Mount Lebanon. Following that, Muslims and Christians were in clash mostly due to economic reasons.²⁹⁴ Sectarian conflicts confirmed al-Bustani’s belief about the need for a source of solidarity other than the religious one. Particularly after these events, al-Bustani made a cultural self-criticism and based this national disunity and civil friction on the cultural decay that the Syrian Arabs were experiencing. At the beginning his suggestion was a patriotic solidarity among the Arabs under the Ottoman rule. After the 1860 events, he put forward the idea of a fatherland. In his articles he always mentioned forgiveness, unity and *hubb al-watan* [love of the homeland]. He called the Syrians “fellow countrymen” and signed his articles as “him who loves his country.”²⁹⁵

Together with his political approach, there was also a change in his perception of the missionary education. In an article he published in 1876, he showed his disillusionment of the religious purposes of the missionary schools. He stated that they were only interested in religiously influencing the children and taught their own

²⁹³ Kamal Salibi, “The 1860 Upheaval in Damascus as Seen by Al-Sayyid Muhammad Abu l-Su’ud al-Hasibi,” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 189.

²⁹⁴ David Commins, “Religious Reformers and Arabists in Damascus, 1885-1914,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no. 18 (1986): 406.

²⁹⁵ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 101.

languages. He was of the idea that there should be a common education system for all of the children of Syria in order to keep a single cultural identity.²⁹⁶

According to al-Bustani, there was an urgent need for an Arabic literary revival for the Arab subjects of the Empire and thus the Arabic language should be used as means of cultural regeneration. Al-Bustani thought of forming a collective consciousness among the Arabs of the Empire. This consciousness was not a political but a cultural solidarity through common language and culture. *Nafir Suriyya*, *al-Jinan* and *Muhit al-Muhit* (which he dedicated to Sultan Abdulaziz) are among his most famous works in Arabic.

His writings on the need for a cultural revival found support and fourteen leading Muslim and Christian intellectuals from Beirut formed a group to publish Arabic literature and history books with the aim of making these works accessible by all people.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, in 1868 al-Bustani established *al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya* [The Syrian Scientific Society] for the purpose of “working for the common benefit in issues of literature and art.”²⁹⁸ The society’s members included people from various religions and sects. Even Ottoman rulers approached it with favor; Fuad Pasha, for example, was among the honorary members of the society.²⁹⁹ All his work served the

²⁹⁶ Süleyman Uludağ, “Araplarda İnanç ve İdeoloji Hareketleri,” *Türkiye Günlüğü*, No:14, (1991): 40.

²⁹⁷ Tibi, *Arap Milliyetçiliği*, 206.

²⁹⁸ A.L. Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine* (London: Macmillan, St. Martin’s Press, 1969), 160.

²⁹⁹ Abu-Maneh, “The Christians,” 292.

aim of uniting various communities of Syria under a single Syrian Arab identity by forming a patriotic solidarity.

Although al-Bustani is considered among the founding fathers of Arab nationalism, he was a strong supporter of the Ottoman Sultan. His ideas revolved around the issue of Arab cultural revival and the strengthening of the Arab language. At the political level, he believed that European domination or independence would not help Syria, because these options would either colonize the country or it will not be able to exist independently due to economic and political reasons. Being part of an already established country was, for him, a more reasonable act. The American example in terms of the idea of a nation, with no cultural or linguistic common background, fit al-Bustani's thought but it is unclear whether he thought of the federal system as an alternative to the existing Ottoman system.³⁰⁰ He seemed to be quite excited by the reforms applied by the Sultan and regarded them necessary for the continuity of the Empire together with its diverse subjects.

In a nutshell, al-Bustani was culturally a supporter of Arabism whereas politically he was an Ottomanist. What he supported was a limited cultural but non-political authority for Syria.³⁰¹ On the other hand, his ideas of patriotic solidarity and unification of the Arabs led to Syrian nationalism. Although he may not have had thoughts about independence or any kind of European domination, his ideas were used to pave the way for such political results. Butrus al-Bustani's ideas about the need for

³⁰⁰ Abu-Maneh, "The Christians," 297.

³⁰¹ Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 499.

the development of the Arab culture later influenced the Arab nationalists of the region. His attachment to Ottomanism was gradually abandoned by the next generations of Arab nationalists, ideas of whom are discussed in the next part.

Nationalist ideas of Butrus al-Bustani later influenced the whole region including the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Arab nationalism was effective on the Arab population of the Sanjak due to its close relations with the rest of the Arab world. By 1936, the political map of the region totally changed, nation states taking the place of the empires. Thus, the Arab nationalist thought also evolved from al-Bustani's Ottomanist approach to Zaki Al-Arsuzi's pan-Arabist nationalism in the Sanjak.

3.4.2 Intellectual Life in Syria

Syrian economic and political life began to change rapidly with the Egyptian invasion in 1831. In addition to these developments, the European influence on the region increased. These changes brought the application of Tanzimat reforms by the Ottoman Empire in the Syrian province beginning with 1840. The religious reformers incorporated the ideals of the Tanzimat era. Reason, science, and progress were the key elements in their new approach to religion³⁰² and the role of the Arabs among the Muslim community was emphasized. In the late nineteenth century Ottoman Syria, both religious reformers and Arabists were known to be eager supporters of the 1876

³⁰² Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 169-175.

constitution. In addition, these groups were known to be the constructors of the Arab ethnic consciousness, which later led to Arab nationalism.³⁰³

Religious reformers, on the other hand, advocated that Islam was not a barrier to progress. Together with Tanzimat ideas, these reformers, including Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi and Muhammad ‘Abduh, began to harmonize Islam with reason, progress and modernity. These reformers thus examined Islamic texts from a different perspective and selected parts to demonstrate Islam’s rationality and its message for believers to unite.³⁰⁴

3.4.2.1 Salafis and Arabists

One of the most prominent reformers was Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (1866-1914). Al-Qasimi was part of a group influenced by the Egyptian reformer Muhammad ‘Abduh’s ideas. Al-Qasimi stated that Islam is a rational religion and advocated the use of reason. In relation with this, he argued that Muslims should not be divided into legal schools because this division would prevent Muslims from uniting. Furthermore, according to al-Qasimi, Muslims should abandon the act of *taqlid* and should use *ijtihad*, which will enable them to make independent judgments in legal matters. Muslim reformers following this interpretation of Islam are called *salafis* because they claimed to be following the way of their pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*). The *salafis* had good connections with the Turkish administrators. Through their connections, they took the

³⁰³ Commins, “Religious Reformers,” 406.

³⁰⁴ Commins, “Religious Reformers,” 407.

side of the Young Turk members of the Committee of Union and Progress and supported the restoration of the constitution.³⁰⁵

Together with Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi, Tahir al-Jaza'iri (1852-1920) was active within the *salafi* group. *Salafis* had students whom they educated in line with their reformed Islamic view. They also imposed the idea that Arab people have special status among the Muslims. Because these thinkers were suggesting that the rulers should appoint rational ulama to the posts, conservative ulama opposed them and tried to turn the Ottoman officials against them. Al-Qasimi and Al-Jazairi were accused of having a secret political agenda, but the Ottoman governor did not take this charge seriously and was satisfied to hear that they actually did not have a secret agenda. He then acquitted al-Qasimi and his followers.³⁰⁶

Tahir al-Jazairi's ability to speak Turkish enabled him to have close relations with the Ottoman officials. One of the officials introduced him to Midhat Pasha to implement plans for the improvement of the Muslim schools. Midhat Pasha was known for his reformist ideas. He was among the constitutionalists. He was dismissed from his position as the Grand Vizier and appointed to the governorship of Syria. He tried to apply his reformist ideas as the governor of Syria.³⁰⁷ In the 1880s, al-Jazairi became an important figure in opening schools for Muslim children, making educational plans and writing schoolbooks on arithmetic, grammar, and Islamic doctrine.³⁰⁸ In the early 1890s,

³⁰⁵ Commins, "Religious Reformers," 409.

³⁰⁶ Zeine N. Zeine, *Arab Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (Beirut, 1958), 52.

³⁰⁷ Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 502.

³⁰⁸ Commins, "Religious Reformers," 410.

Jazairi and other salafis began to come together with a young group of government school students. Their group was called the senior circle [*al-halqa al-kabira*] and included Muhammad Kurd ‘Ali, Shukru al-‘Asali, ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Inklizi, Salim al-Jaza’iri and ‘Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar. Later, Salim al-Jaza’iri, Inklizi and some other young officers formed a secret political group in connection with the Young Turks who were organizing against Abdulhamid II (r. 1876-1909). When they graduated from the government secondary school, they went to Istanbul to attend *Mülkiye* and *Harbiye Mektebi*, where Young Turks were also educated.

While the senior circle was in Istanbul, Tahir al-Jazairi had new students. These students formed a junior circle (*al-halqa al-saghira*). This circle included Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, Salah al-Din al-Qasimi, Salih Qanbaz, Lutfi al-Haffar, ‘Arif al-Shihabi and ‘Uthman Mardam Bey. They all attended the government secondary school Maktab ‘Anbar in Damascus. Most teachers at the school were of Turkish origin. Thus, the students had the opportunity to master Turkish. On the other hand, they were not happy with the Turkish hegemony at the school and in 1904 ethnic rivalry between the Arabs and the Turks grew.³⁰⁹

These secularly educated Arab students were later called Arabists by the scholars of Arab nationalism. Upon their arrival in Istanbul for higher education, the junior circle was shocked how alienated their big brothers had become. After this realization, some of the students decided to establish the Arab Renaissance Society [*Jam’iyyat al-nahda*

³⁰⁹ For information about Maktab ‘Anbar See Fakhri al-Barudi, *Mudhakkirat al-Barudi*, 2 vols. (Beirut and Damascus: 1951-1952), vol. 1, pp. 29-32, 55-57. as cited in Commins, “Religious Reformers,” 411.

al-arabiyya] for the revival of the Arab culture. They gathered regularly to read classical Arabic texts because they believed that cultural revival should begin with language.³¹⁰ Both Arabists and *salafis* were of the idea that the Ottoman authorities should assist education in Syria and the medium of education should be Arabic rather than Turkish. Another common point that the two groups shared was their support for the reinstatement of the constitution.

In order for them to achieve satisfactory positions within the Ottoman system, both Arabists and *salafis* supported the CUP. When the CUP restored the constitution and did not realize the dreams of the reformers, Syrian intellectuals were more into ethnic interests and wanted arabization of the administration and education in Syria. The roots of their radicalization can thus be found in the career blockage they faced within the imperial system.³¹¹

The Arab Renaissance Society also regarded the restoration of the constitution as a big success and planned the inauguration of a public reading room on the first day of the Parliament on December 17, 1908.³¹² By that time, the Society began to use Muhammad Kurd Ali's newspaper *Al-Muqtabas* for its announcements; members of the society wrote articles for the same paper.

Worsening relations between the Turks and the Arabs exacerbated when Muhammad Kurd Ali misquoted the Sheikh al-Islam's declaration by stating that the

³¹⁰ Commins, "Religious Reformers," 411.

³¹¹ Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization on the Middle East*, ed. W. Polk and R. Chambers (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 43.

³¹² Commins, "Religious Reformers," 416.

Ottoman Empire was not a caliphate because the caliphate had ended after the rule of the first four caliphs. This report was corresponded in anger and Muhammad Kurd Ali had to apologize. His apology, published the next day in *al-Muqtabas*, did not save the newspaper to be suspended and his publisher to flee. The society's members were interrogated and at the end, the CUP forced the Arab Renaissance Society to merge with the CUP. Fearful of the public pressure regarding the intentions of its members to form an Arab caliphate, the society had to agree to merge with the CUP.³¹³

Although in the beginning, the Arab Renaissance Society celebrated the restoration of the Constitution and sided completely with the CUP, later on the two groups realized that their understanding of reform differed greatly. While the Syrians perceived reform as a greater level of self-rule, the CUP wanted greater centralization. The demand for decentralization was not unique to salafis and Arabists in Syria. In January 1913, the Party for Administrative Decentralization was formed in Cairo by a group including some Syrian salafis. The Arab Congress of June 1913 in Paris was organized by Arab students in Paris. They gathered to discuss their claim and at the end, resolutions urging the CUP to satisfy the decentralists' demands were issued. On the other hand, the CUP supporters in Damascus, conservatives and ulama opposed the Congress.³¹⁴

Cemal Pasha, who was the military governor in Syria in 1915, suspected Arabist-salafi cooperation with the British and set up a court-martial to try the case. The court

³¹³ Commins, "Religious Reformers," 418.

³¹⁴ Commins, "Religious Reformers," 419.

found leading Arabists guilty of treason. Asali, Inklizi, Salim al-Jazairi and Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi were hanged on May 1916. Two salafi sheikhs, Salim al-Bukhari and Muhammad Sa'id al-Bani, were exiled to Anatolia during the war. Tahir al-Jazairi reacted to the martial court executions and supported the Arab Revolt led by Sharif Husayn of Mecca in cooperation with the British.³¹⁵

Tahir al-Jazairi's reaction and cooperation with Sharif Husayn of Mecca influenced the Arab nationalist ideology in Syria, which was also closely followed in the Sanjak. Support for the Arab Revolt resulted in the rise of the pan Arabist approach and the Arab nationalists of the Sanjak were greatly influenced by this approach.

3.4.2.2 Syria and the World War I

Syrian lands were at the center of British, French and Russian interests after the World War I leading to great discussions as well as secret agreements for the partition of the region. The British government was in contact with Sharif Husayn, the Emir of Mecca, through her high commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. The series of correspondences between the two continued in 1915-1916, during which the British government encouraged Arabs to riot against the Ottomans in return for an independent Arab state. Although the rebellion took place, an independent Arab state ruling over all of the Arab population of the Middle East was never established.

Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was another turning point for the situation of the Arab people living in the post-Ottoman Middle East. It was with this agreement that

³¹⁵ Ömer Osman Umar, *Osmanlı Yönetimi ve Fransız Manda İdaresi Altında Suriye 1908-1938* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), 76.

France and Britain agreed on how to share the region among them and the Russians were informed about the agreement in the same year.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was, for sure, a very important document for the future of Arab nationalism. Britain declared her full support for a Jewish home to be established in Palestine. Following the Ottoman defeat in the World War I Jewish migrants started to flock in Palestine, a source of constant resentment for Arabs.

In the following years Russia was out of the game due to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, but France and Britain's struggle to dominate the region continued. President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, declared a set of principles regarding the administration of the occupied regions and stated that commissions would be sent to the relevant regions to ask the local populations about whom they would like to see as mandate authorities in their regions.³¹⁶ Dr. Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane were responsible for the formation of the commission that would be named as King-Crane commission. The commission arrived at Syria in 1919 and asked the leaders and the notables about their preferences concerning mandate rule. According to the report of the Commission, most of the population was against the French mandate in the region except for the Maronites and some other minority groups. An independent Arab state, unity of Syria, opposition to a Zionist state and support for a mandate rule by the USA was among the dominant ideas presented in the report.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Umar, *Osmanlı Yönetimi ve Fransız Manda İdaresi Altında Suriye*, 360.

³¹⁷ Nicolah A Zadeh, *Syria and Lebanon* (New York: 1957), 48.

When the commission arrived in the Sanjak, Turkish population stated that they wanted Turkish rule and were against French mandate regime.³¹⁸ Apart from the Turks of the Sanjak and some minority groups, general population of the region were supporting an independent Arab state and if a mandate regime was obligatory then this could best be the USA. Their second choice was Britain. The French mandate regime was dominantly opposed by the local population in Syria and the Sanjak.

3.4.2.3 Establishment of the Syrian Kingdom

In 1920 a Syrian Kingdom was established under the rule of Faisal, the son of Sharif Husayn. The French were against such an independent political entity and dismantled it. There was a clash of interest between the French and Faisal. The British had to solve the problem between the two forces. When the greater kingdom was not possible due to the clash of political aims in the region, Faisal was given the kingdom of the newly created Iraqi state, which was also a British Mandate. After the occupation of the region by the French and the division of Bilad al-Sham into many states, a Syrian Revolt in 1925 emerged against the French occupation, but the Greek Orthodox and the Alawites of Northern Syria did not support the revolt.³¹⁹

The intellectual life after Butrus al-Bustani in Syria experienced a great change with the effects of the religious reformists and the establishment of the Syrian Kingdom by the British under Faisal. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the changing political structure of the region resulted in the search for a national identity

³¹⁸ Sökmen, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluşu için Harcanan Çabalar*, 21.

³¹⁹ Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 508-509.

either as a single Arab nation or as belonging to various countries within the region. Arab nationalism was also influential in the Sanjak by the end of the 19th century. There were local influential nationalist thinkers such as Zaki Al-Arsuzi in the Sanjak area, whose ideas are the subject of the next section.

3.5 Arab Nationalism in the Sanjak: Zaki Al-Arsuzi and his Thought

During the 19th century Syria, Islamic reformism and Arabism were the most apparent currents of thought. The last decades of the 19th century can be accepted as transition from Ottomanism to Arab nationalism and in 1920s and 1930s, Zaki Al-Arsuzi's Arab nationalism was among the most important ideologies in the Sanjak region.

Al-Arsuzi was influential especially in the early 20th century. He was a western educated Alawite from Antioch who was particularly concerned with the issue of Alexandretta. Al-Arsuzi's ideas were influential on his people and there was a change of mind among the Alawites of the Sanjak. Al-Arsuzi's life and thoughts are discussed in the following part in comparison to Al-Bustani in order to show how the latter paved the way for the formation of Al-Arsuzi's ideology in the Sanjak region.

During the 1930s, more radical pan-Arabist groups emerged in reaction to the occupying foreign forces and Arab nationalism took over Syrian localism. Young intellectuals of the time were in a dilemma about deciding whether they should be part

of the colonial rule or should they fight for a national state in Syria.³²⁰ Zaki Al-Arsuzi was among the intellectuals who promoted the idea of an independent state. Al-Arsuzi was a prominent figure in the post-war period of Syria especially during the crisis of Alexandretta, when both the Arab and the Turkish nationalisms were competing for the region.

Al-Arsuzi was born in the city of Latakia in c. 1900-1901. His mother was from a prominent religious family and his father was a lawyer. They were a landowning Alawite family with four children. They moved to Antioch in 1904. Al-Arsuzi first went to a *kuttab* to memorize Qur'an, to become a *hafiz*, and then his family sent him to a local *Rüşdiyye*.

Al-Arsuzi mentions his father as an Arab nationalist and adds that his arrest and trial caused his national awakening as a child. After the World War I, Al-Arsuzi studied at the Institute Laic in Beirut and then went to Paris to study philosophy at Sorbonne on a scholarship from the French High Commission. In Paris, he was exposed to the nationalist ideas and was able to express his ideas through nationalist discourse.³²¹

3.5.1 Ambiguous Situation of the Sanjak and Al-Arsuzi's Reaction

In the meantime, in France, Leon Blum had won the 1936 elections as the leader of the leftist party. Changing political atmosphere in Europe obliged the new leader to

³²⁰ Keith D. Watenpugh, "'Creating Phantoms': Zaki al-Arsuzi, the Alexandretta Crisis, and the Formation of Modern Arab Nationalism in Syria," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 28 (1996): 363.

³²¹ Watenpugh, "Creating Phantoms," 364.

reorganize relations with Syria and Lebanon. In line with this idea, the signing of the Franco-Syrian Treaty of September 9, 1936 can be considered the second stage of the Alexandretta problem.³²² The treaty would be valid for 25 years and Syria would be independent within three years. Nevertheless, the essential point was that there were no clear statements about the situation of the Sanjak. Consistent with the 3rd clause,³²³ when France was going to leave the region, her rights over the Sanjak were going to be left to Syria.

Following the Franco-Syrian Treaty, Turkey applied to the League of Nations on December 8, 1936 to discuss the Sanjak issue at the December 14 meeting of the League. Meanwhile the mixed population of the city and the small conflicts among the various groups were used by France to justify its rule in the region. In this frame, the Arab “Vatani Party”, known for its pro-Arab propaganda, was supported. According to Vatani, Syria was composed solely of Arabs and non-Arabs had no place in it. The party even declared that it did not recognize the special status of the Sanjak. This pro-Arab propaganda evolved into a struggle for independence from France. At the end, France tried to take the Vatani Party under control, and for this aim Turks in the Sanjak were supported against the pro-Arabs. New freedoms were given to the Turks such as the right to celebrate Turkish national festivals.³²⁴

³²² Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi and Syrian-Arab Nationalism in the Periphery: The Alexandretta Crisis of 1936-1938,” *Studien zur Zeitgeschichte des Nahen Ostens und Nordafrikas*, vol. 9 (Münster, 2003): 8.

³²³ MAE, Rapport a la Societe des Nations sur la Situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1936 (Paris, 1937), 201-228.

³²⁴ H. Pehlivanlı, Y. Sarıay and H. Yıldırım, *Türk Dış Politikasında Hatay* (Ankara: ASAM Yayınları, 2001), 54.

On the side of the Arabs, Al-Arsuzi was not happy with the situation in the province. When he returned from Paris and began teaching in Antioch, he realized the Alawite segregation at schools by the French. He challenged the French by asking about the inferior situation of the Alawite students at schools while they make up most of the French army.³²⁵ Al-Arsuzi's teaching the students his idea of nationalism was not welcomed by the French authorities. He was expelled to Aleppo. In Aleppo, Al-Arsuzi became in touch with the newly formed League of National Action [*Usbat al-'amal al-qawmi*].³²⁶ The group, formed in 1933, became radicalized towards the end of the 1930s and did not support the ideas of the old nationalists. Al-Arsuzi returned to Antioch in 1934 to represent this group in the Alexandretta Crisis.³²⁷

In 1937, Al-Arsuzi began guiding the publication of the newspaper *al-'Uruba*. It was published in the same publishing house, in the Sajak, as the Turkish newspaper *Yenigün*. Both aimed at reaching the masses and exposing the nationalist ideas in a region where nationality did not matter much before the World War I.³²⁸ The main target of the Arab and Turkish nationalist actions was the Alawites. Turkish nationalist agenda claimed that the Alawites were actually *Eti Türkü*³²⁹ - within the framework of

³²⁵ N. E. Bou-Nacklie, "Les Troupes Speciales: Religious and Ethnic Recruitment, 1916-46", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no.25 (1993), 650.

³²⁶ This organization was known as 'Usbat among the local people of the Sanjak. For a detailed information about the 'Usbat al-'amal al-qawmi see Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir, "Zaki Al-Arsuzi," 312.

³²⁷ Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920-1945* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1987), 416.

³²⁸ Watenpugh, "Creating Phantoms," 370.

³²⁹ A. Faik Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay Tarihi*, Vol 1 (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1937), 77.

the Sun Language Theory and Turkish History Theory,³³⁰ developed by the Republican elite to promote nationalism in Turkey. In the national and local press Turkish nationalists promised religious freedom and economic prosperity to the local population. Al-Arsuzi published some articles on the issue in the newspaper *al-'Uruba* in 1938 expressing his ideas against the attempts of the Turks to turkify the Alawites whereas the French were de-arabizing them. Some titles of these articles were “Who are the Alawites?” and “The Alawites are Purely Arabs.” The main aim of these articles was to show the origins of the sect and emphasize the Arabness of its leaders.³³¹ He took on the job of persuading the non-Arabs and the Alawites themselves that they were Arabs.³³²

Al-'Uruba was closed on 5 June 1938 by the French authorities to stop Arab resistance in the last months before the election that would be held in the Sanjak.³³³ Although print media was an important tool for spreading the nationalist ideology, the level of literacy was low and the intellectuals could not reach everybody. For this reason, nationalists needed public places to come together and discuss their problems. Since both the Arabs and the Turks were aware of this need, they founded sports or

³³⁰ Ezel Kural Shaw and Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey 2 Vols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 376.

³³¹ Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi,” 311.

³³² *Al- Uruba*, Nov. 15, 1937 as cited in Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi,” 311.

³³³ Watenpugh, “Creating Phantoms,” 374.

other kinds of clubs for this purpose.³³⁴ The Fine Arts Club and *Nadi al-'uruba* [Arabism Club] were founded by Al-Arsuzi in Antioch in 1937 for the same purposes.³³⁵

When the Turkish army entered Antakya following the Franco-Turkish Military Agreement on July 5, 1938, Al-Arsuzi fled to Syria with a group of his students in the hope of returning later and continuing the struggle. He first lived in Aleppo and then moved to Damascus. In 1939, he officially announced in a number of newspapers that he was leaving the *'Usbat*, because he was shocked at the condition of the *'Usbat* in Damascus. Most probably the real reason behind this decision was that he realized in spite of all his propaganda, he had failed in the Sanjak.³³⁶

Turkish and Arab nationalist programs paralleled each other in the province. Atatürk was personally dealing with the “issue of Hatay” and his involvement as the leader of the Turks facilitated the raising of national consciousness among the Turks.³³⁷ Zaki Al-Arsuzi also tried to establish a similar leadership around his personality and declared himself to be the “prophet of Arabism”.³³⁸

Much had changed in terms of ideology since the time of al-Bustani, but some similarities still existed between his ideas and those of Al-Arsuzi. Al-Arsuzi also opposed European rule in the region. He even stated that the French were actually

³³⁴ Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi,” 315.

³³⁵ Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2001), 117; Sıtkiye Matkap, “Reconsidering The Annexation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta Through Local Narratives” (Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2009), 94.

³³⁶ Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi,” 323.

³³⁷ Watenpugh, “Creating Phantoms,” 376.

³³⁸ Arsuzi-Elamir, “Zaki Al-Arsuzi,” 310.

against the Arab unity. Despite the fact that the Turks blamed the French authorities for similar acts against Turks,³³⁹ Al-Arsuzi believed that the French supported the Turks. In addition, Al-Arsuzi was of the idea that the National Bloc government of Syria was not taking enough action in the Alexandretta Crisis to stop the mandatory policies of the French. Thus, during the 1930s and 1940s, Al-Arsuzi and his friends formed the “new-style” nationalists who perceived the Alexandretta Crisis as a threat to the Arab Nation as a whole.³⁴⁰ They were not willing to give up the province, which they considered to be an Arab land whereas the National Bloc government, under the leadership of Cemil Mardam, was planning to use this compromise for later requests from the French.³⁴¹

Al-Arsuzi can actually be considered to be successful in formation of the nationalist idea among the Arabs of the Sanjak and Syria, because his ideas were shared by his circle. It was Al-Arsuzi’s circle who later formed the Ba’ath party.

3.6 Conclusion

To sum up, the nineteenth century was an important century for the birth of nationalism which was an ideology later to be effective around the world. Arabs and Turks also partook from this comprehensive ideology. Following the defeat in World War I, transition from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire to a nation state was not easy, especially in regions such as Syria. Syria was a region where several

³³⁹ Melek, *Hatay Nasıl Kurtuldu*, 37.

³⁴⁰ Watenpugh, “Creating Phantoms,” 379.

³⁴¹ Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 506.

ethnic and religious groups lived, thereby forming a single nation out of these groups was very difficult.

Syria was one of the latest among the regions of the Ottoman Empire to raise national consciousness and claim for independence. At the beginning, intellectuals, such as Butrus al-Bustani, were influenced by the Ottomanism movement which originated from Istanbul. Al-Bustani was a supporter of the Sultan and trusted in the viability of the reform movements of the Ottomans. He considered the 1876 Constitution particularly important as an attempt to establish equality among all Ottoman subjects.

After the death of Butrus al-Bustani, the political aura had changed both in the Ottoman Empire and Syria. As the Committee of Union and Progress increased its power, the Sultan lost his grip over power. The voice of the reformists and Arabists were also increasing in the Syria region. When the CUP got the total control of the Empire, their emphasis on the Turkish elements and the wrong policies in the region resulted in the marginalization of the Arabs and in their detachment from the CUP regime.

In the aftermath of the World War I, the French forces occupied the region. Their policies as the mandatory power in the region, especially in the province of Alexandretta, further marginalized the Arabs. Together with the strengthening pan-Arabist movements in the more remote areas of the former Ottoman Empire, Arab intellectuals in Syria began to speak of independence. The “failure” of the Arab nationalists, in the Alexandretta crisis actually was a turning point for most of the Syrians; the modern version of Syrian nationalism was born out of this event.

Arab and Turkish nationalisms developed parallel to each other. Both became popular as Ottomanism was weakened by a set of political crises such as the Berlin Conference, the CUP's rise to power, and the Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars. During the World War I, Arab nationalism was becoming popular in Syria as Kemalist nationalism was growing in Turkey. Both emerged and developed towards the end of the Empire and the Sanjak of Alexandretta thus became an area of conflict for the two competing nationalist movements.

CHAPTER 4

TURKISH NATIONALIST PROPAGANDA IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA

The nationalist propaganda implemented in the Sanjak of Alexandretta to convince the population of the Sanjak regarding their membership to the Turkish nation, offer valid examples to the claim that the Sanjak issue provides a unique case for the study of Turkish nationalism. This chapter argues that ethnic Kemalist nationalism, in the Sanjak, envisioned a national identity based on political unity by examining the kind of propaganda carried out in the region. Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda emphasized whatever was necessary in relevant socio-political conjunctures in a very pragmatic manner in order to include as many people as possible in the Sanjak. Within this context, print media and public places such as youth clubs and libraries were utilized extensively to produce propaganda and disseminate Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak. Alawites, as one of the most populous communities of the Sanjak, therefore was

a strategic asset for the Turkish nationalists. Turkish nationalists worked hard to gain their support on the Turkish side during the election period because more individuals registered under the category of “Turk” meant more seats in the parliament for the Turkish community as well as a basis for the Turkish Republic vis-a-vis the international community to claim a special administration for the region.

Alawites’ hesitations about under which category to be registered were eliminated by attempts to convince them that they would practice their religion freely and prosper economically if they registered under the category of “Turk”. Contents of the propaganda targeted towards the Alawites, towards the aim of eliminating their hesitations, developed at two levels: political and popular. At the political level, which targeted the international and the national public, they were declared as *Eti Türkü* who forgot about their origins under Ottoman oppression. This propaganda was mostly carried out via the printed press and politicized academic circles were involved in it. International academicians were also invited to Turkish Historical Society’s Congresses discussing the Turkish History Thesis, which constituted the basis for the claim about Alawites being *Eti Türkü*. In addition, national newspapers continuously published news and “researches” concerning the Turkish origins of the Alawites in the Sanjak to convince the Turkish population in Turkey that the Sanjak case needed special attention, because there was a Turkish majority living in the Sanjak who were being oppressed under the French mandate rule and the French were even trying to make this “Turkish land” ruled by the Arabs. Historiography was used as one of the main tools to support the ethnic nationalist propaganda concerning the Turkish origins of the Alawites. Institutionalization of Turkish historiography in the Turkish Republic and historical and

linguistic theories developed by these institutions proved to be vital for the “studies” conducted about the history of the Sanjak region and the Turkish pedigrees of the Alawites.

At the popular level, the low rate of literacy among the Alawites of the Sanjak made printed propaganda redundant for the Alawites living in the villages of the region. Therefore, the main target was the Alawite Sheiks who were greatly influential on the Alawite population. Kemalist nationalists were aware that convincing the Sheiks to register as Turkish would mean convincing his community. In newspaper articles, these Sheiks were referred to as *Eti Dini Bařkanı*³⁴² [Hittite Religious Leader] in reference to their influence on their community. Alawite population’s needs and requests were well analyzed and the Sheiks were taken to Anatolia to observe the religious freedom and the economic prosperity that the Anatolian Alevis were enjoying. Alawites of the Sanjak were also promised the same standards of living and the secular and the modern characteristics of the new nation was emphasized at every opportunity to assure them that the new nation was not like the Ottoman Empire. In addition to the emphasis on their Turkish origins, their religious and linguistic differences with the Anatolian people were disregarded as long as they accepted to be part of the Turkish nation.

This chapter explains the methods through which the Turkish Republic gained the Sanjak within the range of modern Turkish Republic. In what follows, the methods and the tools of nationalist propaganda will be analyzed. In addition to the nationalist propaganda tools, Kemalist reforms were simultaneously put into use to attract supporters for modern Turkey; the European style brimmed hats thus quite naturally

³⁴² *Yeniğün*, March 10, 1938, 2.

became the symbol of the followers of the Turkish nationalist propaganda. Therefore, the effects of these reforms on the population of the Sanjak are discussed as well as the ways these reforms were disseminated to the population of the Sanjak. Furthermore, the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory were actively used in the Sanjak to claim the ethnically Turkish character of the region and they constituted the key elements of the nationalist propaganda towards the Alawites especially at the political and academic levels. I also analyze the institutionalization of Turkish historiography with the birth of the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory. A local historian, Faik Türkmen's study, *Mufasssal Hatay Tarihi* [A Detailed History of Hatay], as an illustrative example of the application of the Turkish History Thesis in the Sanjak will also be dealt as an extension and internalization of the Turkish arguments regarding the Sanjak.

6.1 Propaganda Strategies to Convince the Sanjak People

Approaching parliamentary elections in the Sanjak and the need to record the number of the members of each community compelled a registration process during which each voter had to register under a pre-defined ethnic or religious community. With the insistence of the Turkish side, the registration was based solely on individual declaration. It was important, therefore, to convince the inhabitants to register under a certain category. The mixed nature of identities in the Sanjak made it harder for the people to decide under which category to register. At this point, priorities and interests played an important role. Both Turkish and Arab nationalists disseminated propaganda

to get as many voters as possible under the category of “Turk” or “Arab”. Their methods were important in the sense that persuasive claims would affect individual decisions. Turkish nationalist propaganda paid special attention to the Alawites, because they were a large community and their votes would be decisive in the elections. Even though there was a category of Alawites, they could well register as Turks or Arabs.

Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda used local and national newspapers, schools, all available public places such as the youth and sports clubs and libraries to disseminate its message. One of the most important means of propaganda was the local newspaper *Yenigün*.³⁴³ It was in fact the means through which all propaganda was implemented and the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak were organized around this newspaper.

6.1.1 The Print Media

Media coverage of the Sanjak issue, both at the national and local levels, is demonstrated in this part as one of the methods of nationalist propaganda. Examining the coverage of the Sanjak issue in the national media agents of the official ideology, such as *Cumhuriyet* and *Tan*, also matters in understanding how the public in the Republic was informed about the Sanjak. In addition, the nature of the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak is explained through a local newspaper *Yenigün*,

³⁴³ *Yeni Mecmua* was established by Şükrü Balcıoğlu in 1928 as a literary journal, which was published twice a month. It did not contain any political articles. In 1930 it was published with the name *Yenigün* as a daily newspaper. Mehmet Tekin et. al., *Hatay'da Eğitim ve Kültür* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1984), 159.

because examining the contents of the media coverage in the Sanjak gives us a better understanding of the nature of the nationalist propaganda through print media.

6.1.1.1 Yenigün

The printed press in the Sanjak was an important means of expression of different political views³⁴⁴ and the local newspaper *Yenigün* played an important role as the center of Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak. *Yenigün* was established as the continuation of the literary journal *Yeni Mecmua*, which mainly contained literary works and articles on social issues and was established in 1928 by Şükrü Fehmi Balcı.³⁴⁵ In 1930, there emerged the need for a local political newspaper, because of the increasing tension between the Arab and Turkish nationalists. As stated by Hulki Öcal, Arabic newspapers targeted Turkish nationalists and literary writings were not enough to answer these increasing Arab nationalist attacks. Şükrü Fehmi Balcı felt the need and closed down *Yeni Mecmua* to issue *Yenigün* with the same circle of writers.³⁴⁶

The first copy of *Yenigün* was printed on September 16, 1930 and the frequency of the following copies suggests that the first five copies were printed weekly and then the succeeding copies were published twice a week. From 1931 onwards *Yenigün*

³⁴⁴ See Mehmet Tekin, *Hatay Basın Tarihi* (Ankara: Sanat Kitabevi, 1985). for a detailed discussion of the role of the press in the Sanjak.

³⁴⁵ See next page for detailed information about Şükrü Fehmi Balcı.

³⁴⁶ Hulki Öcal, *Hatay Savaşı* (Ankara: Desen Matbaası, 1953), 115.

became a daily newspaper,³⁴⁷ yet it was not published continuously in the following years. *Yenigün* was closed down twice by the Damascus government for short periods of time in 1932 and 1936, re-opening each time.

Şükrü Balcı cooperated with Selim Çelenk³⁴⁸ for the administration of the newspaper in 1931 and from then on Selim Çelenk became the editor.³⁴⁹ *Yenigün* journalists, between the years 1930 and 1938, consisted of the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak including Vedi Münir Karabay, Zübeyr Münir, Ahmet Sırrı Hocaoglu, Nafi Miski, Mustafa Rasih [Bensan], Samih Azmi [Ezer], Kadri Mursaloğlu, Asaf Yahya Bey, Abdurrahman Melek, Cemil Bahadırılı, Dr. Cemil Süleyman, Dr. Sıtkı Osman, Mahmut Ali, Firuz Hanzad, Lami Cankat, A. Mecit, Bekir Sıtkı [Kunt], Reşad Mursaloğlu, Kemal Sülker, Dr. Vedi Bilgin, Ata Derviş, Reşad Kerey, A. Faik Türkmen, Selahattin Kutlu, Latif Günal, Suphi Okay, Servet Tankut, Fazıl Balta, Ahmet Sırrı, Şaban Balcioğlu, Rifat Ut and Şükrü Oğuz. Detailed information about the contributors to the newspaper suggests the nature of political gathering around *Yenigün*.

The founder of the newspaper and one of the leading supporters of Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak, Şükrü Balcı, was born in Antakya in 1906. He went to the primary school in Antakya and then to high school in Adana. After one year, he went to Istanbul and continued his education in the German School. After a while he returned to

³⁴⁷ The first five copies were printed on September 16, September 23, September 30, October 7 and October 14, 1930 respectively. After October 14, the next copy was printed on October 17, 1930 and the rest of the copies were printed twice a week until 1931. See Olcay Özkaya Duman, “İşgalden İltihaka Hatay’da Entelektüel bir Kadro Hareketi, “Yenigün Gazetesi ve Yenigüncüler””, *Tarih Okulu Dergisi* 6, No: 16, (December 2013): 397-422.

³⁴⁸ See next page for detailed information about Selim Çelenk.

³⁴⁹ Selim Çelenk, *Hatay’ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Anıları* (Antakya: Antakya Gazeteciler Cemiyeti, 1997), 35.

Antakya and established *Yeni Mecmua* in May 15, 1928. *Yeni Mecmua* was the first journal of the Turks of the Sanjak that collected all the surrounding writers and served the ideas of Turkish nationalism and Kemalist reform. After two years, Şükrü Balcı closed *Yeni Mecmua* and established the newspaper *Yenigün*. *Yenigün* began as a weekly newspaper, which later continued daily and the newspaper became a ground for the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak. Due to an article published in *Yenigün* concerning the heavy agricultural taxation in the Sanjak, Balcı was tried in the Mandate court and sent to jail in Aleppo in 1932. Later, he was set free as part of the general amnesty and returned to Antakya.³⁵⁰

An important writer of *Yenigün* and a close friend of Şükrü Balcı, Selim Çelenk was born in Antakya in 1902.³⁵¹ He graduated from primary school and could not continue his education due to economic situation of his family. He opened a bookstore in Uzunçarşılı with Ahmet Sipahi with the capital provided by his uncles Murat Çelenk and Ömer Çelenk. He married Bergüzar Çelenk in 1923 with whom he had 5 children. His journalism career began in 1931 after he accepted Şükrü Balcı's proposal about joining the newspaper *Yenigün*. He published *Vahdet* newspaper in Aleppo in 1936. When the mandate regime closed down *Yenigün* in 1938, he started publishing the newspaper *Atayolu* together with some of the journalists of *Yenigün*. Selim Çelenk served as the mayor of Antakya after the Sanjak joined Turkey, between the years 1946

³⁵⁰ Tarık Mümtaz Yazganalp, *Çizgiler ve Bilgiler* (Halep, 1936), 101.

³⁵¹ This date is what is written in official records, but his friends think he was most probably born in 1896 or 1897.

and 1950. After 1950 he established a soap production atelier and continued writing articles in *Atayolu* until his death in 1973.³⁵²

Another important contributor to *Yenigün*, Dr. Sıtkı Osman Bey was born in Antakya in 1309 (1891/1892). He completed his primary education in Antakya and Aleppo and graduated from Aleppo Dar'ül Muallimiye. Afterwards, he enrolled in Medical School in Damascus. After studying one year at the medical school, World War I broke out and due to a mobilization order, he joined the army as a deputy doctor. After the demobilization of medical school students, they were invited to continue their education at Istanbul School of Medicine where he graduated from and was appointed as a physician in Anatolia. After working as a physician in different parts of Anatolia as part of *Kuvayı Milliye* [National Forces], he returned to Antakya. He taught Administration, Chemistry, and History at the Turkish Section of the Lycée of Antakya for around eleven years.³⁵³

One of the most well known supporters of Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak and an important writer, Vedi Münir Karabay, was born in Antakya in 1303 (1887/1888). He graduated from secondary school in Antakya and studied Western and Persian languages. He worked as government official at different subdistricts of the Sanjak. He was appointed as a literature teacher to the Antakya Secondary School in 1331 (1915/1916). Karabay worked at the directorate of land registry of the Alawite State in Latakia. He resigned and returned back to Antakya. After one year he was appointed as

³⁵² Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 5.

³⁵³ Yazganalp, *Çizgiler ve Bilgiler*, 94.

a philosophy, economics, and law teacher at the Lycée of Antakya. After the declaration of the mandate rule that the practice of law and teaching could not be jointly carried out, he resigned from his job at the Lycée and continued as a lawyer.³⁵⁴

One supporter of the Turkish cause in the Sanjak and also a regular contributor to the *Yenigün* newspaper, Ata Derviş Bey, was born in 1877 in Salonica. He studied at the Turkish schools in Salonica. After graduation, he attended the Zurich Trade School for three years and then was trained for two years at the Berlin and Vienna chambers of Trade and Commerce. After the outbreak of the Greco-Turkish War in 1897/1898, he returned to Salonica and established a drapery factory together with his father. He was deported to Izmir for membership in the Committee of Union and Progress during the Balkan Wars in 1912. He stayed in Izmir, Istanbul, and Adana for a while and went to Syria after the World War I. In 1929 he went to the Sanjak of Alexandretta and was appointed as the secretary to the Ministry of Education and teacher at the Lycée of Antakya. He wrote various schoolbooks on history and geography.³⁵⁵

An important figure of Turkish literature and one of the *150likler*,³⁵⁶ Refik Halit Karay (Karakayış) was born in 1888 in Istanbul Beylerbeyi. His father worked at the Treasury in Istanbul. He studied at the Lycée of Galatasaray and then went to law school upon an examination even before graduating from Lycée. In his sophomore year at the law school, the Constitutional period began and he started journalism at *Servet-i Fünun*.

³⁵⁴ Mümtaz, *Çizgiler ve Bilgiler*, 38.

³⁵⁵ Yazganalp, *Çizgiler ve Bilgiler*, 223.

³⁵⁶ *150likler* is the term used for 150 people who had taken (or assumed to take) a negative/enmical stand during the Turkish War of Independence and declared by the Turkish Republic as *persona non grata*. Hereafter it is going to be used as *150likler*.

Karay worked at *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper for a while and established the daily newspaper *Son Havadis*. Later, he wrote humorous articles at comic magazines, including the famous periodical *Cem*. His humorous writings are well known in Turkish literature today. After the closing of the newspaper *Cem*, he was appointed as the first secretary at the Beyoğlu Municipality. Karay was deported to Sinop for his opposition to the leading party. After the armistice, he became the head of the Havas Reuter Agency and editor in chief of the *Sabah* newspaper. He wrote literary articles in many newspapers including the humor magazine *Aydede*. After he went to Syria, Karay wrote for all the Turkish newspapers in the region including *Doğru Yol*, *Mahsur*, *Sahran*, *Vahdet*, *Yenigün* and *Karagöz*.³⁵⁷

The above-mentioned contributors perceived *Yenigün* newspaper as an important platform to state and disseminate their ideas. They persistently fought for the Turkish cause through this newspaper.

Yenigün was widely read by the supporters of the Turkish nationalism, especially those who gathered around the People's Houses and the Republican Party. Coffee houses, common libraries, and youth clubs were places where the newspapers were read and discussed by the regular attenders or members. When considering the fact that newspapers were read in public places in the 1930s is taken into consideration, *Yenigün* must have reached nearly all of the Turkish population living in Antakya. *Yenigün* was the medium of propaganda as well as the means of answering Arabists' attacks.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ Yazganalp, *Çizgiler ve Bilgiler*, 97-98.

³⁵⁸ Öcal, *Hatay Savaşı*, 115.

Lack of any other political newspaper disseminating the Turkish cause turned *Yenigün* into a symbol while putting its journalists at the target of the French Mandate regime and the Arabists. Şükrü Balcı was detained a few times by the French Mandate authorities and was forwarded to the court in Aleppo in 1932 because of an article criticizing the taxation policies of the French Mandate regime.³⁵⁹ The newspaper was closed down after this event by the Damascus government. However Şükrü Balcı and Selim Çelenk petitioned the High Commissioner in Beirut and wanted it to be reopened. When the High Commissioner accepted their request and the newspaper was reopened, there were flattering articles on the French authorities. For the continuation of the newspaper, such positive elaborations on the French rule were published unless they were totally against the ideology of *Yenigün*. Such positive articles on the French rule and Abdurrahman Melek's interview to a French Newspaper *Intrasigant* in 1935 caused some old Turkish nationalists³⁶⁰ and Arabists to criticize the change of attitude of the newspaper towards the mandate authorities. However, cadres gathered around *Yenigün* did not accept the claim and blamed Abdurrahman Melek for being a French supporter.³⁶¹

Yenigün was one of the most important actors of Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda towards the Alawites in the Sanjak. The Alawite sheikhs' visit to Ankara to see the new republic's attitude towards the Anatolian Alavis and some of the sheikhs' change of Arabic surnames into Turkish ones were proudly carried to the front pages of

³⁵⁹ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Anıları*, 36-37. and *Yenigün*, August 10, 1932, 2.

³⁶⁰ Ahmet Sırrı Hocaoglu, *Zindan Bekçileri Yahut Hortlayan Ali Kemal* (Antakya 1936), 6.

³⁶¹ MM, interview by the author, August 2008.

the newspaper. These sheikhs were so convinced about the Turkish History Thesis' claim about Alawites being originally Turks that the sheikhs chose to return to their "roots" at least by changing their surnames. Sheikh Abdülhamid Hayyat was one of the Alawite leaders who supported the Turkish cause and the news about his changing his surname to *Tümkiye*³⁶² was presented as an example to the Alawites who were referred to as *Eti Türkü*.³⁶³

Yenigün supported and disseminated the alphabet reform in the Turkish Republic. When the Latin alphabet was accepted in Turkey in 1928, *Yenigün* adapted to the change gradually beginning in 1929. First, the name of the newspaper was written with the new alphabet in 1929 and after the steady change, the entire newspaper was published in the Latin alphabet in 1937. What is more was that the newspaper published articles urging the French authorities to enable the usage of the new alphabet at schools in the Sanjak.³⁶⁴

Yenigün had a special place in the Sanjak, especially among the Turkish nationalists, as the first daily political newspaper supporting the Turkish cause. After realizing the important role played by *Yenigün*, another newspaper, *Hatay*, also published articles from the same political stance. The good relation of the two newspapers was apparent from the congratulatory address published in *Hatay* for the

³⁶² *Yenigün*, March 10, 1938, 2.

³⁶³ "Şeyh Abdülhamid Tümkiye İskenderun'da görülmemiş bir merasimle karşılandı. İskenderun Eti Dini başkanı Türkiye Deniz Yolları İdaresinin bir vapuru ile İskenderun'a gelmiştir. Tümkiye soyadını almıştır. Doğrudan doğruya Türk konsolosunu ve Halkevini ziyaret etmiştir. Şükrü Kaya'ya telgraf çekmiştir." *Yenigün*, March 10, 1938, 2.

³⁶⁴ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 47-48.

eleventh year of *Yenigün*. In an article published in 1938, the eleven years of struggle of *Yenigün* for the Turkish cause was appreciated and their eleventh birthday was celebrated.³⁶⁵

There were also Arabic newspapers established to support the Turkish cause. *Vahdet* was one of the Arabic newspapers established by the Turkish nationalists in Aleppo. After the closure of *Yenigün* by the authorities in 1936, Selim Çelenk and Ata Derviş went to Aleppo to help with the publishing of *Vahdet*. They wrote offensive articles about the Arabists and answered the attacks of the Arab media. While doing that, they were in close contact with the Turkish Consulate in Aleppo and took directions directly from the consul. After one month, political tension increased in Aleppo. The dissemination of a declaration by a Syrian youth group leader, Fahri Barudi, calling the youth to a great meeting concerning the fight against the loss of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, scared Selim Çelenk and Ata Derviş. The consul's warning about Aleppo as unsafe for them in case of such a meeting brought the end of the newspaper *Vahdet* and its journalists returned to Antakya.³⁶⁶ In November 1937, *Al Yevm-il Cedit* was established especially against Zaki Al-Arsuzi's newspaper *Al-Uruba*. Two journalists were brought from Aleppo and Damascus in addition to Corc Medeni from Antakya to enable publication in Arabic. This newspaper was widely read

³⁶⁵ *Hatay*, 21 Birinci Teşrin 1938, Year: 11-1, No: 651-73, 3.

³⁶⁶ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 76-77.

especially in Damascus area. *Al Yevm-il Cedid* was closed in 1939 before the annexation.³⁶⁷

In 1938, *Yenigün* was still closed and *Vahdet* no longer published. This meant that the Turkish nationalists had no means of disseminating their ideas. Therefore, the journalists of *Yenigün* established the newspaper *Atayolu*. *Yenigün* was reopened in 1938, but *Atayolu* continued to be published weekly so that the license would be kept in case of another closure of *Yenigün*.³⁶⁸ *Atayolu* continued to be published as a daily newspaper until today.

Yenigün was kind of a school that around which devoted supporters of the Turkish cause in the Sanjak gathered. The cadres gathering around this newspaper were active in every aspect of nationalist propaganda both in and out of the Sanjak. They were in direct contact with the Turkish officials and acted as the local promoters of Kemalist reforms.

6.1.1.2 Print Media in the Republic

Daily newspapers of the Turkish Republic regularly published propaganda articles and news about the Sanjak of Alexandretta for the information of the public in Turkey. The reason for the propaganda in the national newspapers can best be explained as the need to convince the Turkish public about the need for involvement in the Sanjak

³⁶⁷ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 82-83.

³⁶⁸ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 82-83.

issue. The emphasis was on the Turkish nature of the region and the bad treatment that the Turks faced in the region by the French and the Arabs. This type of news would induce the masses to believe that Turkey should protect the Turks in the Sanjak.

National newspapers that were published in Turkey, *Cumhuriyet*, *Ulus* and *Tan* appeared as major defenders of the cause of Hatay. On December 4, 1936, the title of İsmail Müştak Mayakon's news concerning the pressure over the Turks on not attending the Syrian Parliament elections was striking: "We like to play with guns as much as we love peace."³⁶⁹ This article was written to intimidate the international actors involved in the Sanjak issue. Yunus Nadi, İsmail Müştak Mayakon and many more Kemalists of Turkey were constantly writing about how important the Sanjak issue was for Turkey. References to *Yenigün* in these articles also gave clues about the close cooperation between *Yenigün* and *Cumhuriyet*. These writers were actually the representatives of the cause of Hatay in Turkey and the Sanjak; the journalists of these two newspapers were the voice of the official ideology in Turkey.³⁷⁰

In the same manner, newspapers *Ulus* and *Tan* published articles about the Sanjak issue nearly every day beginning in October 1936. The connection of these journals with each other was most apparent in the publication of the editorial written by Falih Rıfkı Atay first in *Ulus* on October 1, 1936 and the next day in *Tan*. Falih Rıfkı

³⁶⁹ İsmail Müştak Mayakon, "Sulhu sevdiğimiz kadar silah oyunundan da hoşlanırsınız," *Cumhuriyet*, December 4, 1936, 1 and 5.

³⁷⁰ See Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 76-77. about how the journalists of Yenigün were asking the Turkish officials in Aleppo before taking an action concerning the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak and in Syria.

Atay was well known for his personal relations with Atatürk.³⁷¹ In this article Atay talks about the Turkish majority living in the Sanjak and criticizing the Syrian government's expectations about Sanjak to be part of the independent Syrian state within three years.³⁷²

These newspapers were also publishing articles about the Turkish nature of the region and the necessity for the Turkish Republic to fight for this piece of land. In the same manner, *Yenigün* gave information about the social and political life in the Turkish Republic and also constantly reminded the Turkish population of the Sanjak about their righteous fight against the French and all other forces that detain them from achieving their aims.

6.1.2 Propaganda by Other Means

Media was not the only means of propaganda in the Sanjak. Public places were important venues for the explanation and dissemination of the Turkish cause. In this part, these public places of nationalist propaganda are explained in detail by focusing on *Selamet-i Belde Cemiyeti* [Society for the Well-being of the Region], *Gençspor Klubü* [Youth Sport Club] and the *Bekir Efendi Kütüphanesi* [Bekir Efendi Library].

Turkish nationalist propaganda accelerated and took more of an institutional character after 1936. As part of these efforts, *Halkevi* [People's House] of Antakya was established in the same year. The number of newspapers, youth clubs, and libraries

³⁷¹ For Atay's memoirs with Atatürk see Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya* (Istanbul: Pozitif Yayıncılık, 2009).

³⁷² Falih Rıfkı Atay, "İskenderun'da arayı umumiye muvafakat ediyoruz," *Tan*, October 2, 1936, 1 and 8.

increased steadily after this date. The government of Turkish Republic supported the establishment of public institutions such as *Gençspor Klubü* [Youth Sports Club] as well as bringing students from the Sanjak to Turkey for educational purposes. Activities of these institutions were widely mentioned in the local newspapers to show that there was great interest in Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak.

After the acceptance of the new alphabet in Turkey in 1928, public places such as the sports and youth clubs as well as the public libraries in the Sanjak joined efforts to teach people to read and write with the new alphabet. Şükrü Balcı, who was writing for *Yenigün*, exerted great efforts in the establishment of *Gençspor Klubü* in 1926.³⁷³ One of the journalists in the *Yenigün*, Selim Çelenk, was among the names who offered night courses in Turkish for those who wanted to learn the new alphabet. In addition, the People's Houses of the Sanjak established "Reading Rooms" for the same purpose.³⁷⁴ French and Arab officials blamed the Turkish Republic for making propaganda via these institutions. Therefore, a symbolic amount of fee was collected from the course attenders to show their personal interest in learning the new alphabet.

6.1.2.1 Selamet-i Belde Cemiyeti

Public places such as youth and sports clubs were very popular among the youth of the Sanjak. Selamet-i Belde Society was one of the earliest examples of these clubs.

³⁷³ Mehmet Tekin, "İşgal Yıllarında Hatay Cemiyetleri III: Gençspor Kulübü," *Güneyde Kültür*, no: 16 (June 1990), 15-21.

³⁷⁴ Şükrü Balcı, "Okuma Odaları," *Yenigün*, April 21, 1937.

Samih Azmi [Ezer], one of the leading supporters of the Turkish cause in the Sanjak, established the society in 1922. The program of the society contained articles such as accelerating cultural, economic, and commercial development in Hatay, but the main purpose was to coordinate Turkish nationalist actions in the Sanjak.³⁷⁵ Political actions were carried out incognito by the leaders of the society, but the French mandate authorities started an investigation and soon found some evidence that the society was involved in politics and had direct connection with Turkey. They closed down the Selamet-i Belde Society and arrested some of its directors. Samih Azmi Bey and two of his friends were able to escape to Adana. Samih Azmi Bey stayed in Adana for more than two years and worked for the Hatay cause in Adana, Ankara and Istanbul until he returned to Antakya following a general amnesty declared by the French in the Sanjak.³⁷⁶

6.1.2.2 Gençspor Kulübü

After 1924, more clubs were established. As mentioned above, *Gençspor Kulübü* [Youth Sports Club] was one of the most important youth clubs that gathered the supporters of Turkish nationalism in the Sanjak. While an active sports movement was taking place through the club, political activities were secretly taking place. The club was a socializing center for the Turkish youth of the Sanjak. Since its administrators were the leading Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak, they adopted the Kemalist reforms

³⁷⁵ Sebahattin Ezer, interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004. and Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 26-27.

³⁷⁶ Mehmet Tekin, "İşgal Yıllarında Hatay Cemiyetleri I: Selamet-i Belde, Elektrik Şirketi, Hilal-i Ahmer," *Güneyde Kültür*, No:5, (July 1989), 2-5.

simultaneously with the Turkish Republic and disseminated them via the *Gençspor Kulübü*.³⁷⁷ Night courses to teach the new alphabet were organized in this club and the brimmed hats brought from Turkey were distributed to the youth who attended the activities of the club from this club.

6.1.2.3 Bekir Efendi Kütüphanesi

A library, consisting of 500 books, most of which were brought from Turkey, was established within *Gençspor Kulübü*. The French warned the administrators that a library was unnecessary in a sports club. The French were suspicious of the young men, coming to the club for sports activities, spending time on reading books. The administrators tried to convince the French authorities by saying that reading was also a sport for the brain, but had to transfer the library to a separate building in order to be able to continue their activities as a sports club. The Bekir Efendi³⁷⁸ Library was established with the books taken out of *Gençspor Kulübü*. This library was important for the dissemination of Turkish nationalist ideas and the youth made extensive use of it.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 32-33.

³⁷⁸ Bekir Efendi was the first teacher of Antakya Rüşdiyesi. He served for around 50 years in the Sanjak and moved to Birecik after the signing of the Ankara Agreement in 1921.

³⁷⁹ Mehmet Tekin, "Hatay'da Kitap ve Kütüphanenin Tarihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Güneyde Kültür*, No: 25, (March 1991), 3-9.

6.2 Kemalist Reforms in the Sanjak

Despite the fact that some propaganda activities were targeting the public in the Turkish Republic, some other means of propaganda, such as the Kemalist reforms, were directly influencing the lifestyles of ordinary people living in the Sanjak. For instance, the hat reform and the alphabet change, did touch their daily lives and not always in a way they would like. Two of the very controversial Kemalist reforms, the Hat Reform and adoption of the Latin alphabet, are evaluated in this section together with the reactions raised to them in the Sanjak.

Adopting the Kemalist reforms was an obligation in the Turkish Republic. Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak closely followed events in Turkey and immediately embraced the reforms although they were not forced upon them by law as was the case in Turkey. In the Sanjak of Alexandretta adopting the Kemalist reforms became a way of showing one's political view. The hat reform particularly caused great tension in the region and one could understand a person's political view by looking at the type of headgear he was wearing. Nevertheless, these reforms faced reaction from the people both in Turkey and the Sanjak. Mostly the conservative population of the Sanjak did not want to wear hats or change the alphabet that they were using. Their reactions were mostly based on religious concerns to such an extent that they had to leave their homeland of birth due to their fear of not being able to practice their religion under the Kemalist regime.

6.2.1 The New Alphabet

Adopting the Latin letters instead of the Arabicized Ottoman letters was perceived to be a clear division between the Ottoman heritage and the modern character of Turkish nationalism. For this, abandoning the Ottoman language and alphabet and adopting Latin script were seen as a major step toward Westernization. In the late Ottoman period, some of the modernist linguists and some officers, who felt the need for a change in the language, suggested various ways of simplifying the Ottoman language,³⁸⁰ but the change in the early republican period was a complete desertion of both the old language and the old way of life.

³⁸⁰ The Latin alphabet was accepted to be the new Turkish alphabet on November 1, 1928, but ideas on changing the Arab alphabet were born long before this date. Modification of the Ottoman alphabet, which contained elements of both Arabic and Persian languages, was suggested as early as 1851 by Ahmet Cevdet Paşa. He believed that Turkish had some sounds that should be shown in the alphabet with some new letters and signs to be derived from Arabic and Persian alphabets. (Nevzat Özkan, “Ahmet Cevdet Paşa’nın Türk Dili Hakkındaki Görüşleri ve Eserleri”, *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, No: 20, 1(2006), 223-224). In 1862, the Minister of Education, Münif Paşa, also suggested a reform in the alphabet. (Mehmet Tekin, *Harf İnkılabı Türk Ocaklarının Çalışmaları ve Hatay’da Yeni Yazı* (Antakya: Kültür Eğitim Tesisleri Basımevi, 1988), 11). Another suggestion was made by an Azerbaijani linguist Mirza Fethali Ahunzade who came to İstanbul, in 1863, with a proposal to provide unity in writing for the Turkish world. He suggested either to continue using the Arabic alphabet with modifications such as not connecting the letters and showing the vowels separately, or using the Latin alphabet. However, the Ottoman Education Society [*Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye*] did not accept the proposal with the reason that this change would make society forget the old Islamic classics. (Tekin, *Harf İnkılabı*, 11-12). In the same year, Şemsettin Sami Bey also wrote his ideas on the need for the modification of the Arabic alphabet. İbrahim Şinasi, in 1869, and Ebuzziya Tevfik, in 1884, amended the Arabic letters that they used in the press. (M. Şakir Ülkütaşır, *Atatürk ve Harf Devrimi* (Ankara: TDK Yayınları, 1981), 21). These suggestions were made not only within the Empire, but also by individuals/nationals living in Europe such as Ali Suavi who wrote about the need for an alphabet reform in his newspaper “*Ulum*” which was published in Paris. After 1908, there were concrete steps taken to reform the alphabet. In 1912, an association named “Commission on the Reform of the Alphabet” was established with the leadership of Müşir Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa. (*Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*, 1977, Volume 4, İstanbul, p 116). During the First World War, Enver Paşa used his position as the Minister of War to try to modify the alphabet. His suggestion was to use Arabic letters without connecting them and showing the vowels separately with the letters ^۱, ^۲ and ^۳. This system was known as the “Huruf-u Munfasıla”, “Hatt-ı Cedid” or “Enver Paşa Yazısı”. (Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 29). It was obligatory to use this writing in the army and when the conditions of war are taken into account this change was not welcomed. Writing the letters separately and using the vowels after every consonant lengthened the writing of the military messages. Since the results of the application were proven to be time consuming, this writing was abandoned shortly afterwards. These ideas and scholarly debates did not go as far as abandoning even banning the Ottoman letter all together.

The Turkish population in the Sanjak was informed about the new reform in the alphabet through the newspapers. There were articles published in *Yeni Mecmua* stating that the new Turkish alphabet was eagerly learnt in the Sanjak like all the other Turkish lands, first because of the ease in use when compared to the old alphabet and second because the alphabet change was seen as an issue of national language. If the Turks of the Sanjak wanted to continue to have a national identity they had to learn the new alphabet.³⁸¹ Using the new Latin alphabet instead of the Ottoman letters was represented to be the only way to stay connected with the Turkish Republic.

Like the general language reform, the reason for the change of the alphabet was to break the newly established Republic's ties with the Ottoman past and the Islamic East and turn its face to the West.³⁸² The close relation between language and ideology was seen in the case of the alphabet change, because the new alphabet would mean that the connection with Arabic-- which is also the language of the Qur'an-- would also be eliminated. Secularizing the alphabet as well as the language in its entirety was seen as part of the Kemalist program by the opposing groups.³⁸³

It was seen necessary by some of the supporters of the new alphabet based on the claim that the schoolbooks of the Turkish section of the Antakya Lycée came from

³⁸¹ Faik Abdurrahman "Türk Yazısı," *Yeni Mecmua*, 15 Kasım 1928, 13 as cited in Volkan Payaşlı, "Hatay'da Harf İnkılabının Kabulü ve Yeni Alfabenin Uygulanması," *Turkish Studies*, Vol 6/1, (Winter 2011), 1700.

³⁸² Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 27.

³⁸³ Yılmaz Çolak, "Language Policy and Official Ideology in Early Republican Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, (2004): 67.

Istanbul and therefore the change in the alphabet directly affected the Sanjak.³⁸⁴ Furthermore, the simplicity of the new alphabet was given as a cause to learn the new language. Examples were given in the newspapers about how easily everybody could learn the language with the new alphabet.³⁸⁵

Milli Mektepler [National Schools] were established in Anatolia after the acceptance of the new alphabet to teach people to read and write with the new alphabet. In the Sanjak, *Gençspor Kulübü* took on the role of these schools and established night courses for those who wanted to learn the new alphabet.³⁸⁶ In addition to the Club, “Reading Rooms” were established by the Cultural Branch of the *Halkevleri* and served the people of Antakya to a great extent.³⁸⁷ On the other hand, Arab nationalists blamed the Turks for using these night courses as sites for propaganda.

The French mandate rule sent inspectors to the courses organized by Selim Çelenk to ensure that they only teach the new alphabet and no nationalist propaganda was carried out. Selim Çelenk took a token payment from the course attenders to show that these were private initiatives and not conducted by the Turkish Republic. Still, the Syrian Mandate government was not happy with these activities and wanted the French to ban these courses.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁴ Mehmet Tekin, *Harf İnkılabı: Türk Ocakları'nın Çalışmaları ve Hatay'da Yeni Yazı* (Antakya: Kültür Eğitim Tesisleri Basımevi, 1988), 121.

³⁸⁵ Ayten, *Yeni Mecmua*, Teşrinisani 15, 1928 and January 1, 1929 as cited in Payaslı 2011, “Hatay’da Harf İnkılabının Kabulü,” 1700.

³⁸⁶ Çelenk, *Hatay’ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 32.

³⁸⁷ Şükrü Balcı, “Okuma Odaları,” *Yenigün*, April 21, 1937.

³⁸⁸ Tekin, *Harf İnkılabı*, 124.

The Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak requested from the mandate rulers the new alphabet to be the new medium of education at schools in the Sanjak. Usage of the new alphabet at schools and government institutions took a while to be accepted by the mandate regime and its adoption faced opposition by the Arab nationlists. When the Hatay government was finally established in September 2, 1938, the new alphabet began to be used in every aspect of life in the Sanjak.

Changing the alphabet meant cutting a nation's ties with its past as well as integrating its citizens into the newly established nation. While the supporters of the Kemalist reforms perceived this change as a necessity to become a modern and secularized nation, opponents of the reforms did not want to cut their ties with their past and the Islamic world. Therefore, opposition between the supporters and the opponents of Kemalist reforms should be read from this perspective. The priorities and benefits of different communities in the Sanjak were once more influential on their decision to support or oppose the new alphabet.

6.2.2 Reactions to the New Alphabet

Some Turks also opposed the new alphabet, because they believed that the reason behind all these reforms regarding language was to decrease the number of readers of the Qur'an.³⁸⁹ Religious circles made statements about the new alphabet being against Islam as they did with the hat reform. Until 1938, the new alphabet was not obligatory and the Qur'anic Schools continued to exist in which children could

³⁸⁹ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 32 and 153.

obtain a religious education. Because of these reasons, most of the religious people in the Sanjak found the French rule better than the Turkish in terms of the ease of practicing their religious beliefs.

The alphabet change caused unrest especially among the conservative people due to the religious attributions made to the Arabic alphabet. The main argument of the opponents was that reading the Qur'an and other religious texts would be much harder for future generations if a completely different alphabet was adopted. Opposition to the new alphabet was big, but a bigger problem was the perception of the hat reform in the Sanjak.

6.2.3 Hat Reform

The new Republic aimed at changing the outfit of modern Turkish citizens from an Ottoman to Western one. Imposing every male citizen to wear European style brimmed hats seemed an important initiative towards realizing that goal. The hat reform was introduced in 1925. The law first banned all other kinds of headgear for government officials, except for the religious officials, and as a second phase of this, wearing hats was obligatory for all men in society including children and peasants.³⁹⁰

Atatürk, often appeared in public with the European style brimmed hat around 1925 in order to popularize this new outfit. He was of the idea that this type of hat was the only appropriate type of headgear for the kind of nation he envisioned.³⁹¹ Atatürk

³⁹⁰ Selami Kılıç, "Şapka Meselesi ve Kılık Kıyafet İnkılabı," *Ankara Üniversitesi Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 4, No:16 (1995): 547.

³⁹¹ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 24.

believed that wearing European dress was an important step towards becoming part of the European world.³⁹² The new headgear was seen as an important tool to make the Sanjak appear Turkish. While young men wore brimmed hats, women began to abandon veil. Soon the hat became the symbol of the supporters of the Turkish rule.³⁹³

6.2.4 Reactions to the Hat Reform

In the Sanjak, reactions based on religious concerns turned what meant to be unifying reforms into a source of ethnic and religious division. When the hat reform was introduced in 1925, supporters of the Turkish rule immediately adopted it in the Sanjak.³⁹⁴ The first hat wearers were Vedi Münir, Miskizade Nafi Bey, Türkmenzade Abdülgani Ağa, Selim Çelenk and Abdurrahman Melek.³⁹⁵ They were strong supporters of Turkish nationalism in the Sanjak and in the following years they were given important roles when the Hatay State was formed.

Opposition to the hat reform was the solid expression of the rejection of the Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak. Wearing hats was perceived as anti-Islamic by the

³⁹² Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam-Mustafa Kemal, 1922-1938, Vol 3* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1985), 234-235.

³⁹³ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 350.

³⁹⁴ Mehmet Mursaloğlu, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesinde Türk Ordusu* (Iskenderun: 39. Mekanize Piyade Tugayı Tarih Araştırma Grubu Yayınları, 2010), 158.

³⁹⁵ Nuri Aydın Konuralp, *Hatay Kurtuluş ve Kurtuluş Mücadelesi* (Iskenderun: Hatay Posta Gazete ve Basımevi, 1970), 213.

average citizens of the region. They even associated the newly enforced hats as the habits of non-Muslims, an imposition on Muslims.³⁹⁶

Because of the implied political meaning, the expression of one's beliefs, wearing (or not) a Western style brimmed hat became a political statement in the Sanjak region. Turkish inhabitants of the Sanjak started to wear hats as early as 1926. In the years 1936-1937 most of the supporters of the Turkish rule were wearing hats. In 1937 the brimmed hat became the symbol of the Turks. On the other hand, opponents of the Turkish rule in the Sanjak consisted of two groups; the first group represented the moderates who wanted the continuation of the Mandate rule and the second group was composed of Arab nationalists. Since headgear became a political statement for every group in the Sanjak, the moderates wore the fez and the Arab nationalists wore the sidara, as statements against the Western style brimmed hats of the Turkish nationalists.³⁹⁷ The headgear turned into a symbol to understand a person's political stand.

At the beginning, opponent groups only demonstrated for their political stance. Later on, these demonstrations turned into violent street fights. When the League of Nations' observers arrived in the Sanjak to observe the situation and prepare a report for the League of Nations concerning the population structure of the region, different groups demonstrated their position by wearing hats, fezzes, or sidaras and walked on the streets where the League representatives would be present. The streets of the Sanjak

³⁹⁶ MK, Interview by the author, November 2008.

³⁹⁷ Remzi Siliöz, "Bir Halk Nüktesi," *Yenigün*, March 29, 1944.

were therefore full of fancy people demonstrating their political stance, but sometimes these demonstrations turned into fights.³⁹⁸

An interesting case in point related to the hat debate in the Sanjak was the experience of Refik Halit Karay who was among the *150likler*. Karay was living in the Sanjak. To the dislike of his other *150lik* friends, Karay was also among the first hat wearers in the Sanjak region. Because of his adoption of the brimmed hat, he was ostracized, this time, by those other friends who were also among the *150likler*.³⁹⁹ Supporting the Kemalist reforms as a member of an exiled group who were declared as *personas non grata* was perceived as an odd behavior.

Ali İlmi Fani was another member of the *150likler* living in the Sanjak. He wrote to his friend Rıza Tevfik, that the hat reform was too early for the people of the Sanjak, in that it was creating a sense of obligation for Turkish supporters which would result in deep cleavages between the different communities of the Sanjak and even among the Turkish population.⁴⁰⁰ Inhabitants of rural areas were not able to follow what was happening in the Turkish Republic and when offered to wear the European style brimmed hats to show their support for the Turkish rule, their first reaction was to reject it believing that it was religiously impermissible. Some individuals from religious circles started to raise their opposition to the hat reform based on a hadith briefly

³⁹⁸ Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta," 106. See Appendix for the pictures of various groups demonstrating on the streets.

³⁹⁹ Volkan Payaslı and Olcay Özkaya Duman, "Şapka (İnkılabı) ve Din Üzerinden Verilen Hatay Bağımsızlık Mücadelesi-Vedi Münir Karabay ve Risalesi: Şapka Giymek Haram Değil," *Tarihin Peşinde*, No: 9 (2013): 299.

⁴⁰⁰ Abdurrahman Uçman and Handan İnci, *Bir 150liğin Mektupları: Ali İlmi Fani'den Rıza Tevfik'e Mektuplar* (Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 1998), 128.

meaning that: “those who look like the infidels will become one of them.”⁴⁰¹ Some scholars of Islamic Law interpreted this hadith strictly stating that those individuals who look like the infidel in terms of clothing or anything related to their outlook must certainly become one of them.⁴⁰² On the other hand, scholars who supported the reforms and interpreted the hadith in terms of life style stated that looking like infidels had nothing to do with clothing or outlook, but with similar life style. Therefore, according to the latter scholars, hat reform was not against Islam.

In response to the booklets published and distributed by religious circles against the hat reform, the Kemalists of the Sanjak prepared their own religiously oriented booklets trying to prove that wearing hats was not anti-Islamic. Both sides, those for and against the hat reform, attempted to convince pious people of the rural areas and employed the same methods by relying on different religious texts.⁴⁰³ As one of the local supporters of the hat reform, Vedi Münir Karabay wrote a booklet of his own, telling people that wearing hats should not be perceived as a symbol of infidelity and tried to disprove all claims mentioned in the hat-opposition booklets.⁴⁰⁴

Reactions to the hat reform were not only on religious lines. The topic actually evolved into a political issue in the Sanjak where the type of headgear determined a

⁴⁰¹ Reported by Ebu Davud from Prophet Mohammad. Muhammed Muhyiddin Abdülhamîd ed. *Sünen-i Ebu Davud*, Vol: 4 (Beyrut: 1983), 44.

⁴⁰² Vedi Münir Karabay gives the relevant part of the hat opposing booklets as an example in his *Şapka Giymek Haram Değil* (Antakya: İktisat Matbaası, 1938), 1-11.

⁴⁰³ It is claimed by a news journal that the “Turkish government even took a fatwa from Al-Azhar University stating that the wearing hat was not against Islam.” (See M. Yaşar Durukan, “Sakıncalı Türkler: Ankara’ya Söyleyin Bizi Vatandaş Yapsınlar,” *Aksiyon*, February 16, 2004).

⁴⁰⁴ Karabay, *Şapka Giymek Haram Değil*, 1-11.

person's political stance. Prior to the Kemalists' adoption of the hat, Christians wore brimmed ones. When this type of hat became the symbol of the supporters of the Turkish rule, Christians abandoned the hat for the fez, because by that time the fez and the sidara⁴⁰⁵ became the symbols of the Syrian rule supporters.⁴⁰⁶ Arab Christians' change of headgear is just an example of how serious the political cleavages had become in the Sanjak region. Headgear or any other type of material related to a person's outlook determined one's political view; and the choice of head covering was sufficient for opposing groups to attack one another on the streets of a once tranquil region.

The cleavage among the Turks of the Sanjak based on the hat issue was most apparent in some events such as the *Yeni Cami* occurrence of 1934 in the month of Ramadan. Selim Çelenk, one of the leading Kemalists of the Sanjak, was among the first group who had started to wear the brimmed hat after the reform's declaration in Turkey. As reported in his memoirs, he was present at the *Yeni Cami* where Kürt Hoca's sermon criticized the revolutions which were taking place in Anatolia. He was stating that all were infidels who made the Turkish people wear hats, abolished the Sharia rule, and accepted the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic alphabet. After listening to his sermon, Selim Çelenk approached Kürt Hoca and asked whether hat wearers were infidels or not. When he replied "Yes, they are," Çelenk shouted at the Hoca saying "You are infidel!" After this, there was a fight between the two opposing groups and they were taken to the

⁴⁰⁵ Zaki Al-Arsuzi established the Arab nationalist organization, the League of National Action, and replaced the fez with sidara which is a headgear introduced by Faysal in Iraq. The ones wearing the sidara were mainly Alawites who were in support of an Arab state in the Sanjak.

⁴⁰⁶ Arı İnan, *Tarihe Tanıklık Edenler* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011), 224.

court.⁴⁰⁷ The event was mentioned as the “Kubilay Issue” in the newspaper *Yenigün* and protests took place against the French and the Syrian rulers of the Sanjak. The people of the Sanjak were encouraged to wear hats through the newspaper. None of them were found guilty, but this event demonstrates how politics around Kemalist reforms affected everyday life of the people in the Sanjak.

Opposition to the hat reform from the Turks of the Sanjak mainly concentrated in certain places such as Abacılı, Akbez, Söğüt and Ceylanlı villages. According to the December 11, 1936 National Laborer Service Report, Ali Kutsi and Zeynel Abidin were mentioned to have carried out some activities in the Abacılı region.⁴⁰⁸ When the state made it an obligation to wear hats, especially when entering state institutions, the people of Ceylanlı had to buy hats. Only one hat was bought for common use and kept in a tree hollow near the village square. Whoever needed to go to the city for an official business would take the hat from the hollow and wear it in the city. The destiny of the tree, which hosted the only hat of Ceylanlı village, was not brilliant. After being used as a focal point of the village, the tree was no longer needed to hold the hat. When the obligation to wear hat was lifted,⁴⁰⁹ the villagers cut the tree, because the hat, which was an infidel headgear, had been placed in it.

⁴⁰⁷ Çelenk, *Hatay'ın Kurtuluş Mücadelesi*, 57-59. See also Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 25.

⁴⁰⁸ ATASE Arşivi, II. Dünya Harbi Koleksiyonu, Dosya 13, Belge No: 16- 17 as cited in Hamit Pehlivanlı et al, *Türk Dış Politikasında Hatay* (Ankara: ASAM, 2001), 63.

⁴⁰⁹ The law on wearing hats was declared in 1926. Initially, it was opposed by many, leading to revolts around Anatolia. Some of the opponents, including İskilipli Atıf Hoca who had written a pamphlet about wearing hats being against Islam before the Hat Reform, were sentenced to death for their acts. In the following years, this law was no longer applied; however, the law was still valid with changes in its punishment. In 2005, the punishment for not wearing hats was changed to 2 to 6 months of imprisonment or 1,000 TL to 5,000 TL fine. It was only in March 13, 2014 that the law requiring to wear hats was

The obligation to wear the hat was opposed by the villagers of Hassa as well as Ceylanlı. In the city, there were soldiers responsible for the application of the hat reform. They made sure that everyone was wearing hats in public places and in official buildings. Villagers going to the city on official business did not want to wear a hat and when they were asked by the soldiers why they did not wear a hat they came up with several different excuses. One of the most remembered excuses was having mange. At one occasion, villagers from Küreci (a village in the sub province of Hassa) used the same excuse when asked about not wearing hats. They thought that the soldiers would let them alone with this excuse, but the soldiers were determined to make sure that everyone wore a hat and did not want this excuse to be used by the villagers any longer. The soldiers cut the villagers' hair and tarred their heads as a method to fight mange. After this event, nobody from the region tried to deceive soldiers by saying that they had mange.⁴¹⁰

Not all hat wearers were Turks. As stated earlier, wearing a hat symbolized a political stance for Turkish rule. There were Arabs who chose to wear hats as well as Turks who chose not to. The Arabs who wore brimmed hats faced opposition from their ethnic groups⁴¹¹ just as the Turks who did not wear hats.⁴¹² In 1938, when the Turkish army entered the Sanjak, Arab villagers and Alawites were reported to have worn

totally abolished.

⁴¹⁰ Conversation with a villager from Küreci by the author, August 2013.

⁴¹¹ Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta," 65.

⁴¹² Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 41-42.

brimmed hats for the welcoming ceremonies.⁴¹³ These acts were celebrated by the Turkish media, but it was not clear whether these Sunni Arabs and Alawites wore hats because they were scared of the Turkish army in the Sanjak or just because they supported Turkish rule in the Sanjak.

Kemalist Reforms were an important tool of the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak. These reforms were a way of reflecting one's acceptance to change the life style to become part of the newly defined Turkish nation. The reforms were not the only tools utilized by the Kemalist ethnic nationalists. Declaring everyone living in the Sanjak took place mainly through historiography, because the Kemalist nationalists were aware of the relation between ideology and historiography.

6.3 Ideology, Historiography and Language: the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory

Historiography is shaped within ideologies and nationalism is among the most influential ideologies on historiography. In the nineteenth century, the formation of the nation state brought with itself the practice of rewriting history according to the ideas and the needs of the ruling power. History is used by nationalists to disseminate their ideas to the masses. Within this framework, historiography can be defined as the representation of nationalism and the ideological expression of the political atmosphere.⁴¹⁴ Kemalist nationalism was no exception to this as it also used elements of

⁴¹³ *Yenigün*, June 29, 1939.

⁴¹⁴ Büşra Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih, Türkiye'de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu 1929-1937* (Istanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1992), 98.

history as well as linguistics, anthropology, and geography when defining the new nation. One of the most vivid examples of this influence is the handling of the issue of the Sanjak of Alexandretta within the framework of Turkish History Thesis. The nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak region targeted every ethnic and religious group, but a common ground was created for them by suggesting that the population living in the Sanjak region shared a common history even prior to the Ottoman rule and the historical roots of the new nation are to be found in ancient Anatolia, reaching as far back as the Hittite civilization. The ancient peoples of the region were declared to be Turkish and the ancestors of the new nation, thereby creating a sense of belonging.

Kemalists, as Peter Burke noted once, “used history to justify the present.”⁴¹⁵ Not only history but also archeology and linguistics were deployed to this end. Mustafa Kemal personally instigated the foundation of the *Türk Tarih Kurumu* [Turkish Historical Society] and this institution’s active engagement in archeological discovery of Anatolia was all for the benefit of the Kemalist ideology in its struggle to disengage the people of Anatolia from Islam and the Ottoman past while engaging them with the “ever-Turk” background of Anatolia. The main product of the *Türk Tarih Kurumu* was the *Türk Tarih Tezi* [Turkish History Thesis] according to which all the earlier peoples of Anatolia were the forebearers of the Turkish state and the new excavations on the Hittites provided invaluable material to support this theory. The thesis was first officially presented to the nation’s educational, scholarly, and intellectual community during the First Turkish History Congress at the Ankara *Halkevi* (2-11 July 1932).

⁴¹⁵ Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.

When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, the Republican leadership chose the civilization of the West as its ultimate goal in all areas of life. Towards this end, it was necessary that the Turks should become part of Europe rather than being identified with the predominantly Arab Middle East. Furthermore, the war-torn people of Anatolia should be made proud of their nation and should not yearn for their Ottoman past. A new historical reality had to be created for the Turks of Anatolia free from the perceived “backwardness” of Islam and the Ottomans.⁴¹⁶

Kemalist nationalism claimed ownership of Anatolia. However, it was not safe to lay such a claim over Anatolia, because the Greek and the Armenians were already claiming rights over the same lands. In order to prove their claims irrelevant, the Turkish History Thesis had to show clearly that Anatolia was Turkish even before the coming of the Greeks and the Armenians.⁴¹⁷ The Hittites were chosen as the ancient ancestors of Turks in Anatolia.⁴¹⁸

Excavations were carried out in Anatolia to learn more about the Hittites during the early republican years, especially by *Deutsch-Orient Gesellschaft*. Despite all the research, their languages were not yet understood; thus, the Hittites were not yet affiliated with any of the languages that are used today. Using this lack of knowledge, Kemalist nationalists claimed that Hittites were actually Turks coming from Central Asia. With this claim, the search for the roots of the Turks was extended to Central Asia.

⁴¹⁶ See Can Erimtan, “Hittites, Ottomans and Turks: Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey and the Kemalist Construction of Turkish Nationhood in Anatolia,” *Anatolian Studies*, 58 (2008), 141-171.

⁴¹⁷ Maarif Vekili Esat Bey [Sagay], “Açma Nutku,” in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi (2-11 Temmuz 1932) Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1932), 7.

⁴¹⁸ Afet İnan, “Orta Kurun Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış,” in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, (2-11 Temmuz 1932) Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1932), 417.

Although the hieroglyphs were soon to be defined as a member of the Indo-European language family, Kemalist linguists had already “proved” that all languages were actually born out of Turkish. The theory Kemalist scholars presented as the source of these claims was *Güneş Dil Teorisi* [Sun Language Theory] developed in 1936.⁴¹⁹

6.3.1 Institutionalization of Turkish Historiography

Research on Turkish history began to be carried out in an organizational manner in the first 20 years of the twentieth century. *Türk Derneği* [Turkish Association],⁴²⁰ *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni* [Council on the Ottoman History],⁴²¹ *Âsâr-ı İslamiyye ve Milliyye Tedkik Encümeni* [Council on the Research of National and Islamic Works],⁴²² *Türk Ocakları* [Turkish Hearths]⁴²³ and *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti* [Turkish History

⁴¹⁹ İbrahim Necmi Dilmen, *Üçüncü Türk Dili Kurultayı (1936) Tezler, Müzakere Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1937), 8-9.

⁴²⁰ *Türk Derneği* was established in 1908 by Ahmed Midhat, Necip Asım, Vedat Çelebi, and Yusuf Akçura. The Association published a weekly journal called *Türk Derneği Dergisi* [Turkish Association Journal], which published six issues in 1911, and one issue in 1912. The main foci of the articles published in the journal were Turkish history, Ottoman social structure and language. The institution continued to function until 1912 and after its closure many of its members joined other associations.

⁴²¹ Mehmet Reşat IV formed the *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni* in 1909 with the aim of writing a comprehensive history of the Ottoman Empire and publishing Ottoman history documents. It also published a journal with the same name between 1910 and 1928. Although it had a certain professional standard, its point of focus was limited to Ottoman history and historiography rather than talking about Turkish history in general.

⁴²² Ziya Gökalp and Fuad Köprülü were interested in sociology and other modern research methods. They formed the *Âsâr-ı İslamiyye ve Milliyye Tedkik Encümeni* together with German, French, Russian, and Hungarian members in 1912. The commission’s journal was called *Milli Tettebular Mecmuası* [National Research Journal] and published only for one year.

⁴²³ *Türk Ocakları* were established by a group of military school students in 1912. In an article, they stated their common characteristic as their belief in positivism and scientific explanations (Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, “Türk Ocağının Tarihçesi ve İftiralar Karşı Cevaplarımız”, *Türk Yurdu* 5, 25(1930): 2). The journal *Türk Yurdu* [Turkish Homeland], published by Yusuf Akçura, was their main source of inspiration, and in 1912 it became Turkish Hearths’ publication. The *Türk Yurdu* journal provided the passage of ideas and concepts concerning historiography from the founders of the Turkish Association to

Investigation Committee]⁴²⁴ established under *Türk Ocakları* can be counted among the most important organizations that paved the way to the institutionalization of Turkish historiography.

The institutionalization process of Turkish historiography resulted in the ruling group taking over the historical research. During this process, what was striking about most of these institutions was their emphasis of the founders' political views. Many of them carried the term "Turkish" in their names pointing to the effect of nationalism on the urge to study the history of the nations. The teleological character of history writing of the early twentieth century was also apparent in the Turkish case and reflected on the Sanjak issue when claiming that the Sanjak population was all Turks sharing a common history; if the factors leading to their separation were deleted from the region's history.

6.3.2 *Türk Tarih Tezi* [Turkish History Thesis]

During the single party era (1923-1946), Kemalist nationalism flourished and used history as one of its main tools to convince people about their common background. As a result of rejecting everything related to the Ottoman past, religion was

the Kemalist rulers. Turkish Hearths were established with the aim of studying Turkish history and culture. They paid special attention to develop Turkish national education, raising the scientific, social and economic standards of the Turks and enhance the Turkish race and language. (Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal* (London, 1917), 19). The first director of the Turkish Hearths was Ahmet Ferit, and Hamdullah Suphi continued the same duty after him (Yusuf Sarııay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları* (Istanbul: Ötüken Yayınları,1994), 134-135). None of its first cadre wanted Turkish Hearths to serve as a branch of the CUP. However, after the establishment of Turkish Republic and the single-party period that began with it, Turkish Hearths faced the inevitable end. In 1931 they were officially an institution of Republican People's Party (Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 84).

⁴²⁴ Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti [Turkish History Investigation Committee] under Turkish Hearths was established and its members were appointed directly by Atatürk.

no longer the uniting element; positivism and secularism were emphasized as main characteristics of the new nation. In line with these characteristics, no religious references were given in the Turkish History Thesis and “scientific” methods of anthropology, geography, and linguistics were utilized to the fullest extent. This section explains the creation of the Turkish History Thesis as well as its main claims. The *Guidelines of Turkish History* is also analyzed as the main source of the History Thesis.

Briefly, the Turkish History Thesis contained the following claims: Turkish history was very old, it took place in a wide geography, the sublimation of Central Asia and Hittites as Anatolia’s oldest Turks, the very bright nature of the Turkish culture that led to the creation of Roman cultures through ancient Romans and even Etruscans, by also claiming that these were Turkish people.⁴²⁵ The Turkish History Thesis was based on the unexplored points of historical research such as the Hittites, Sumerians and the Etruscans, and they were claimed to be Turks.⁴²⁶

The Turkish History Thesis was first formulized by Istanbul University Faculty of Law Professor Yusuf Ziya [Özer], in opposition to Fuad Köprülü who believed that it was unscientific to claim that the Turks were the source of every civilization in every geography that they have ever lived.⁴²⁷ As was clearly stated by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, the Turkish History Thesis rejected Ottoman history and Turks are said to come from the

⁴²⁵ Afet İnan, “Orta Kurun Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış,” 412-415.

⁴²⁶ Copeaux, *Ders Kitaplarında*, 52-53.

⁴²⁷ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması, 1923- 1931* (Ankara, 1981), 300-303.

Caucasian race who are actually the builders of civilization and the Turks have contributed a great deal to the human civilization from the very beginning.⁴²⁸

Proving the existence of Turks in Anatolia and the Sanjak region even before the historical ages was the main aim of the Turkish History Thesis. History and archeology were used extensively towards this aim. Ensuring that people believe in the ideas put forward by the thesis was more important than supporting these ideas with valid proof.⁴²⁹ The national sense of self-esteem was accepted to be as important as the material proofs reached as a result of the excavations.⁴³⁰ Turkish History Thesis provided the main framework for the modern Turkish historiography and therefore nation building for the Kemalists.

Afet İnan⁴³¹ narrated that what had triggered Atatürk's personal involvement in the matters of history and historiography was the racist relegation of the Turks to a secondary stage in human development by some European scholars. Atatürk appointed Afet İnan to study anthropology to show the superior place of the Turkish race in the global scale of races.⁴³² In 1930, Afet İnan spoke at the Turkish Hearths General

⁴²⁸ Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, "Atatürk ve Tarih," *Belleten* 35, 140(1971): 539.

⁴²⁹ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 192.

⁴³⁰ H. Cemil Çamlıbel, "Atatürk ve Tarih," *Belleten* 3, 10(1939): 270-271.

⁴³¹ Afet İnan was a teacher who met Atatürk and expressed her interest in further study in this meeting. Atatürk supported her and she was sent to Europe to work with one of the most important anthropologists of the era, Eugene Pittard. Her work was politically driven and dedicated to proving the Turkish History Thesis.

⁴³² Afet İnan, *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1968), 193.

Assembly, in which she made one of the most open declarations of the aims of the Kemalist historiography and all the other disciplines used to support this ideology:

“Turks are the first civilized people of the world. They are the ones who built the Chinese civilization. It is the Turks who established the first civilization of human kind in Mesopotamia and Iran at least 7000 years before the beginning of the human history, even though they were given names as Sumerians, Elams and Acadians. The autochthonous settlers of the Nile Delta and the builders of the Egyptian civilization were Turks. The Assyrians and Sami Hammurabi of the 2300 BC Mesopotamia, the Dors who later were called the Greeks and the Hittites as the autochthonous people of Anatolia and its first and real owners, were all Turks. Even the Etruscans who are believed to create the essence of the Latin civilization were Turks.”⁴³³

The Turkish History Thesis was first published in 1931 as a 605-page volume, entitled *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* [Guidelines of Turkish History]. The book consists of eleven chapters after it was published as a whole; the introduction to the Turkish History and Central Asia chapters [*Methal Kısmı*] was published as a brochure by the

⁴³³ Afet İnan, *Türk Tarihi Hakkında Mutalaalar* (Speech made at the Turkish Hearths General Assembly), (Istanbul: Türk Ocakları Neşriyatı, Türk Ocağı Matbaası, 1930). For other ways of expressing the same idea see Sadri Maksudi's speech in the same book.

Ministry of Education in 1931⁴³⁴ with the aim of disseminating the ideas of the thesis to more people and it was sent to the schools to be used as a textbook.⁴³⁵

The work, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, was the best example for the studies conducted within the framework of the historical reform and it was the first complete presentation of the Turkish History Thesis. The book devoted a great deal of space to pre-historical and ancient times. The second part of the book contains the core ideas of the History Thesis and presents the ideas of Central Asia as the homeland. According to the book, the Turks who emigrated from Central Asia civilized the rest of the world.⁴³⁶ The following parts of the book are about the ancient histories of China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, the Aegean Basin, Italy, and Iran. The positive effects of Turkish migration in these places are discussed in depth. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* devotes only fifty pages to the Ottoman history.

The main idea of this book is stated as the “Elimination of all the mistakes made in the past and enabling the Turkish race to be aware of their capability to form great civilizations and feel the greatness in them. Thus, it is the best time to write a national history of the Turks to show that it is through our deep ethnic roots that we are going to develop into a great nation again.”⁴³⁷ Ottoman history was completely omitted in the Introduction to the Guidelines of Turkish History.

⁴³⁴ Semavi Eyice, “Atatürk’ün Büyük bir Tarih Yazdırma Teşebbüsü: Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları,” *Belleten*, 32, 128(1968): 509-526.

⁴³⁵ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatlarına Methal* (Istanbul Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

⁴³⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996), 57-66.

⁴³⁷ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 25.

Turkish History Investigation Community organized the International History Congress in 1932, which continued annually. The main idea behind these Congresses was to provide an academic environment to discuss the new findings and ideas concerning the history of the Turkish Republic. Both the Institution and the Congresses had the aim of creating the image that independent scientific research was carried out in Turkey. Another important goal was to integrate the History Thesis with the schoolbooks in order to provide a strong sense of citizenship.⁴³⁸ However, the papers presented at the Congresses were mostly based on questionable data picked up by Kemalist historians or from Western researchers.⁴³⁹ Western sources were chosen according to their stance towards the Turkish History. If they were supporting the official ideology, the author was mentioned as a great scholar. If the person was saying anything negative about the thesis--the official ideology-- they were blamed for being enemy of the Turks.⁴⁴⁰

Kemalist ideology so dominated the work presented at the congress that in the foreword of a collection of the congress proceedings, Atatürk was represented as the only source of information for the Turkish History Investigation Community.

“Atatürk took the Turkish History Investigation Community under his safeguard. The community was inspired by the depths of his genius that scatters the darkness and has command over centuries. We worked day

⁴³⁸ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 117.

⁴³⁹ Copeaux, *Ders Kitaplarında*, 53.

⁴⁴⁰ İsmail Beşikçi, *Türk Tarih Tezi, Güneş Dil Teorisi ve Kürt Sorunu* (İstanbul: Komal Basım-Yayım, 1997), 131.

and night to investigate the Turkish history according to the guidelines defined by him.”⁴⁴¹

The papers presented at the first Turkish History Congress, including Şemsettin Günaltay’s speech, were mainly about Sumerians and Hittites being Turks.⁴⁴² Another common subject was the anthropological and archeological studies carried out in line with the Turkish History Thesis. The Second Congress (1937) contained a wider range of studies. Some discussed the blood groups and fingerprints of Turks⁴⁴³ and they were thought to be scientific researches that nobody would oppose. The Second History Congress had an important mission such as to emphasize the “long history” of the Turks from the perspective of language. The initiative to clean the Turkish language from the Persian and Arabic words began at this Congress.⁴⁴⁴

Excavations of the Hittite civilization together with the recent discoveries in Central Asia contributed much to the Turkish History Thesis. The Hittites were accepted as the ancestors of the Turks in Anatolia. In addition, the links between the Hittites and the Turks of Central Asia were firmly riveted when the Orhun Inscriptions were deciphered by the Danish philologist Vilhelm Thomsen. Since there were other European scholars such as Léon Cahun, the European audience was familiar with the

⁴⁴¹ *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları, “Önsöz,”* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010), v-vi.

⁴⁴² Şemsettin Günaltay, “Türk Tarih Tezi Hakkında İntitakların Mahiyeti ve Tezin Kati Zaferi,” *Belleten*, 7-8(1938): 339-358.

⁴⁴³ Sadi Irmak, “Türk Irkının Biyolojisine Dair Araştırmalar, Kan Grupları ve Parmak İzleri,” in *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Kongrenin Çalışmaları Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1937), 841.

⁴⁴⁴ *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Kongrenin Çalışmaları Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1937).

notion of the Turks migrating to Anatolia from Central Asia. Kemalist historians and ideologues built the Turkish History Thesis upon this notion to obtain international support.

Sanjak region was among the important centers of the Hittite civilization. Therefore, basing Turkish historical claims on ancient civilizations such as the Hittites also served Kemalist ideologues' claim about the Sanjak region being a Turkish land.

6.3.3 Reform in the Language

While the Kemalist nationalists were trying to form a national history for the Turks, it was gradually realized that history on its own was not enough to form the new Turkish identity. A national language had to be made as part of the republican project of identity building.⁴⁴⁵ Nineteenth century nationalists were using language to support their notions of nation. Emerging ideas on language in Europe was used for categorizing nations around the world. Western philologists of the nineteenth century commonly believed that Turkish Language was among the inferior languages,⁴⁴⁶ similar to the views of the anthropologists who categorized races according to their physical characteristics. When Kemalist nationalists worked toward the creation of a national language, they also aimed at glorifying the degraded Turkish honor through its language.

⁴⁴⁵ Ahmet Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene:*" *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları, 1919-1938* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001): 286-90.

⁴⁴⁶ Lourens P. Van der Bosch, "Language as the Barrier between Brute and Man: Friedrich Max Müller and the Darwinian Debate on Language," *Saeculum* 51, (2000): 57-89.

In 1932, the Turkish Language Investigation Community was established. This institution organized congresses similar to the History Congresses. The theories and ideas presented at the First and Second Congresses were systematically collected under the title of “Sun Language Theory” in the Third Congress of the Turkish Language Investigation Community.⁴⁴⁷

In all of the Congresses there were expressions such as “the father of the Turks” and “our ancestors” when talking about Sumerians and Hittites. In the same manner, Turks were represented as “the father of the Arian [*sic*] race”.⁴⁴⁸ Ahmet Cevat’s paper, presented in the First Congress, was based on the claim that the Sumerians and the Hittites were Turks. The Sumerians had spoken a language that was not related to Indo-European or Semitic languages.⁴⁴⁹ Therefore, Kemalist historians and linguists tried to establish an ethnic unity between the Turks and the Sumerians. Since they were the inventors of writing, this would provide a very good status for the Turkish nation.

Other papers presented by Mehmet Saffet Bey, Hakkı Nezihi Bey, Raif Paşazade Fuat [Köseraif] Bey, Abdullah Battal [Taymas] Bey and Agop Martaya [Dilaçar] in the First Language Congress advocated that Turkish should be acknowledged as the father of all the Indo-European languages or at least it should be counted as part of this

⁴⁴⁷ Beşikçi, *Türk Tarih Tezi*, 151.

⁴⁴⁸ *Üçüncü Türk Dili Kurultayı, Tezler, Müzakere Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1937).

⁴⁴⁹ Ahmet Cevat [Emre], “Sümer Dili ile Bizim Dilimizi Fonetik, Morfoloji, Lügat ve Nahvi Teşekkül Noktalarından Mukayese,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı: Tezler, Müzakere Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933), 81-94.

language family.⁴⁵⁰ Although some of the scholars were more precautionary about their claims concerning the Turkish language, by 1935 they were all ardent supporters of the Sun Language Theory, which mainly acknowledges Turkish as the first language of all humankind.⁴⁵¹

The aim of the Sun Language Theory was to prove the continuity of the Turkish language and the Turkish race since ancient times. The supporters of the Turkish History Thesis used the Sun Language Theory to analyze Turkish language free from “the Islamic yoke”⁴⁵² by claiming that the language was born as an act of worship, which for the ancient Turkic tribes a ritual practiced towards the Sun. In their worship, Turkic tribes transformed their meaningless chattering into a coherent set of words. There comes the relation between the Turkic tribes of the Central Asia and all the other ethnic groups who worshipped the sun. The reference to the sun in the Sun Language Theory is based on this claim.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Agop Martayan [Dilaçar], “Türk, Sümer, Hint- Avrupa Dilleri Arasındaki Rabıtalalar,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı*, 94-104; Mehmet Saffet Bey, “Türk Dilinin Kıdamı ve Hâkimiyeti- Türkçe’nin Arı Dillerle Münasebeti,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı*, 110-124. and Hakkı Nezihi Bey, “Türkçe’nin Diğer Dillerle Alaka ve Münasebeti-Türkçe’nin Menşei Hususiyeti- Hint-Avrupa Ana Lisanı,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı*, 129-139. and Raifpaşazade Fuat [Köseraif] Bey, “Dillerin Ayrılması,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı*, 216- 232. and Abdullah Battal Bey, “Türk Dili En Eski ve Zengin Dillerden Biridir,” in *Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı*, 232-242.

⁴⁵¹ Ahmet Cevat Emre was among the precautionary linguists who did not dare to make such a big claim based on such unscientific evidence.

⁴⁵² Şemsettin Günaltay and H.Reşit Tankut, *Dil ve Tarih Tezlerimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar* (İstanbul: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1938), 27.

⁴⁵³ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 50.

Although there were some Turkish scholars who accepted that they were not working in a scientific manner,⁴⁵⁴ the general trend among the Turkish linguists and historians was to denounce Western scholarship as biased and condescending. Atatürk really believed in the Sun Language Theory when he first put it forward for the contribution of linguists, but he started to abandon it when he saw that the foreign scholars found it nonsensical.⁴⁵⁵

6.3.4 Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory in the Sanjak

Propaganda in the Sanjak and in the Turkish Republic were not limited to printed press or sports and youth clubs. History writing was an important tool in the hands of the new Republic and was utilized to its full extent via the Turkish History Thesis. This section analyzes an important historical study conducted by Faik Türkmen,⁴⁵⁶ one of the most passionate supporters of the Kemalist reforms and ideas. His work, *Mufasssal Hatay Tarihi*, is a comprehensive examination of the history of the Sanjak region through the lens of Turkish History Thesis. Türkmen's work is devoted to prove the Turkish character of the region, and he accomplished this goal through various means including geography, ethnic relations, language, and common history.

⁴⁵⁴ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya: Atatürk'ün Doğumundan Ölümüne Kadar Bütün Hayat Hikayesi* (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Basımevi, 1969), 478.

⁴⁵⁵ Yılmaz Çolak, "Language Policy and Ideology in Early Republican Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, 6 (Nov 2004): 83.

⁴⁵⁶ Unfortunately there is limited information about A. Faik Türkmen's life, but his surname is the same with one of the notable families of the Amik making one think that he is from the Amik region. Although there are some studies claiming that he was for sure from Antakya, there is not enough source, found by the author, supporting this claim. See Aydın Efe, *Reyhanlı Türkmen Aşireti*, speech conducted at Türkiye Kamu Çalışanları Kalkınma ve Dayanışma Vakfı (Çankırı: Şubat 2014).

Faik Türkmen was dedicated to the Kemalist cause and his politically driven attitude was clearly reflected in his works. He was among the leading Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak and served at various positions including his appointment as the editor of the local newspaper *Yenigün* and Hatay State's Minister of Education. Although he did not have a high degree in history, he took on the job to write the history of the Sanjak in line with the Turkish claims. His detailed knowledge of the region and its social life makes his work invaluable to understand the relations among the various communities of the regions, but his politically driven attitude limits the researchers when referring to his studies. Therefore, this thesis will also benefit from his study while keeping in mind his teleological history writing.

One of the most concrete adoptions of Turkish History Thesis, which was developed as part of the political environment of the time, was the history of the Sanjak region. The biggest aim of the ideologues who were assigned by Atatürk was to prove the Turkishness of the region based on historical sources. Discovering the "Turkish origins" of the Alawites was not an easy process and Kemalist ideologues had to go back to the Anatolian civilizations as early as the Hittites.

There was continuous coverage about the Alawites of the Sanjak in the daily national newspapers of Turkey and the local newspapers of the Sanjak especially after 1936.⁴⁵⁷ Alawites were referred to as *Eti Türkü* in these newspapers. Linguistic analyses

⁴⁵⁷ Signing of the Treaty between Syrian National Bloc and the French in 1936 sparked political uneasiness on the Turkish side, because with this Treaty, the future of the Sanjak after the Mandate was left unclear. The possibility of it becoming part of Syria was not acceptable for the Turkish side.

on the Arabic spoken by the Alawites concluded that their Arabic was not “real” Arabic but more resembled Turkish.⁴⁵⁸

Faik Türkmen was one of these “historians” who devoted his work to proving Hatay’s Turkish character based on the discourses of the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory. After July 23, 1938 he was appointed as the editor of the local newspaper *Yenigün*.⁴⁵⁹ Following the establishment of the Hatay State on September 2, 1938, Turkish influence in the region increased greatly; all non-Turks were eliminated from the education system by removing them from important posts. At this point, Faik Türkmen was appointed as the Minister of Education.⁴⁶⁰ Faik Türkmen wrote a very important book on the history of Hatay. His book is a perfect example of official history writing inspired by the Turkish History Thesis.

“Historians” who conducted their research in line with the Turkish History Thesis looked at the history of Hatay with the aim of proving that the region had always been Turkish and Alawites living in it were not Arabs, but Turks who forgot their Turkishness, blaming the Ottoman Empire for the estrangement of the Alawites.⁴⁶¹ Their proof was based mainly on geographical and historical background of the region. Hatay’s geographical connection with Anatolia and its people’s historical and cultural

⁴⁵⁸ Tan, 10 September 1937, 1. and Peyami Safa, Editorial, *Cumhuriyet*, 3 September 1937, 3.

⁴⁵⁹ Bülent Nakib and Mehmet Tekin, *Bekir Sıtkı Kunt* (Antakya: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Hatay Şubesi Yayınları, 1990), 21-22.

⁴⁶⁰ Mehmet Mursaloğlu et al, *Cumhuriyetin 80. Yılında İskenderun* (İstanbul: MEB, 2003), 36.

⁴⁶¹ Angell, “Inventing Hatay,” 15-16.

links with the Turks of their northern neighbor were the main points of focus in the aforementioned studies.

Faik Türkmen first published a series of articles in *Cumhuriyet* about Hatay being Turkish lands throughout centuries. His writing was represented as the scientific explanation of the Turkish claims on the Sanjak. In 1939, his work was published as an extensive study on the history of Hatay in *Tan Matbaası* in Istanbul. When the newspaper *Tan*'s support for the Turkish cause in the Sanjak is taken into consideration, this work's publication at the same publishing house would make more sense. Türkmen's book was distributed both in Turkey and the Sanjak. His statements such as “*Hatay Alevileri Türktürler. Bu itibarla Hatay Sünni Türkleriyle ırkdaşırlar*”⁴⁶² clearly defined Turkish nationalists' claims about the Sanjak.

6.3.4.1 “Alawites are Turks and it is Unnecessary to Claim the Opposite”

Faik Türkmen defined Alawites of Hatay as the “Shi’a Turkish community of Hatay” and although their belief system is not the same with the Sunni Turks, he emphasized that they actually were not very much different and belong to the same ethnic group.⁴⁶³ He also declared that Hatay Alawites were a small Turkish community that lived in a specific region.⁴⁶⁴ This region was where many religious and ethnic groups lived together. However, not all of them lived peacefully. There were some

⁴⁶² “The Alawites of Hatay are Turks. Therefore, they are from the same race with the Sunni Turks of Hatay,” Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 177.

⁴⁶³ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 177.

⁴⁶⁴ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 217.

ongoing conflicts between certain groups and the one between the Druze and the Alawites was given as an example. This historical conflict between the Druze and Alawites was also used as a proof of the Alawites' Turkishness. According to Türkmen, the Druze-Alawite conflict was based on the difference of ethnicity rather than religion. He stated, "Because the Druze was Arab and the Arabs have a categorical way of thinking, they are in constant conflict with the Alawites' open mindedness which is a Turkish characteristic."⁴⁶⁵

That the Alawites spoke Arabic points to a difference between the Alavis of Anatolia. This fact was used often by the Arabists to state that they were actually Arabs. It was rejected by the Turkish state based on sociological theories concerning the formation of the nation. According to Türkmen, there was no doubt that the Alawites were Turks because "they began to speak Arabic only in the 16th century and it is a well-known fact in sociology that the language is not the only criteria for the formation of the nations."⁴⁶⁶ When the campaigns carried out in various parts of Anatolia to promote people to speak Turkish to become members of the Turkish Republic during the late 1920s and early 1930s is taken into consideration, Faik Türkmen's suggestions about Arabic speaking Alawites of the Sanjak proves to be a special approach to the ethnically mixed population of the Sanjak.

Türkmen's insistence on the Turkishness of Alawites was based on the idea that there were many kinds of sects or sub-sect level communities in Anatolia, such as the

⁴⁶⁵ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 218.

⁴⁶⁶ Türkmen *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 220.

Mevlevi and Kadiris, and they were never thought to belong to some other ethnicity. According to him, if these groups in Anatolia were Turks, so were the Alawites.⁴⁶⁷

The Alawites' own understanding of ethnicity was also reshaped by Turkish nationalists. In the registration period there were many Alawites who chose to register under the category of Alawite or even as Arabs. There were some leaders among this group who were ardent supporters of Arab nationalism such as Zaki Al-Arsuzi and his father before him. When it came to explaining this situation, Türkmen suggested that the differences between different groups actually resulted from economic reasons, but after a while, people began to base these differences on religious or ethnic motives.

Türkmen claimed in his extensive study that the Alawites were also Turks, but they were organized into separate groups under the names Alawite and Turk as a result of French way of administration.⁴⁶⁸ Later on, these names were internalized by the groups themselves and these different names were turned into deep cleavages as a result of economic inequality. As stated by Türkmen: "yesterday's casts were turned into minorities. Actually they are all Turks who forgot their Turkish origins."⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 220.

⁴⁶⁸ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 4, 938.

⁴⁶⁹ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 4, 904-905.

6.3.4.2 Seeking Historical Connections in Geography

Türkmen makes observations on the issue of geographical relation of the Sanjak region to Turkey. The attention he pays for this relation resulted in his devising a geographical theory of the region. In the case of Hatay, geography functioned as one of the main components of the Turkish History Thesis and the geographical characteristics were accepted as clear proofs for the region's Turkish background. Türkmen concluded, after his detailed explanation about the region's geographical characteristics, that according to the natural geography of the region, Hatay was the continuation of the Taurus region rather than part of Syrian land. Türkmen claimed that both physical characteristics and anthropogeography revealed that Hatay was part of Anatolia.⁴⁷⁰

Türkmen supported the fact that the Sanjak region had always been part of the civilizations founded in Anatolia. He suggested that this was the most important aspect of the Sanjak's connection with Anatolia, because through the Sanjak region, Anatolia meets with the eastern part of the world. Türkmen presents the idea that without this part, Anatolia would lack its passage to the eastern trade market. According to Türkmen, the Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilizations were all effective in the region for centuries; however, they were not able to assimilate the Turks of the Sanjak region. Since the Turks were not given important posts in the administration, they lived in a closed community keeping their characteristics. When Muslims came, the social status of the Turks changed. They were given high-level posts as the real owners of the region.

⁴⁷⁰ "Tabi coğrafya bakımından Hatay, Suriye ile değil Toros muntıkasıyla alakalı olduğundan fiziki coğrafyada ve beşeri coğrafyada da Suriye'nin değil Anadolu'nun parçası olduğu ortaya çıkar." Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1, 20.

Although this change may be perceived as a positive thing for the Turks, it resulted in the cultural closure between the Arabs and the Turks.⁴⁷¹ Still, he continues, “Turks felt themselves as a separate ethnic group and never wanted Arabs to dominate them.”⁴⁷²

He brings another evidence from history; this time from the Ottoman era. He cites Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*⁴⁷³ that gives detailed accounts of places and people he visited. Türkmen argues that if Evliya Çelebi did not make any reference to Antakya’s Arab nature, this must be because it was all-Turkish.⁴⁷⁴

After the invasion of these lands by the Arabs, there was a slight mixing of the cultures; this was the time period in which some native Turks forgot their roots and began to adapt to Arabic culture. This region was not paid as much attention as it should have been during the Ottoman reign, but there were still Turks settled in the region as *zeamet* and *tımar* holders and the Nomadic Turkmen tribes. These groups reinforced the Turkish character of the region.⁴⁷⁵

Toponymy was also used to “scientifically” prove that the Alawites were Turks. Faik Türkmen and Agop Dilaçar stated that the names of the places that the Alawites lived were originally Turkish. Both authors reached the conclusion from their “research”

⁴⁷¹ Faik, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 497.

⁴⁷² Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 500.

⁴⁷³ *Seyahatname* is a widely known travel book, consisting of ten volumes, written by Evliya Çelebi in the 7th century. For detailed information see Seyit Ali Kahraman, Robert Dankoff, Yücel Dağlı, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007-2010).

⁴⁷⁴ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 556.

⁴⁷⁵ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 568.

that the Alawites switched their language from Turkish to Arabic as a result of Selim I's oppression.⁴⁷⁶ Therefore, Alawites began speaking in Arabic due to oppression rather than being of Arabic origin.

6.3.4.3 Tying the Sanjak Region to Hittite History

The general idea of the official historians of the 1930s, who worked in line with the Turkish Historical Thesis, was that the Arabic speaking people of Hatay were originally Turks and spoke Arabic because they were obliged to do so; similar to Farabi and Ibn-i Sina who wrote their work in Arabic as a requirement of their time despite being Turkish. Official historiography reminded them of their own identity and showed that they were of Turkish origin as part of the nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak. Atatürk himself worked hard towards the aim of including the ethnically and culturally Turkish people of Hatay within the borders of Turkish Republic. The name "Hatay" was personally given by Atatürk, as a result of his historical genius,⁴⁷⁷ to symbolize the connection between the Anatolian "Hittites" and the Asian "Katay" people.⁴⁷⁸

Several writings produced as part of the project, the Turkish History Thesis, argue that Anatolia has always been of Turkish origin. Among all the other civilizations of Anatolia, the Hittite civilization was more relevant to Hatay, because in the 1930s,

⁴⁷⁶ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 224. and Agop Dilaçar, "Alpin Irk, Türk Etkisi ve Hatay Halkı," *CHP Konferanslar Serisi*, Kitap 19 (Ankara: Recep Ulusoglu Basimevi, 1940), 17.

⁴⁷⁷ Nuri Aydın, *Hatay Meclisinin Son Toplantısında Söylenen Nutuklar* (Antakya: Yenigün Basimevi, 1939), 9.

⁴⁷⁸ Dilaçar, "Alpin Irk," 17.

the newly-began excavations in the region showed that it was an important city during the Hittite rule with highly developed culture and civilization.⁴⁷⁹ According to Demircioğlu, ruling the Sanjak region meant to secure east-west trade routes.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, the Turkish History Thesis and Demircioğlu suggest that the history of Hatay and the Hittites should be studied together because for the Hittites, this region had a special place due to its strategic position.⁴⁸¹

Another source, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatlarına Methal* [Introduction to the Guidelines of Turkish History], which actually founded the basis of the Turkish History Thesis, focused on the point that Turks came from Central Asia. The northern part of China was also counted among the regions where Turks used to live and the lands in this part were called Hata region.⁴⁸² Hittites are represented as “Hata Turks” and the word Hittite was said to derive from “Hata.” It is suggested that some historical texts mention place names such as Katay, Kıtay, Hitay, Hatay, Hata, Hato all of which refer to the northern Chinese lands.⁴⁸³

Not only do historical texts mention the Turks of this region; the famous poet of 17th century Ottoman literature, Nefi (1572-1635), and another Ottoman poet who wrote

⁴⁷⁹ Dilaçar, “Alpin Irk,” 4 and 14.

⁴⁸⁰ Halil Demircioğlu, “Anadolu’da İlk Siyasi Mekân Vahdeti Kuruluşunda Hatay’a Verilen Önem,” in *Ankara Üniversitesi Haftası: Hatay- Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1945), 64.

⁴⁸¹ Demircioğlu, “Anadolu’da İlk Siyasi Mekân,” 67.

⁴⁸² *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatlarına Methal*, 8-9.

⁴⁸³ See Chapter 2 for the renaming of the Sanjak region.

his poems during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Fuzuli(1483-1556), were presented as examples who mentioned these people as Hato Turks in their *divans*.⁴⁸⁴

According to Türkmen, the Turks from the Hata region of Northern China settled in Anatolia and northern Syria and established the Hittite civilization in these areas.⁴⁸⁵ Most of the place names in Anatolia were thought to derive from Greek or Arabic names; however, with the results of the excavations made in Hatay led to the realization that these names were neither Greek nor Arabic, but of the Hittite language, which was much older than all the above-mentioned languages.⁴⁸⁶ The same author argues that the Turks who came a long way from Hata region and settled around the Port of Alexandretta, gave the same names as their old ones to the lakes and rivers in their new country. Alagöl and Ası were given as examples and this was the reason for the river's name to be Ası rather than Âsi.⁴⁸⁷

The Turkish History Thesis and the other sources produced along this line were aware of the fact that looking at the origins of a place name provides valuable information about the historical geography of the relevant region as well as illustrating ethnic settlement patterns. Therefore, they historically connect the Sanjak region to the Turkish culture/people by looking at the origin of the names of the places.

This section demonstrated how Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory were adopted by the intellectuals of the new Republic to prove the Turkishness

⁴⁸⁴ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatlarına Methal*, 8.

⁴⁸⁵ Türkmen, *Mufassal Hatay*, 324.

⁴⁸⁶ Dilaçar, "Alpin Irk," 4.

⁴⁸⁷ Türkmen, *Mufassal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 325. Local people of Hatay usually refer to the river as "Ası"

of the Sanjak region through history writing. Faik Türkmen was one of the leading representatives of the new Republic in the Sanjak and his work targeted both the public in the Turkish Republic and the Sanjak. His work together with the other type of nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak influenced the Alawites to a certain extent. As discussed in the section about local newspapers, some Alawite Sheikhs decided to change their surnames with Turkish ones, thus openly declaring themselves as Turks. In addition to their actions, Agop Dilaçar presented papers at the history and language congresses in the early 1930s as well as members of the Hatay Parliament speaking at the last session defended the Turkish character of the region.⁴⁸⁸ On the other hand, interviews conducted with the Alawites draw the conclusion that these propaganda materials were discussed at a higher level and ordinary people of the Sanjak were not exposed to them. For instance, one of the Alawite interviewees, attending primary school at the time of these propaganda activities, stated that they have never heard anything about their Turkish origin.⁴⁸⁹ At this point it is important to examine the kind of propaganda that touched the daily lives of the Sanjak population.

The name “*Eti Türkü*” was used extensively at the academic level and the printed press to refer to the Alawites and the propaganda trying to prove the Turkishness of the Alawites was not limited to the Sanjak only. Alawite population also lived in the region including Mersin, Tarsus and Adana. A study conducted in 1938⁴⁹⁰ shows us that all of the Alawite population of this region was called “*Eti Türkü*.” In his book “*Etili*

⁴⁸⁸ Haçador Karabacakyan, *Hatay Meclisinin Son Toplantısında Söylenen Nutuklar* (Antakya: June 29, 1939), 16.

⁴⁸⁹ See the Appendix for examples of the interviews.

⁴⁹⁰ Taha Toros, *Çukurova’da Etili Şairler* (Adana: 1938).

Şairler,” Taha Toros compiled Turkish poems written by Alawite poets of the Mersin, Tarsus, Adana region and talked about how incorrect it was to treat this community separately from the Turks. When their ethnic and religious connection with the Sanjak Alawites is taken into consideration, naming the whole group as such shows us how effective the propaganda materials on the population of the Turkish Republic. In the same manner, history congresses served the purpose of showing the international as well as the national academic world that the Republican nationalist claims about the Turkish majority in the Sanjak were true, because Alawites were actually Turks.

At the local level, propaganda towards the Alawites concentrated on economic and religious lines rather than the theoretical approach embraced at the academic level. More practical reasons such as religious freedom and economic prosperity were put forward as motives for the Alawites to register themselves as Turks. Although the effects of this propaganda cannot be measured due to lack of statistical information, results of the registration process show us that many non-Turks also registered as Turks.

6.4 Conclusion

Both history and language proved to be useful tools in the formation of the Turkish nation. Ethnic Kemalists produced both the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory to cope with the inferior position that the Turkish nation was put in by the Western scholars. The newly established Turkish Republic had to detach itself from this inferior position by rejecting its connections to the Ottoman Empire. Only this way could the Republic claim a place for itself among the European countries.

Another important cause that these theories served was the creation of a past that all the members of the nation could proudly share. The glorious past of the nation was emphasized to such an extent that the Turkish nation was claimed to be the founder of all the civilizations as well as the Turkish language being the mother of all languages. Only through such a glorification could the new national identity be utilized to include all the ethnic and religious communities of the region.

The same approach was used in the Sanjak of Alexandretta during the ethnic nationalist propaganda. Faik Türkmen wrote a detailed history of the region based totally on the claims of the Turkish History Thesis to convince both the people living in the Turkish Republic and the Sanjak about the Turkish nature of the Sanjak region. In addition to history, language was also employed for the same purpose in the Sanjak and the differences in the languages spoken by the Sanjak population were explained through the Sun Language Theory. Since all the languages were born out of Turkish, some speaking Arabic any other language would not change the Turkish character of the region.

CHAPTER 5

DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA

This chapter argues that the social structure of the Sanjak of Alexandretta throughout the history of the region shaped the contents of the Turkish nationalist propaganda carried out in the 1930s. Every community was targeted by the Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda first by declaring all of them Turks, later specializing according to their needs and desires and each community's response to this propaganda changed according to their socio-political stance. The Sanjak region has always contained numerous ethnic and religious communities and their relationships with their rulers were influential in the nature of the social life.

In the Sanjak case, the notables played an important role in the political and the social life of the region. Traditional notables and the Amik *Beys* constituted the elite of

the Sanjak and their relations with each other as well as the Turkish, Arab and French Mandate authorities were effective on the ways the political life was shaped in the region.

Moreover, Alawites, an important group in terms of their population, were targeted by both Turkish and Arab nationalist propaganda in the 1930s. Turkish national identity was founded upon the opposition to everything related to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Turkish propaganda towards the Alawites of the Sanjak emphasized the secular and modern character of the new nation as well as calling them *Eti Türkü*. Kemalist nationalists knew the Alawites' resentment toward the Ottoman rule beginning with the 16th century and decided what characteristics of the new nation to emphasize over the others.

In the same manner, the Armenians of the Sanjak were targeted by Turkish propaganda, as ethnic Turks, based on the common historical connections discovered through the ancient Hittite civilization.

Conservative Sunni Turks of the Abacılı, Ceylanlı, and Hassa regions, on the other hand, were simply ignored due to their relations with the opponents of the Kemalist reforms in Anatolia. The role, played by the exiled actors of the Bozkır Events⁴⁹¹ and the *150likler* in the opposition that was raised in the Sanjak of

⁴⁹¹ One of the earliest and most important rebellions that took place in Anatolia was the Bozkır Incidents (September 27, 1919 and October 20, 1919). Cemal Bey, English priest Frew, and Zeynelabidin were counted among the organizers of the Bozkır rebellion. Zeynelabidin was among the leaders of the Freedom and Accord Party. Bozkır was Zeynelabidin's place of birth and he had good influence on the population. Zeynelabidin and the other leaders of the Bozkır events persuaded the local population to support their movement in the name of Islam and the Sultanate. The propaganda carried on in the region paid off and many people joined the movements against the national forces. The second part of the events resulted in frustration for the population of Bozkır. There were many casualties, the leaders had to flee

Alexandretta by the conservative Sunni Turks of the region, resulted in the lack of attention towards this group by the Kemalist nationalists when the opponents chose to leave the Sanjak.

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the structure and historical background of different communities living in the Sanjak and their relations with each other as well as Turkish authorities. The effects of the nationalist propaganda on their political decisions are also discussed in the light of their reactions to the Kemalist reforms and decisions under which category to be registered. The role of the notables in the general structure of the Sanjak is analyzed followed by their reactions to the Turkish nationalist propaganda and the Kemalist reforms in the region. Following that, the history of the Alawites⁴⁹² is examined to see how they came to settle in the region and what kind of relations they had with their rulers throughout their history. The historical background of the Armenian population in the Sanjak is mentioned in the following part due to their importance for the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the region. The Armenians' relations with the French mandate authorities are explained in detail to provide background for the readers to better understand the relations between the Turks, Armenians, and the French in the Sanjak. The Alawites and the Armenians were

and the Kuvayı Milliye forces took control of all the villages of the rebels. See Hülya Küçük, "Sufi Reactions Against the Reforms After Turkey's National Struggle: How a Nightingale Turned into a Crow," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 123 for detailed information about the Bozkır Events.

⁴⁹² The names Nusayri and Alawite are used interchangeably throughout this chapter, because although Nusayri is the historical name of this religious group, Alawite was also used in many historical and recent sources. In addition, Alawite is the name used specifically for the Nusayris and the term Alavi is used to refer to the non-Arabic speaking population of Anatolia sharing a similar belief system in terms of their love for the IV. Caliph Ali.

counted among the Turkish speaking population of the Sanjak and nationalist propaganda envisioned them as part of the Turkish nation. Therefore, the reactions of these communities to the Turkish nationalist propaganda, discussed at the end of each section, bear special importance. Next, the conservative Sunni Turks of the Sanjak are examined as an important group when the impacts of the Kemalist reforms are taken into consideration. The way they reacted to these reforms provide a special case that needs attention when debating Turkish nationalism. The pragmatic nature of Kemalist propaganda in the Sanjak chose to ignore the emigration of this community, while drawing a more inclusive picture when the non-Muslim and the non-Turkish groups were considered. While discussing the emigration of the conservative Sunni Muslims, the cases of the *150likler* and the Bozkır Events are elucidated in order to give some background information about the role they played in the Sanjak, in particular, the Sunni Turkish migration from the Sanjak to Syria.

The results of the registrations made for the upcoming elections in the Sanjak need a thorough analysis to understand how the various groups of the Sanjak reacted to the nationalist propaganda. In this chapter, statistics for the registration records are provided to show the effects of the nationalist propaganda in numbers.

The last part of this chapter is dedicated to the situation in the Sanjak in the immediate aftermath of the annexation. Those who chose to leave and those who chose to stay are given in numbers, as much as possible, to provide a picture of the populational structure of the Sanjak right after the annexation. Furthermore, the way the new rulers of the region treated the Sanjak people is explained mainly through oral

history interviews to get a glimpse of the social life in the Sanjak as the new province of the Turkish Republic.

5.1 The Notables

The notables of the Sanjak were significant in the politics of the region. I will first give a historical background of the notables of the Sanjak. The city center was more politicized due to its lively public spaces and higher economic conditions of its dwellers. The urban notables of Antakya were mostly resided in the city, and the basis of their wealth was mainly land ownership in the countryside concentrated mostly in the Kuseyr Plateau and Orontes Valley.⁴⁹³ It was for this reason that Hourani talked about “urban notables” when conceptualizing those people who could play an important political role as intermediaries between the government and the people as well as being leaders of the urban population.⁴⁹⁴ They had better access to administrative posts and held either secular (*ağa*, *ayan* or *amir*) or religious (*ulama*) positions. During the Ottoman rule, they had the right to collect taxes from these lands, but after the Mandate, they had the right to privately own these lands. According to Bazantay, they played an important role in shaping public opinion.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Faik Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay: Tarih, coğrafya, ekalliyetler, mezhepler, edebiyat, içtimai durum, lengüistik durum, folklor, etnografya ve Hatay davasını ihtiva eden 4 cild*, vol 1 (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1937), 51.

⁴⁹⁴ Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables”, in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, eds. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 89.

⁴⁹⁵ Pierre Bazantay, *La pénétration de l'enseignement dans le sandjak autonome d'Alexandrette* (Beyrouth: Impr. Catholique, 1935), 103.

The urban notables of Antakya flourished around the personality of the Bereketzade family whose power diminished relatively after 1908.⁴⁹⁶ The other notable families were mainly Kuseyr, Yahyaoğulları, Civelekzade, Müftüoğulları, Adalı, Şemseddinzade, Melekzade, Halefzade, Miskioğulları, Türkmenzade, and Huri as well as the non-Muslim and Alawite families of Cilliye and Hevaca Hanna from Suveydiye.⁴⁹⁷

Sunni Turkmen *Beys* were dominant in the Amik Plain. They were settled by the Ottoman Empire in the 1850s in this fertile area, where they owned vast lands. They prospered economically particularly after the World War I when the price of grains increased. Although they were as powerful as the urban notables of Antakya, the Amik *Beys* could not get their desired status among the traditional elite of Antakya. The traditional urban notables of Antakya formed a kind of “closed group” which possessed both economic and cultural capital. According to them, the Amik *Beys* lacked cultural capital, which was necessary to be part of this group.⁴⁹⁸

Inspite being politically driven, Faik Türkmen’s study on the history of Hatay provides in depth information about the relations among the notables of the Sanjak. Türkmen claims that the decline of the urban notables started with the rise of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).⁴⁹⁹ The traditional elites of Antakya did not sympathize with the CUP; most of them supported the Freedom and Accord Party (FAP)

⁴⁹⁶ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 4, 908.

⁴⁹⁷ Hikmet Mercan and Bereket Parmaksız, Interviews by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁴⁹⁸ MM, Interview by the author, November 2008.

⁴⁹⁹ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 4, 907.

[*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*].⁵⁰⁰ It was at this point that one of the Amik notables, the Türkmenzade family, began to rise politically in the Sanjak. Türkmenzade Ahmet Ağa became the deputy from the CUP list against the Freedom and Accord Party.⁵⁰¹

The struggle between the Amik *Beys* and the traditional elite of Antakya became apparent through the fight between the CUP and FAP supporters. CUP was the emerging power in the Empire. Its founders were mostly young officials who did not belong to the traditional elite. They were frustrated with the situation of the Empire and looked for novel solutions to revitalize the state. Turkish nationalism was one of the ideas that the CUP had pursued. The CUP's nationalist ideas gave the Amik *Beys* the solution to gain upper status among the elites of the Sanjak. Although they possessed all the necessary economic power, they were not part of the urban notables of the Sanjak. With the ongoing rule, they would never have the opportunity to access the desired administrative posts and social status. The CUP rule posed a new opportunity for them. Since the traditional elite of the Sanjak opposed the policies of CUP, the Amik *Beys* did not miss the opportunity to obtain better socio-political positions. A new political movement meant new opportunities; new opportunities in turn brought the social and cultural capital that the Amik *Beys* were accused of lacking.

The traditional elite of Antakya collaborated with the French when the Mandate regime started in the Sanjak in 1920s. The elite wanted to continue their privileged

⁵⁰⁰ Abdurrahman Konuralp, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵⁰¹ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 4, 908.

position since they “were permitted to partake in the colonial benefits.”⁵⁰² In other parts of the Mandate Syria, the traditional elite opposed French rule and later became the Arab nationalists of the region. Their opposition was known by the French and the new regime collaborated only with those who were pro-French and anti-nationalist, who were chosen to be window dressing in the government. On the other hand, the French supported the elite in the autonomously ruled areas such as the Sanjak, Jabal Druze, and Latakia.⁵⁰³

Only 28% of the Sanjak population lived in the cities⁵⁰⁴ and this ratio was low when compared to that of Damascus. The low density of the urban population was an important factor for the French in supporting the urban notables in the autonomously ruled areas. Therefore the French were providing opportunities for the Sanjak urban notables while not collaborating with the Syrian urban elite.

The urban notables of Antakya did not consist only of Turkish speaking families. There were also Christian urban notables who were mostly involved in trade. The French Mandate regime provided opportunities for these notables and they benefited extensively from the Mandate regime. Uneasiness existed regarding the overrepresentation and enrichment of the Christian notables, a factor that caused a change in the composition of wealth among the elites of the Sanjak.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Barbara Aswad, “Women, Class and Power: Examples from the Hatay, Turkey,” in *Women in the Muslim World* ed., Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 477.

⁵⁰³ Altuğ, “Between Colonial and National,” 88-90.

⁵⁰⁴ Bazantay, *La Penetration*, 12.

⁵⁰⁵ Muhsin Yeşiloğlu, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

The harmonious adaption of the urban notables of Antakya to the French Mandate regime resulted in the continuing privileged position of the same group in terms of access to the administrative posts. The urban elite of Antakya held administrative posts under the Ottoman rule and after the establishment of the French Mandate regime, they could hold these posts by collaborating with the new rulers. Therefore, they did not seek a change of rule as long as they kept their positions. The same urban notables did not favor CUP for similar reasons. Their support for the status quo continued even after the World War I when nationalist sentimentality started to rise.⁵⁰⁶ Consequently, Turkish nationalism found support among the educated youth and the Amik Beys who were in an inferior position during the Ottoman rule.

5.1.1 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Notables

Already formed alliances among the notables of the Sanjak were effective in their political decisions. Historical ties and familial relations prepared the background for the notables' support or opposition to the French mandate as well as the Arab or Turkish cause. Political relations provided economic and social benefits for the elites of the Sanjak, but at the same time, these benefits resulted in certain groups' abhorrence of them. Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak targeted all of the elites together with the detesting communities. The politically motivated and pragmatic nature of the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak resulted in the formation of a new elite group consisting of all those supporting Kemalist reforms.

⁵⁰⁶ Sebahattin Ezer, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

Since politics in the Sanjak was elite dominated⁵⁰⁷ and nationalism was politically defined, the first supporters of Turkish nationalism were mainly the members of the elite in the Sanjak. By focusing on the different ethnic and confessional communities through persuasion of a sense of belonging to the new Turkish nation despite their intrinsic Armenian, Christian, Arab, or any other origin(s), the Turkish nationalist propaganda, thus formed a new elite group in Antakya- the center of the Sanjak- from those supporting the Kemalist reforms and ideals. The new elite group was based in the city center, as were the traditional elites of the Ottoman Empire.

5.1.2 Reactions of the Notables to the Reforms and the Turkish Nationalist Propaganda

Local notables were important actors in the political life of the Sanjak and thus they were among the main addressees of the nationalist propaganda. Their reactions to the nationalist propaganda greatly mattered due to their influential positions both in social and political life of the region.

Values and lifestyles comprise membership in status groups and in the case of the Kemalists of the Sanjak, wearing hats and women's taking the veil off was a way of showing their adjustment to the Kemalist reforms and the desire to be part of the new Turkish nation. Those who supported the Kemalist reforms and accepted the modern life style chose to wear the hat even before the annexation and the hat became their symbol.

⁵⁰⁷ Seda Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National Dominations: Antioch under the French Mandate, 1920-1939" (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2002), 33.

In Weberian terms, the stylization of life originated in the status group and they conserved it.⁵⁰⁸

The first ones to change their life styles in line with the Kemalist reforms were the members of the Amik notable families. As mentioned earlier, a change in the regime would bring new opportunities for those who support it. In awareness of these opportunities and with the aim of changing the inferior position of the Amik *Beys* in comparison to the urban elites of Antakya, young members of wealthy families became ardent supporters of Kemalist nationalism in the Sanjak together with the educated youth of the city.

There was a general increase of wealth in the Sanjak during the French mandate; however, the beneficiaries were the traditional elite. At the same time, there was an over representation of Christians due to the increasing importance of the liberal professions that they held.⁵⁰⁹ On the other hand, the educated youth of the city were unhappy with their situation. They had obtained a high education with the hope of a better socio-economic status, but the status quo kept by the French mandate regime and their support for the Christians made them feel frustrated about the mandate regime. Both Arabic and Turkish speaking educated youth began to come together with their groups in public places such as libraries and youth clubs spending time on talking about politics and economic situation in the Sanjak.

⁵⁰⁸ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Vol 2, (California: University of California Press, 1978), 936.

⁵⁰⁹ Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 109-110.

The lifestyle change was apparent as early as the beginning of 1930s, but institutionalization of Kemalist nationalism in the Sanjak began after 1936.⁵¹⁰ For instance, one of the agents of modernization, implemented by Turkish Republic, *Halkevi* of Antakya was established in 1936 and the number of newspapers, youth clubs, and libraries increased after this date. The youth of the Sanjak was distressed by the Mandate rule and looked for a new regime that they would be part of. Therefore the propaganda targeting the youth of the city was based on the idea that Turkish Republic possessed just the opposite characteristics of the traditionalist and colonial Sanjak. The modern character of the Turkish Republic was emphasized rather than presenting an ethnic based identity. Public places and newspapers were the main tools of Kemalist nationalist propaganda when targeting the educated and distressed youth of the Sanjak.

While the Amik notables of the Sanjak were among the first supporters of Turkish nationalism, traditional elites also joined the movement in time. They also had good relations with the French Mandate authorities. They were participating in Kemalist activities as well as accepting administrative posts proposed by the French. The local dynamics of the Sanjak necessitated good relations with the French as far as the traditional elite was concerned. On the other hand, the new nationalist elites were active in shaping the youth according to the needs of the Kemalist agenda in the region. The traditional elite's affinity to the Mandate officials resulted in blaming them for supporting the French. As mentioned by one of my interviewees from the Mursalzade family of Amik, Abdurrahman Melek was among the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak.

⁵¹⁰ According to Hikmet Mercan (an interviewee from Antakya) clashes of different ethnic groups increased after 1935-36 and also these were the years that the residents of Antakya faced separation of ethnic and religious groups. Before that, people were living together without much emphasis on their different ethnic or religious backgrounds.

However, he was denounced for accepting the post⁵¹¹ offered him by the French mandate government.⁵¹²

Nationalism enforced a particular lifestyle as well as a nationalist discourse, both of which were represented by the new elite of the Sanjak. Criticisms from among the traditional elite were harshly answered by the members of this new elite by blaming everything other than the nationalist discourse as either pro-French or pro-Arab. Modern, secular and Turkish character of the region was one of the main elements of the ethnic Turkish nationalist discourse and accepting the Kemalist reforms was the only way to be part of the new nation. Any other discourse or any other affiliation was unacceptable for the Turkish nationalists. Religious references were also blamed for preventing the Sanjak from modernization and self-improvement.

There were certain families among the urban notables of Antakya that were major landowners and held most of the administrative posts during the Ottoman rule. Under the French mandate, they were divided among themselves. Some of the urban notables, led by the Bereket, Adalı, and Kuseyri families, cooperated with the French and continued their privileged position in the society. Others, including the Türkmenzade family, allied with the Kemalists from the beginning and worked for the Turkish national cause. They were related through kinship or marriages and did not have problems with each other due to their political stances. Being on the winning side was a matter of keeping the high standards of living that they had enjoyed since the Ottoman

⁵¹¹ He was appointed as the Sanjak governor (Umum Vali) by General Collet.

⁵¹² M.M, Interview by the author, August 2008.

rule. When Turkey began to emerge as the winning party in the rivalry to gain the Sanjak, most of them acted together with the Kemalist cadres.

Amik Beys supported the Kemalists from the very beginning. As mentioned earlier, their support stemmed both from nationalist feelings and the opportunity to achieve the social status they lacked. The motivations for the Amik Beys' support for the Kemalists, including expectation of better socio-economic positions and higher political posts, are discussed in details throughout the thesis but it needs emphasizing once more that the Amik Beys perceived the urban notables who cooperated with the French as traitors. Even though the urban notables later on joined the Kemalists of the Sanjak, the Amik Beys based their late participation on economic reasons. According to the Amik Beys, urban notables became members of the Hatay Parliament just because they wanted to maintain their economic wellbeing. Unlike Altuğ's claim,⁵¹³ they were perceived as traitors by the other notables because of their cooperation with the French and the Syrian Mandate rule.

At this point, Weber's discussion of status groups is very much relevant to the situation of the Amik Beys. Weber based the formation of the status groups mainly on economic grounds and the consumption behavior of the members is stated as one of the main indicators of the group. Consumption behaviors of the members are part of the strategies by which people distinguished themselves from others. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu pursued Weber's approach to consumption and stated that consumption

⁵¹³ Seda Altuğ claims that although the urban notables who cooperated with the French were perceived as traitors in Syrian Mandate State, they were not perceived as such in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. See Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 58.

manners are actually a means for converting economic capital into political, social, cultural or “symbolic” capital.⁵¹⁴ When the case of the Sanjak is taken into consideration, the Amik Beys also turned their economic capital into political and social capital by supporting the Kemalist reforms to the fullest extent possible. They were able to become part of the status group created by the Kemalist cadres by changing their life styles according to the reforms. Theirs was not a solely economic group but contained political elements. Values and desire to change the lifestyle- in addition to some economic power- were important in becoming a member of this status group.

Traditional nobles of Antakya rejected the newly emerging groups’ claim to high status. They had limited relations with the Amik *Beys* although they were as wealthy as the traditional elites. Since the Amik *Beys* did not have important posts during the Ottoman rule, they did not have a socially high status. There were cultural differences due to political power and residential areas. The traditional elites of Antakya still supported the status quo in the region while the Amik *Beys* began to take on action the side of the Kemalist cadres towards realizing the goal of joining with Turkey. The Amik *Beys*’ behavior could be interpreted as converting wealth into status and power. Accepting the values and the lifestyle of the new regime was sufficient for membership in the new group, which, in this case, was the Turkish nation.

As the political atmosphere changed with the approaching World War II and changing governments, the Turkish speaking Sunni elites of Antakya also conformed to the nationalist agenda by utilizing their networks. They no longer had good relations

⁵¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

with the French, because important posts had been taken from the Turkish speaking Sunni elites of Antakya and given to non-Turkish groups.⁵¹⁵ Beginning to lose political effect, the traditional elites were anxious to lose their financial wealth as well. The changing political conjuncture in the Sanjak was perceived as the rising political power of Turkey. Therefore, the traditional elite saw Turkey as the future winning side and cooperated with the nationalists. As mentioned earlier, there were already members of the traditional elite supporting the Kemalist agenda in the Sanjak who were effective in convincing their relatives to act on behalf of the Turkish Republic.

Although the traditional elite was latecomers for the nationalist movement, they did not lose their political influence. When the new parliament of the Sanjak was established, nearly all of the urban Turkish speaking Sunni notables of Antakya were reelected to the administrative posts.⁵¹⁶ However, even as of today they are still blamed for acting on the side of the French or Syria by the earlier supporters of the Kemalist regime.⁵¹⁷

As the political conjuncture changed, Turkish nationalism found more support in the Sanjak. Non-Muslim and non-Turkish communities, which were either supporting the French or choosing to remain neutral, had to devise different strategies. Most Christian notables had left for France, Syria, Jordan, or the Americas.⁵¹⁸ The other

⁵¹⁵ Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 183-184.

⁵¹⁶ Tekin, *Hatay Tarihi*, 208.

⁵¹⁷ MM, Interview by the author, August 2008 and Sebahattin Ezer, Abdurrahman Konuralp and Hikmet Mercan Interviews by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵¹⁸ Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 151.

groups including the Jews, Circassians, and Kurds had to choose a side or leave the Sanjak under the new political circumstances. Amik *Beys*' early support and traditional notables' cautious approach to the Turkish nationalist propaganda and the Kemalist reforms are important to understand the general political and social atmosphere of the Sanjak. Arab Christians, conservative Sunni Turks, Armenians, Alawites, Jews, Circassians and Kurds had to decide which side to take when the changing international political atmosphere affected their lives. Although the propaganda activities of Kemalist nationalist in the Sanjak was an important factor, religious beliefs of the conservative groups and the ethnic affiliations of others were also influential in their decisions.

5.2 The Alawites

The Alawites⁵¹⁹ live primarily at the city center of Antakya, in the villages and city centers of Iskenderun, Samandağ and Altınözü.⁵²⁰ They are known to come to the region from Latakia as a result of the pressure they have faced from local rulers. Some sources even state that they originated from the city of Kufa, by suggesting that the name "Nusayri" was given to this group based on their place of origin, "Nasuraya," which is a small village near Kufa.⁵²¹ There are other suggestions concerning the origin of the name "Nusayri." Lois Massignon gives five sources in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*

⁵¹⁹ The name "Alawite" is going to be used for the sake of fluency in this thesis except for the parts relevant to the explanation of the name "Nusayri".

⁵²⁰ Erdal Aksoy, "Nusayrilerin Sosyal Yapıları ve Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Türkiye'de Yaşayan Bu Topluluğa Devletin Yaklaşımları," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 54, (2010): 200. and Mustafa Öz, "Nusayriyye," in *Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Türkiye'de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler* (Istanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 1999), 186.

⁵²¹ Öz, "Nusayriyye," 201.

under the title of “Nusayri”: 1) a version of the Latin word for Christian “Nazerani”, 2) Nasuraya, a village near Kufa, 3) “Nisba”, the name of the so called martyr of the Shi’a 4) “Nasrani”, the word for Christian, 5) name of Muhammad bin Nusayr who is considered to be the founder of the sect.⁵²²

The primary attribute of the Nusayri creed is an affinity towards secrecy; the creed was born out of a mixture of Phoenician paganism, trinity belief as well as various religious festivals of Christianity, and was based on loyalty to the fourth Caliph Ali, Prophet Muhammad and Selman-ı Farisi, the Persian companion of Prophet Muhammad. In order to keep their beliefs secret, they perform the ritual of *takiyyah* [hypocrisy] and their secrecy is perceived with suspicion by the members of other religions. As with most, if not all, religions has been influenced by older religions in terms of practices, but its main characteristics, which are the belief of Ali as God, a strong belief in “Hızır,”⁵²³ shrines, and reincarnation⁵²⁴ are unique to this faith. In terms of their social life, every Alawite village has its own Sheikh who serves as a religious leader that is also very influential in his community.⁵²⁵

Nusayriyyah is accepted to be one of the extreme and esoteric factions of Shi’a in the Ottoman Empire. They were taken under Ottoman control after the Battle of Mercidabik in 1516. Their region was administered as part of the Sanjak of Aleppo.

⁵²² Louis Massignon, “Nusayriler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol IX, (1964), 365. and Kais Firro, “Nusayriliğin Milliyetçilik ve Milli Devlete Adaptasyonu,” in *Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Türkiye’de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler*, 209-210.

⁵²³ An immortal person believed to come in time of need.

⁵²⁴ M. Aringberg-Loanatza, “Türkiye Alevileri- Suriye Alevileri: Benzerlikler ve Farklılıklar,” in *Alevi Kimliği*, ed. Tord Olsson, Elizabeth Özdalga and Cathrina Raudvere (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 197.

⁵²⁵ Samuel Lyde, *The Asian Mystery: Ansaiireeh or Nusairis of Syria* (London: Longman, 1860), 5-7.

When Ibrahim Pasha invaded Syria, the Alawites remained loyal to the Ottoman State. However, they rebelled against the Ottoman rule under the leadership of Ismail Bey (1854-1858); around 120,000 Alawites joined this rebellion, which was suppressed by Tahir Pasha. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, schools and mosques were built in the Alawite regions in order to improve their situation. It was also during Abdulhamid II's reign that the Alawites were counted among the Muslim groups and thus became eligible for conscription. There was improvement in their region after the establishment of schools and they gradually became one of the elements constituting the state.⁵²⁶

Although there were some attempts of amelioration of the status of the Alawites within the Empire, Alawites did not have good relations with the Ottoman rulers mainly because of the political issues in earlier centuries. The Alawites opposed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the same manner, because they were perceived as the continuation of the Ottoman administration. The supporters of the CUP in the Sanjak consisted mainly of the noble families of the region who belonged to the upper class. During the World War I, noble families of the Sanjak were living in better conditions than were the Alawites and they claimed that the notable families were supported by the government while they were not. According to Türkmen, this inequality also resulted in Alawites' hatred towards the Turkish nobility and this hatred was further deployed in Arabist propaganda.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ Öz, "Nusayriyye," 185.

⁵²⁷ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, Vol 4, 916.

The French mandate regime began to use the name Alawite instead of the historical name of “Nusayri.”⁵²⁸ This change was welcomed by the Alawites who were willing to discard the historical name, which evoked bad connotations in the minds of the others, due to Ottoman Empire’s perception of them as a deviant group, for a newer, historically less loaded term. Modern Alawite writers such as Muhammad Emin Galip et-Tawil and Hashim Osman deliberately used the term Alawite instead of Nusayri in their writings.⁵²⁹

In August 1920 an autonomous Alawite state was established in the region including the Sanjak of Latakia, the northern part of the Sanjak of Tripoli, and some parts of the district of Masyaf; the state became part of the Syrian Federation of States together with those of Damascus and Aleppo. In 1924, the Federation was dispersed and the name of the Alawite State was changed to the State of Latakia. In 1937, the State of Latakia had become a province of the Syrian State.⁵³⁰

5.2.1 Missionaries and the Alawites

As early as the late 1820s, European/American missionaries targeted Syria and Palestine and paid special attention to heterodox Muslim groups including the

⁵²⁸ See Necati Alkan, “Fighting for the Nusayri Soul: State, Protestant Missionaries and the Alawis in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Die Welt des Islams* 52, (2012): 26 for his claim that the name Alawi was used before the 1920.

⁵²⁹ Öz, “Nusayriyye,” 185-186.

⁵³⁰ Ministre des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), Serie: Syrie-Liban, No: 469, 16 March 1933, Summary of the Report prepared by the Permanent Borders Commission, Head of the French Delegation, and Öz, “Nusayriyye,” 186.

Alawites.⁵³¹ The activities of the missionaries were important for the Ottoman administration, because foreign interventions based on the rights of the minorities caused complications for the Ottomans in other parts of the Empire; intervention concerning the Alawites was the last thing the administrators would ever wish. According to the writings of the missionaries, Alawites were ethnically Arab,⁵³² but their religious belief was a matter of discussion. Most missionaries, and later, some officers of the mandate regime stated that they were “half Christians” based on the similarities⁵³³ between some Alawite and Christian religious practices.⁵³⁴

Missionaries also gave some information about the population of the Alawites, which were not based on censuses, but only estimates. According to Van Dyck from the Beirut American Missionary Administration, the population of the Druze was 100,000 and the total population of the Ismailis and the Alawites was 200,000. He adds that most of this population was consisting of Nusayris.⁵³⁵ In another source, the population of the Alawites was stated as over 200,000.⁵³⁶ In later years, French sources provide more realistic numbers about the population of the Alawites in the Vilayet of Syria; according

⁵³¹ Alkan, “Fighting for the Nusayri Soul,” 37.

⁵³² Alkan, “Fighting for the Nusayri Soul,” 137.

⁵³³ See Alkan, “Fighting for the Nusayri Soul,” 141 for a detailed explanation of the similarities between the Nusayris and the Christians.

⁵³⁴ Handwörterbuch der Christlichen Religions und Kirchengeschichte (HCRK), (1829), 200 and William Jowett, “Ansari,” in *Christian Researches in Syria and Palestine in 1823 and 1824*, ed. C. And G. Carvil (Boston, New York: John P. Haven, 1826), 52. and MAE, CP 469, 16 March 1933, Summary of the Report prepared by the Permanent Borders Commission, Head of the French Delegation and Kemal Suleiman Salibi, and Yusuf Q. Khuri eds. *The Missionary Herald* (Amman, Jordan: Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies, 1995), Vol 4, 6.

⁵³⁵ Bernard Springett, *Secret Sects of Syria and Lebanon* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922), 119.

⁵³⁶ W. M. Thomson, *The Missionary Herald: Reports from Ottoman Syria (1819-1870)*, (Beirut: 1995), Volume II, 47.

to the French Deputy Consul General of Tripoli, the population of the Alawites approximated 66,000 in 1864.⁵³⁷

Detailed information about the social structure of the Alawite community can be traced in the travel notes of the missionaries. According to these writings, the Alawites were hospitable and sociable, but when asked about their faith they chose to drink coffee and smoke and change the subject. The missionaries believed that the reason for their silence about their faith is their fear of being hated and watched by the others.⁵³⁸ Other data gathered from these travel notes are mainly as follows: they were divided into different groups; they did not have places or times of prayers; the Alawites had feasts, no marriage laws; they had their own religious books but they were mostly illiterate, and they believed in the transmigration of the soul.⁵³⁹

Every tribe or tribal confederation had its own leader, but it was hard to form a unity between these groups.⁵⁴⁰ Although the conflicts between the tribes never turned into violent fights among the Alawite groups, they were harmed from the ongoing struggles between the tribal leaders.⁵⁴¹ Since there were many divisions based on different dimensions among the Alawites, they failed to become a united group.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁷ Emanuel Guillaume Rey, "Reconnaissance de la Montagne des Ansaries," in *Bulletin de la Societe de Geographie de Paris*, Vol XI, (1866), 441.

⁵³⁸ Salibi and Khuri, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 3, 260 and 267.

⁵³⁹ Salibi and Khuri, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 3, 267.

⁵⁴⁰ Aksoy, "Nusayrilerin Sosyal Yapıları," 210.

⁵⁴¹ Yvette Talhamy, "The Nusayri Leader Isma'il Khayr Bey and the Ottomans (1854-58)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, 6(2008), 895.

⁵⁴² Aksoy, "Nusayrilerin Sosyal Yapıları," 203.

According to at-Tawil, even the religious factionalism among the Alawites stemmed from tribal rather than religious controversies.⁵⁴³

As for the role of the women within the community, Dupont states that Alawite women were very much degraded within the community.⁵⁴⁴ They were not taught the details of the creed, because they were not trusted to conserve the secrecy of the creed.

5.2.2 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Alawites

The historical background of the Sanjak elite and their relations with each other as well as the Alawites are important to understand the strategies developed by the Turkish nationalists to convince each group to be part of the new nation. Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak aimed to include as many people as possible, but special attention was paid to the Alawites due to their advantageous population size.

French sources organized census data, based on ethnic and religious differences, creating separate categories for Alawites, Armenians, Sunni Arabs, Sunni Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and all the other groups living in the region.⁵⁴⁵ In line with the Turkish ethnic nationalist ideology, Faik Türkmen approached the Alawites of Hatay as Turks and found it unnecessary to question their Turkishness.⁵⁴⁶ The Turkish daily newspaper

⁵⁴³ Muhammed Emin Galib et-Tawil, *Arap Alevileri Tarihi*, trans. İsmail Özdemir (Adana: Karahan Kitabevi, 2012), 372.

⁵⁴⁴ Felix Dupont, "Accounts of the Nesserites, A People Inhabiting the Mountains Near Aleppo," *The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*, Vol V (London: Longman, 1825), 639-640.

⁵⁴⁵ MAE, CP 567, Population Statistics, 1936.

⁵⁴⁶ Türkmen, *Mufasssal Hatay*, vol 1-3, 177.

Tan also embraced the same approach as Türkmen's when stating that there were 240.000 Turks living in Hatay, and this number consisted of both Sunni and Alawite Turks.⁵⁴⁷

Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the late 1930s mostly aimed at the Alawites of the region. According to the first census data by the French, Turks comprised approximately 40% of the whole population in the Sanjak.⁵⁴⁸ However, Turkish claims about the Sanjak were based mainly on the idea that the Turks were the majority and for that reason they should be treated separately from the "Arab" Syrians.

Registrations for the elections to be held in the Sanjak were an ordeal for the Kemalist Turks of the Sanjak, because the results would either confirm their claims or they would be blamed for taking over Syrian lands, an accusation which would totally contradict what the leaders of the newly established Turkish Republic had been telling the international community.

Alawites were one of the most populous groups⁵⁴⁹ of the Sanjak thus, their decision as under which category they would register mattered for both Arab and Turkish nationalists because the outcome would show which community comprised the

⁵⁴⁷ B. R. Feyzi, *Tan Gazetesi*, November 29, 1937.

⁵⁴⁸ Robert B. Satloff, "Prrelude to Conflict: Communal Interdependence in the Sanjak of Alexandretta 1920-1936," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, (April, 1986), 154 and Sarah Shields, *Fezzes in the River* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 193.

⁵⁴⁹ According to French sources there were 62.000 Alawites in the Sanjak before the Sanjak elections. MAE, CP 567, Population Statistics, 1936.

majority of the population. Turkish nationalism used a secular and modernist discourse when approaching the Alawites in the Sanjak, in addition to calling them Turks at the political and academic level- similar to their approach towards the non-Muslim population of the Sanjak. The Alawites of the Sanjak blamed the Ottoman rule for their inferior position in the society and claimed that they were oppressed due to their religious beliefs. This claim supported their interpretation of the Ottoman regime as the continuation of low economic and social status in society. Any kind of rule promising to change the status quo would be favorable for the Alawites.

Turkish nationalism pursued a more pragmatic approach towards the Alawites at the local level and promised religious freedom as well as economic opportunities. Nationalist propaganda emphasized the suffering of the Alawites under both the Ottoman and the French rules. The non-existence of big land owners and better living conditions in Turkish Republic were offered as the main motives for the Alawites to register as Turks by the Turkish nationalist propaganda which went as far as to claim that Atatürk himself was an Alawite.⁵⁵⁰

Supporters of the union with Turkey tried hard to keep the Alawites away from the Arab nationalist propaganda. For that reason, in addition to praising the Turkish rule, the Sunni origin of the members of the National Bloc of Syria was blamed for the disturbances in the region. Sheikhs [*dedes*] of the Sanjak Alawites were taken to Turkey in 1937 to see the achievements of the new regime and how the Alevi population of

⁵⁵⁰ Altuğ, "Between Colonial and National," 201.

Anatolia was free to practice their religion.⁵⁵¹ Modern lifestyle and economic prosperity were shown as the future situation of the Sanjak if they would register as “Turks” for the upcoming elections.⁵⁵²

While persuasive attempts were made on the Alawites by showing the living conditions of Anatolian Alevis, theoretically “research” was cited/presented to prove that the Alawites were originally Turks who forgot their Turkish identities as a result of the oppression they faced during the Ottoman rule.

When the low level of literacy among the Alawite population and widespread news in the daily national newspapers of Turkey are taken into account, which group comprised the target of the extensive newspaper coverage should be questioned. The *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, in Turkey, began its propaganda in 1936 by stating that all Turkish citizens in Turkey should leave any other international issue aside and only be occupied with the issue of the Sanjak of Alexandretta.⁵⁵³ The newspaper offered almost daily news about the Sanjak beginning with the return of the Syrian delegation from Paris through Istanbul. The delegation’s declaration about the content of the new agreement between France and the Syrian Mandate government made the Turkish authorities realize the French plan to leave the Sanjak to Syria after its independence, which would be within three years. The news was prepared in a manner that would galvanize the masses in Turkey. The news reports, such as one regarding Turks being

⁵⁵¹ *Yenigün*, February 5, 1938, 2.

⁵⁵² Ali Özalp, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵⁵³ *Cumhuriyet*, October 1, 1936, 1 and 3.

killed during a protest against the Sanjak elections, were given under the title “They began to kill Turks in Antakya”⁵⁵⁴ as if an ethnic cleansing was taking place towards the Turks of the Sanjak. As stated by many of the interviewees, the killing of the Turks mentioned in the newspaper was not a planned act towards the Turks but occurred during a protest against the Sanjak elections.⁵⁵⁵ Such news was publicized in exaggerated ways in *Cumhuriyet* so that the public in Turkey would support the Turkish cause in the Sanjak and believe in the necessity of Turkish support to the Sanjak. This propaganda was very much towards the internal politics of Turkey. Attempts took place to convince the public that the people living on this specific piece of land were in fact Turks and that the entire political struggle was justified in the eyes of the international community as well as the French Mandate rulers, Arab nationalists, and the elites of the Sanjak.

Alawites were an important group when the registration process was taken into consideration and at the academic and political level Turkish nationalists insisted on the Turkish origins of the Alawites through constant media coverage both in the Sanjak and in Turkish Republic and history congresses. The appropriateness of the newspapers as the medium disseminating this propaganda is questioned based on the low level of literacy among the Alawites as well as the need to convince Turkish public about the ‘righteous’ fight for the Sanjak. On the other hand, at the practical level, the Alawite population was tried to be persuaded to register as Turkish based on the promises of religious freedom and economic welfare.

⁵⁵⁴ “Antakya'da Türkleri Öldürmeğe Başladılar,” *Cumhuriyet*, December 3, 1936, 1 and 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Sebahattin Ezer, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

This two-layered nature of the nationalist propaganda towards the Alawites of the Sanjak can also be traced in the oral history interviews. Many of the Alawite interviewees introduced themselves as Arabs in the interviews conducted for this study.⁵⁵⁶ They even stated that there were no such references in the schools about Alawites being *Eti Türkü*. Muhsin Yeşiloğlu's statement about the issue is very clear in this respect: "We identify ourselves as Arabs. No one told us at school that we were not Arabs, but Turks."⁵⁵⁷

The nature of the propaganda towards the Alawites of the Sanjak suggests that the Kemalist nationalists were aware of the needs of the Sanjak population and shaped the content and the methods of their propaganda accordingly.

5.2.3 Reactions of the Alawites

There was no homogeneity among the Alawite community of the Sanjak and this was also apparent in their reactions to the Kemalist reforms and the Turkish nationalist propaganda. There were those who ardently supported Arab nationalism as well as those claiming that they were actually Turks who had forgotten their origins.

During the registration process for the Sanjak elections, Alawites were divided in many respects. Most of the Alawites were sharecroppers on the lands of the Sunni Turkish notables of Antakya. They lived on these lands and took care of the property while the owners resided at the city center. Most of the interviewees stated that they had

⁵⁵⁶ AY, Interview by the author, August 2008 and Muhsin Yeşiloğlu, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵⁵⁷ "Biz kendimizi Arap biliyoruz. Okulda Arap değil Türksünüz diye birşey anlatılmadı." Muhsin Yeşiloğlu, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

very good relations with their landowners. Their inferior position in society was raised as an issue by their educated youth. Zaki Al-Arsuzi was among them. His organization was known as “*Usbat*” by the Sanjak residents and he found great support from the Alawites of the Sanjak as well as the growing intelligentsia of the Christian and Sunni Arab youth. The supporters of this group wore ‘sidara’, symbolizing an independent Arab nation. This headgear was originally worn by Iraqi soldiers. Iraqi independence from the British was set as an example for the Arab world and the Arab youth of the Sanjak suggested that Syrian independence would only be another step toward the creation of a larger Arab nation.

Not all Alawites were of the same mind. Some were influenced by the Turkish ethnic nationalist propaganda and were convinced that they would have higher living standards under Turkish rule. Although no statistical data is available to precisely state how many Alawites registered under the category of Turkish, promises of religious freedom and economic prosperity were enough for some of them to register as Turks. The extensive propaganda aimed to make the Alawites “remember” their Turkish origins and the Ottoman “tyranny” in changing their identity and their language. Some of the Alawite Sheikhs were openly supporting the Turkish cause and they began to use the prefix of *Eti Türkü* and replaced their surnames with a Turkish surname “acknowledging” their Turkish origin. The case of Sheikh Hayyat changing his surname to *Tümkaya* is a good example of the effect of the propaganda on the Alawites of the Sanjak. Nevertheless, it can be stated that the basic motivation of the Alawites registering as “Turks” in the last registrations for the Sanjak elections was not the results of the “scientific” research conducted by the ideologues of the Kemalist regime, but they

were seemed to be influenced by the promises of religious freedom and economic well being.

According to Aringberg-Loanatza, it is a fact that the Alawites were exposed to various types of oppression and defamation throughout their history. When the Turkish Republic emphasized its secular character and Hatay was annexed to the Republic in 1939, Alawites had the opportunity to ameliorate their social situation for the first time. For this reason, most of them supported Atatürk.⁵⁵⁸

5.3 The Armenians

The Armenian population of the Sanjak concentrated in Kırıkhan, Iskenderun, Beylan (Belen), Cisişşuğur, Süveydiye (Samandağı), and villages of Antakya before World War I. There were seven Armenian villages in Samandağı: Kabusi (Kapisuyu), Vakıf (Vakıflı), Hıdırbey, Yoğunoluk, Hacı Habipli (Erikli Kuyu), Bitias (Batiayaz, Teknepınar), and Azir (today it is a neighborhood in Vakıflı village).

Armenians who escaped the Armenian-Turkish conflict in Adana came to the Sanjak in the late 1890s, thus increasing the tension in the region. The Ottoman administration was forced then to send troops to settle the unrest in the Sanjak. Armenians and the Sunni Muslims clashed in the Sanjak in 1909, this time causing some deaths. As a result of the ongoing violence in the region, CUP officials included Armenians of the Sanjak in the deportation plans of 1915. Upon this decision, the

⁵⁵⁸ Aringberg-Loanatza, "Türkiye Alevileri," 200-201. and Aksoy, "Nusayrilerin Sosyal Yapıları," 205-206.

residents of the seven Armenian villages of Samandağı left their places of residence and moved to Musa Dağı with their guns, herds, and everything they could carry; they resisted the deportations for forty days. The region was under siege by the central administration during the crisis. Finally, Colonel Galip arrived and searched for the Armenians to come to an agreement, but it was realized that the Armenians left the mountain.⁵⁵⁹ Later, it was learnt that the Armenians of Musa Dağı contacted the allied forces and a ship was sent to take them from there to Port Said in Egypt.⁵⁶⁰ They stayed in a refugee camp in Port Said until the end of the World War I. After the Mudros Armistice in 1918, some of them returned to Samandağı while others went to Western countries. The French formed special troops to be stationed in the Sanjak and many Armenians returned as part of these troops.

The population of the Armenians who took refuge in the Musa Dağı is a matter of discussion, but an approximate number can be reached when the relevant data is taken into consideration. According to the census information of 1914, the population of the Armenians in the Sanjak was 6,669.⁵⁶¹ The number of Armenian Refugees in 1926 was given as 6,460 in French sources, while the whole Armenian population in the Sanjak was stated as 10,535 in the same year.⁵⁶² These numbers suggest that the non-refugee Armenian population of the Sanjak in 1926 was 4,075. When a comparison is

⁵⁵⁹ Franz Werfel, *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (New York: The Viking Press, 1934), 76.

⁵⁶⁰ İhsan Sakarya, *Belgelerle Ermeni Sorunu* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1984), 23.

⁵⁶¹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830- 1914, Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 176.

⁵⁶² MAE, CP 313, Annual Report presented to the League of Nations (1926), 195.

made between the Armenian population of 1914 and 1926, it can be concluded that approximately 2,500 Armenian must have left the Sanjak from Musa Dağı.⁵⁶³

During the World War I, the Committee of Union and Progress regime deported the Armenians mostly through the Anatolia-Syria (Dayrazzor) lane. After the war; the demographic structure of the Sanjak was dramatically changed. According to a study conducted in the late 1920s, there were 24,911 Armenians in the Sanjak constituting the 11.3% of the population.⁵⁶⁴ Armenian legions, as part of the French army occupying the Southern Anatolia and Cilicia region, were active in the establishment of refugee camps, mostly in Dörtöl, for the Armenians who were the subject of the deportations. Armenians from the Lebanon and Syria regions also settled in the Sanjak region, a situation that exacerbated the fight between the Armenians and the Muslim population. Revenge raids of the Armenians against the Sunni Muslim population of the Sanjak resulted in many of the Sunni Muslims' immigration to central Anatolia.⁵⁶⁵ In the same manner, Sunni Muslim militia of the Sanjak region was successful in their fight against the occupiers and the Armenian legion. Most Armenians, both the autochthonous population and the ones recently settled in the region, left Dörtöl region together with the French as a result of the Ankara Treaty signed in 1921, which left Dörtöl to the Turkish Republic. They mostly went to Syria, Lebanon and Palestine or settled in the

⁵⁶³ Also see Halil Özşavlı, "Türkiye'den Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü Sancak Ermenilerinin Lübnan'a Taşınması 1938-1939," unpublished manuscript.

⁵⁶⁴ Barbara Aswad, *Property Control and Social Strategies: Settlers on a Middle Eastern Plain* (Michigan: University of Michigan Museum, 1971), 54.

⁵⁶⁵ Berna Pekesen, "İlhaktan Sonra Hatay'dan Ermeni Göçü," in *1915: Öncesi ve Sonrasıyla Ermeni Siyaseti, Tehcir ve Soykırım*, ed.s. Fikret Adanır and Oktay Özel (Istanbul: TESEV, 2015), 3.

Sanjak of Alexandretta.⁵⁶⁶ Although it is not possible to give an exact number of the Armenian population settled in the Sanjak in 1921, it was stated in a report prepared by a member of the League of Nations Commission for Refugees in 1925, G. Carle, that the number of Armenian refugees was 5,000 in the Sanjak of Alexandretta.⁵⁶⁷

Migration of the Armenians from the southern part of Anatolia to the Sanjak of Alexandretta began in 1921 with the French withdrawal from Anatolia. First, the Armenians stayed in the refugee camps, but after a while their numbers increased and refugee camps, both in the Sanjak and the other parts of Syria, were not enough to host all. The French Mandate regime cooperated with the League of Nations in 1927 for the settlement of the Armenian refugees in the Sanjak. By the end of 1934, around 13,000 Armenians were settled in permanent houses in Iskenderun, Kırıkhan and Antakya. By the end of 1936 no refugees were left in the refugee camps in the Sanjak. All were settled in their permanent residences. The Armenian population in the Sanjak increased from 6,669 in 1914 to 10,000 in 1926 and 24,000 in 1936 as a result of the refugee settlement project carried out with the League of Nations and the change of the Sanjak border to include the Armenian region of Kessab in 1936.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ Ellen M. Lust-Okar, "Failure of Collaboration: Armenian Refugees in Syria," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1/32 (1996): 53-68.

⁵⁶⁷ *League of Nations Archives of Nansen Office, A. 41. 1925. XIII* as was cited in Halil Özşavlı, "Türkiye'den Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü Sancak Ermenilerinin Lübnan'a Taşınması 1938-1939," unpublished manuscript.

⁵⁶⁸ Halil Özşavlı, "Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü," 11.

5.3.1 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Armenians

Turkish nationalist propaganda towards the Armenians of the Sanjak first began in the second half of the 1930s by claiming that they were Turkish, based on the fact that most of them spoke Turkish, albeit as their second language.⁵⁶⁹ Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak increased their propaganda towards the Armenians in opposition to the propaganda activities of the ‘Usbat al-‘amal al-qawmi and the Dashnak Party. Turkish government asked the local Turkish population and the local leaders to talk amicably manner when talking about the Armenian population of the Sanjak.⁵⁷⁰ Despite the efforts of the nationalists of the Sanjak, they could not obtain the full Armenian support for the Turkish cause. Historical events between the Turks and the Armenians of the region, especially the deportation attempts in 1915 and the *çete* fights during the early 1920s, haunted the nature of relations in the events of the Sanjak.

Towards the end of 1930s, the tone of the Turkish nationalist propaganda changed from claiming the Turkishness of Armenians to guaranteeing equal treatment if they choose to stay. In spite of the attempts of the Turkish nationalists to keep the non-Turkish population in the Sanjak by offering to forget about the past events,⁵⁷¹ most of the Armenians chose to leave. According to the members of the autochthonous Armenian population of the Sanjak, migrating Armenians were mostly those who had been settled in the Sanjak region between 1915 and 1921. The Armenians migrated even

⁵⁶⁹ Tan, November 29, 1937.

⁵⁷⁰ Yunus Nadi, *Cumhuriyet*, June 1, 1938.

⁵⁷¹ Shields, *Fezzes in the River*, 41.

though the Turkish officials guaranteed them an equal treatment under the new regime.⁵⁷²

5.3.1 Reactions of the Armenians

The majority of the Armenians of the Sanjak region opposed the Turkish rule in the Sanjak and supported the Arab nationalists as a result of the treatment they received during the World War I. Politically, Armenians of the Sanjak were organized under the *Dashnak* and *Hnchak* parties, in addition to the Dr. Matussiyan movement in cooperation with the Usbat al-‘Amal al-Qawmi and Syrian Communist Party.⁵⁷³

After the Turkish troops’ entrance to the Sanjak in July 5, 1938, mass migration of various ethnic and religious communities began and gained pace with the annexation of Hatay by the Turkish Republic in 1939. The immigrants consisted mostly of the Armenians and the non-Turks, but the Sunni Turks who were against the Kemalist reforms also left with the fear of not being able to practice their religion. Some groups began migrating earlier, but when the agreement ceding Hatay to Turkey was signed on June 23, 1939, it was clear that the French was going to leave the administration to the Turks. The non-Turkish population and especially the Armenians left the region with the fear of being attacked by the Sunni Muslim population. According to British and French sources 4,000 Armenians left the Sanjak by the end of August, 1938.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² Sarkis Amca, interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵⁷³ Stephen H. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 228.

⁵⁷⁴ FO 371/21915 / No: E5077/5.3.1 as cited in Halil Özşavlı, “Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü,” 16.

Armenians were supported by the French and benefited to a great extent from the mandate regime. During the early 1920s, they collaborated with the French and fought against the Turkish *çetes* [militia]. In the 1930s they prospered economically due to the privileges they were given by the French. When the French mandate regime was over, they were given the opportunity to go to Lebanon or Syria to be given citizenship rights.

Turkish government declared after the agreement that all the citizens of the Sanjak will be treated equally,⁵⁷⁵ but the mass migration of the Armenians from Antakya, Iskenderun, Kırıkhan, Reyhaniye and Musa Dağı region could not be stopped. French authorities organized and financially supported the Armenian migration from the Sanjak region. There were the Western Missionaries, other similar organizations and the Beirut Office of the League of Nations Committee on the Refugees that financially supported the migrant Armenians in Syria and Lebanon. Not only financial support, but also political freedom and security were provided for the immigrants by the French in the settlement areas prepared for them.⁵⁷⁶

Based on the agreement signed between the French and Turkish governments on 23 June, 1939, the French had to leave the Sanjak within one month. Therefore, France only had one month to organize the migration of all the Armenians living in the Sanjak. For the sake of convenience, Colonel Collet was appointed to organize the operations. The Sanjak was divided into four areas to control the Armenian migration: Musa Dağı, Iskenderun, Antakya and the Amik Plain. Four French administrators were appointed for

⁵⁷⁵ BCA. (030.10.00.225). 515.26.

⁵⁷⁶ Halil Özşavlı, “Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü,” 19.

the administration of each area. The first points of destination of the migrant Armenians were defined by the French as Kessab, Bedrusiye, Aleppo and Tartus. After staying at refugee camps for a few weeks these Armenians were permanently settled in Beirut, Bekaa Valley and Ayncar. The number of Armenians migrated from the Sanjak to Syria and Lebanon in 1939 was estimated by the British sources as 14,000, which was 90% of the entire Armenian population of the Sanjak.⁵⁷⁷ 13,000 of these were settled in Lebanon, mainly due to French political aims concerning the region.

The French authorities allocated lands to the Armenians for agriculture or house building and settled them in places suitable for their professions. Those coming from the six villages of the Musa Dağı region were given lands in Ayncar and they continued to live as farmers. In the same manner, the Armenians from cities like Iskenderun and Antakya were mostly merchants and they were settled in the city of Rasul 'Ayn. They were financially supported initially, but later they established their own businesses.

By July 22, 1939 the French administrators completed their job of moving the Armenians from the Sanjak to Syria and Lebanon, which were still under the French mandate rule. According to statistical information gathered from the French and the British sources, 18,000 Armenians migrated from the Sanjak to Syria and Lebanon between 1938 and 1939. A few families from each Armenian region, making around 30 families in total, were left to take care of the estates and other valuables. They were able to sell all their belongings.

⁵⁷⁷ FO 371/21915 / No: E5132/5132/44, Meeting of Aleppo Consul of Britain A. W. Davis with the French Beirut High Commissioner, July 10, 1939.

Some of the Armenians chose to remain in the Sanjak. Those who chose to remain were gathered together by the Turkish state to form the Vakıflı village.⁵⁷⁸ Interviewees from Vakıflı stated that there were those who emigrated as well as those who stayed in their village, which consisted mainly of Armenians. Sarkis, an Armenian from Vakıflı who stayed in Hatay after the end of the mandate regime, explains his reason to stay by saying that “the French were going to make us fight in the German fronts if we went with them.”⁵⁷⁹ The Armenians who remained were perceived badly by the ones who left. The new Turkish state tried to convince the ones leaving that they were not going to be harmed if they stayed, but most felt unsafe in the Sanjak due to their support for the French and decided to leave.⁵⁸⁰

5.4 Conservative Sunni Turks

The conservative Sunni Turkish population of Abacı, Ceylanlı, and various villages of the sub provinces of Hassa and Kırıkhan are important for this study when their opposition to the Kemalist reforms and the specific example they provide for the study of Turkish nationalism are taken into consideration. These regions of the Sanjak were exposed to Armenian raids during the 1920s when the Turkish and Armenian *çetes* were fighting for the control of the region. Not only the members of the *çetes*, but also the civil population living in the villages were greatly influenced by these fights. The

⁵⁷⁸ Halil Özşavlı, “Son Toplu Ermeni Göçü,” 25.

⁵⁷⁹ Sarkis Amca, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

⁵⁸⁰ Avedis Demirci, Interview by Süha Ünsal, 2004.

events of *büyük kaçkaç*⁵⁸¹ [the big escape] and *küçük kaçkaç* [the small escape] are still vivid in the memories of the people living in these villages. Their experience of agony in the hands of the “infidel” during the World War I, followed by the Turkish War of Independence and lastly during the *çete* fights of the early 1920s was greatly influential on their identity formation process. First foreign occupation and then Armenian attacks on them shaped their view about their self and other in such a way that their religion had come to be the dominant part of their group identity.

Conservative Sunni Turks of Abacılı, Ceylanlı, Hassa and Kırıkhan prioritized religious identity over any ethnic affiliation and their main concern was to be able to perform their religious duties freely as part of a state that will provide them what they needed. Their conservative structure was effective on their decisions about how to react when the Kemalist reforms were introduced in the Sanjak, but outside factors such as the opponents of the new regime in exile were also influential on them. The Bozkır Incidents and the case of the *150likler* are therefore introduced in this part to better represent the social dynamics influential on the conservative Sunni population of the Sanjak.

5.4.1 150likler

The formation of the list of the *150likler* is important to show how the Kemalist regime reacted towards any opposition in Anatolia. Information about those among the

⁵⁸¹ *Büyük kaçkaç* is the name given to the escape of the villagers to the nearby mountains because of the approaching Armenian raids on their villages. When going for these escapes they buried all their valuables and provisions to the ground so that upon their return they would not lose everything they have. The difference between the big and small escapes is the duration of the stay at the mountains. According to my interviewees, these stays could even extend to a month with all the small children and the elderly. M.K., Interview by the author, November 2008.

150likler, who settled in the Sanjak of Alexandretta, is offered to provide the background before discussing their influence on the Sanjak residents. The relation between the opposition in Anatolia and the Sanjak was not limited to similarity in their motives, but there were also influential figures of the Anatolian opposition who came to the Sanjak and affected the people in the Sanjak in various ways. While Zeynelabidin from Konya, counted among the main instigators of the Bozkır Incidents,⁵⁸² was effective on the conservative Sunni population of Abacı in terms of influencing their attitude towards the Kemalist reforms, which even led to their immigration to Damascus; Refik Halit had become an ardent supporter of the Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak and worked for Kemalist nationalist cause.

It is customary for the warring parties to issue a comprehensive amnesty after every major war to promote domestic compromise.⁵⁸³ Ordinarily, this amnesty targets political and military criminals. During the peace negotiations, the Turkish delegation asked as narrow an amnesty for the political and military criminals as possible, because a narrower amnesty would give more possibility to eliminate potential political rivals as well as collaborators.⁵⁸⁴ After the negotiations, it was decided that while the general amnesty was in force; the Turkish government reserved the right to expel or prohibit from among those who were returning to Turkey a list of 150 persons.⁵⁸⁵ *150likler* is the term used in Turkish history to refer to the list of 150 personas non grata created during

⁵⁸² See Page 222 for information on the Bozkır Incidents.

⁵⁸³ Şerife Özkan, “Yüzellilikler and Süleyman Şefik Kemali: A Legitimacy and Security Issue” (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2004), 6.

⁵⁸⁴ Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State: Power Struggle in the Early Turkish Republic* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 22.

⁵⁸⁵ Sedat Bingöl, *Yüzellilikler Meselesi* (Master Thesis, Hacettepe University, 1994), Appendix 4.d.

the negotiations for the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. According to the protocol signed in 1923, after the negotiations, non-Muslims would not be on this list and the Ankara government was free to include any Muslims it wished to exile from their own country.

After the signing of the protocol, which gave the Turkish Republic the right to decide a list of 150 people, discussions began at the Turkish National Assembly on April 16, 1924.⁵⁸⁶ Earlier, the Ministry of Interior and the Directorate of Security prepared a list of 600 people and this list was later reduced to 300 names.⁵⁸⁷ Heated discussions took place at the National Assembly, but everyone had his own list in mind and there were no objective criteria to determine the list. Finally, İhsan Bey, suggested that the list to be finalized by deciding on those who have the potential to harm the regime in the future.⁵⁸⁸ The main idea behind the formation of such a list was eliminating both the supporters of the old regime and the opponents of the new regime.

The final list of the 150 people was published in the *Resmi Ceride* on January 7, 1924.⁵⁸⁹ Shortly afterwards, those who were in Turkey were asked to leave the country. Among them were Zeynelabidin from Konya, Refik Halit [Karay], Ali İlmî Fani [Bilgili] and Çerkez Ethem. Three years after their exile, in 1927, the Turkish government decided to revoke their citizenship as well as their right to own property.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁶ TBMM Gizli Celse Zabıtları, April 16, 1924, Devre 2, Volume 4, 434-454.

⁵⁸⁷ Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 27.

⁵⁸⁸ TBMM Gizli Celse Zabıtları, April 16, 1924, Devre 2, Volume 4, 436.

⁵⁸⁹ Resmi Ceride, January 7, 1924, number 81 as cited by Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 33.

⁵⁹⁰ İlhami Soysal, *150likler* (İstanbul: Gür, 1985), 139.

In 1938, the *150likler* were granted a limited amnesty, which reinstated their citizenship and pardoned them from their past opposition activities. There were many limitations of this amnesty, including the reservation of the right to revoke their citizenship again if deemed necessary by the government.⁵⁹¹ The reason for the amnesty was based on the strong principles of the regime. Such a strong state would not fear any opposition and should show forgiveness towards the families of the *150likler*, as the citizens of this state.⁵⁹² When the amnesty law was put into effect in 1938, only 40 of the 69 surviving *150lik* returned to Turkey.⁵⁹³

Sanjak was also among the places that the *150likler* left Turkey for. Some of the *150likler* are specifically important for the course of this study due to their influence on the population of the Sanjak. In what follows some information about their life and the reason for their inclusion in the list of the *150likler* are presented to provide a better understanding of their influence on the course of the events.

One of the names which was on the list of *150likler* was Mesut Fani (Bilgili) (1889-1979) who was a member of a well-known family in Adana. Two more names from this family were on the list of the *150likler*. He was of Kurdish origin and the *mutasarrıf* [sub-governor] of Cebelibereket during the French occupation. He supported the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* (Freedom and Accord Party) and opposed the nationalist struggle. After Turkish forces won a victory against the occupying powers, he fled to

⁵⁹¹ TC. Resmi Gazete, 16 Temmuz 1938, No: 3961, Law No: 3527.

⁵⁹² Kamil Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi* (Ankara: Tekin, 1998), 144-145.

⁵⁹³ Nurşen Mazıcı, "Af Yasalarında 150likler," *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 55(January-March, 2000): 79.

Syria and then to France to complete his doctorate. In 1933, he returned to the Sanjak and worked as a philosophy teacher at the Lycée of Antakya, where he influenced his students on the side of the Turkish nationalist struggle changing his political position. In the same year, he published a pamphlet with the title: “Atatürk’s Philosophy of Life,” in which he praised Atatürk and his success.⁵⁹⁴

After the amnesty for the 150likler in 1938, he left his job as a teacher at the Lycée and returned to Turkey. After staying in Istanbul for a while, he returned to Antakya and worked as a lawyer until 1970s. He has published books about the Sanjak in 1939: “*Manda İdaresinde Hatay Kültür Hayatı*” [Cultural Life in Hatay under the Mandate Regime] and “*5 Temmuz Hatay’ın Kurtuluş Günü*” [July 5, Independence Day of Hatay].⁵⁹⁵ Both of which show that he sided with the Turkish nationalist cause in the Sanjak, despite being on exile. He died in Istanbul in 1979.

The brother of Mesud Fani, Ali İlmi Fani (Bilgili) (1878-1964), was also born in Adana. He studied literature and published the newspaper *Ferda* between the years 1918 and 1922 in Adana, the tone of which was against the Ankara government.⁵⁹⁶ After the War of Independence ended with victory, he fled to the Sanjak of Alexandretta and

⁵⁹⁴ Murat Yümlü, “Yüzellilikler Meselesi, Mesud Fani ve Risalesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme,” *History Studies*, 2/3(2010): 345-346. For the review of the book also see İsmail Arar, “Bir Yüzelliliğin Kitabı,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, 10 (November 1989): 318.

⁵⁹⁵ Rengin Galioğlu, *Hatay Kültür Tarihinde 1921-1938 Dönemi ve En Önemli Eğitim Kurumu Antakya Lisesi* (Master Thesis, Mustafa Kemal University, 2004), 59-60.

⁵⁹⁶ Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 72.

worked as a literature teacher at the Lycée of Antakya until 1938. After the amnesty, he returned to Adana where he died in 1964.⁵⁹⁷

Refik Halit (Karay) (1888-1965) was born in 1888 in Istanbul. He went to the Lycée Galatasaray and studied law afterwards. He became a member of the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*. During the third Damat Ferit Pasha government, he was appointed as the director of the General Directorate of Mail and Telegram in 1919.⁵⁹⁸ He was included in the list of the *150likler* due to his refusal of sending the telegrams of the nationalist resistance in Anatolia as the Director, which hindered the communication of the resistance movement.

He wrote opposing articles for various newspapers including *Servet-i Fünun*, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, *Son Havadis*, *Muhit*, *Fecr-i Ati*, *Kalem*, *Vakit*, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, *Zaman*, *Cem*, *Şerah*, *Alemdar* and *Aydede*. He was a strong opponent of the CUP and then the Ankara government.⁵⁹⁹ He left the country in 1922 before the declaration of the list of *150likler*.

He went to Beirut and Aleppo during his exile years. He wrote for the newspaper *Vahdet* in Aleppo, which was published by the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak. Later his views changed totally: he began to support Kemalist reforms. He was among the first

⁵⁹⁷ Ali Birinci, "Fanizade Ali İlmi Bey," *İlmi Araştırmalar* 5, (1997): 79.

⁵⁹⁸ Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 70.

⁵⁹⁹ Nihat Karaer, *Tam Bir Muhalif: Refik Halid Karay* (Istanbul: Temel, 1998), 175.

ones to wear the hat in the Sanjak⁶⁰⁰ despite his fellow *150likler*'s reactions. He worked for the Turkish cause in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. According to Erdeha, Refik Halit's pro-nationalist activities in the Sanjak were influential on the decision of amnesty for the *150likler*.⁶⁰¹ He returned to İstanbul after the amnesty in 1938 where he died in 1965.

Zeynelabidin from Konya (1869-1940) was a prominent Naqshi sheikh and an influential *hoca* [religious officer] in Konya. He also served as a member of the Ottoman Senate. He joined the *Hürriyet ve İttiaf Fırkası* [Freedom and Accord Party] and was exiled to Gemlik during the reign of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), but returned after the Mudros Armistice in 1918.⁶⁰²

At this point, information about the Bozkır Incidents would be beneficial to better understand Zeynelabidin's political stand. The first of the Bozkır rebellions was organized by the most influential governors of the Damat Ferit Government, Konya Governor Cemal Bey, between the dates September 26 and October 4, 1919. The Tevfik Pasha government tried to solve the problem by the means of sending counselor commissions consisting of the notables of the region. However, with the courage that they had gained via their success in the first rebellion, the rebels demanded the Kuvayı Milliye forces, which were believed to be oppressing the local population,⁶⁰³ to leave the

⁶⁰⁰ Volkan Payaslı and Olcay Özkaya Duman, "Şapka (İnkılabı) ve Din Üzerinden Verilen Hatay Bağımsızlık Mücadelesi-Vedi Münir Karabay ve Risalesi: Şapka Giymek Haram Değil," *Tarihin Peşinde* 9,(2013): 299.

⁶⁰¹ Kamil Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi* (Ankara: Tekin, 1998), 210.

⁶⁰² Hülya Küçük, "Sufi Reactions Against the Reforms," 133.

⁶⁰³ *Harp Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi* 45, (Eylül 1963), Document No: 1060.

region as well as a general amnesty for all the rebels. Another rebellion took place between the dates October 22 and November 4, 1919.⁶⁰⁴

Bozkır was Zeynelabidin's place of birth and he had good influence on the population.⁶⁰⁵ Zeynelabidin and other leaders of the Bozkır incidents persuaded the local population to support their movement in the name of Islam and the Sultanate. The propaganda that was carried out in the region paid off and many people joined the movements against the national forces.⁶⁰⁶ The second part of the events resulted in frustration for the population of Bozkır.⁶⁰⁷ There were many casualties, the leaders had to flee and the Kuvayı Milliye forces took control of all the villages of the rebels.

After the victory of the nationalists, he first went to Egypt and then joined Sultan Vahdettin in Mecca.⁶⁰⁸ According to the interviewees from Abacılı,⁶⁰⁹ Zeynelabidin came to Iskenderun through the mountains on his way to Mecca.⁶¹⁰ According to a report sent from the Sanjak to Ankara, "Some opponent Turks such as Nazif from Dört Yol, Muallim Mehmet from Malatya, and Ali Kutsi from Konya (nephew of Zeynelabidin) tried to convince the villagers of Abacılı not to support the Kemalists by

⁶⁰⁴ Taha Niyazi Karaca, "Milli Mücadelede Bozkır İsyanları," *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 16, 1(2004): 169.

⁶⁰⁵ Karaca, "Milli Mücadelede," 172.

⁶⁰⁶ Salahi R. Sonyel, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlerinde İngiliz İstihbarat Servisinin Türkiye'deki Eylemleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 47.

⁶⁰⁷ Suavi Aydın and Murat Yağcı, "Sarıkçılıların 'Eşkıyalığı' ve Konya Delibaş İsyanı Üzerine Değerlendirmeler," *Kebikeç*, 35(2013), 59-112.

⁶⁰⁸ Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 54.

⁶⁰⁹ Abacılı is the region in Iskenderun, Hatay where many people migrated to Syria due to their religious beliefs.

⁶¹⁰ S. C., Interview by the author, August 2013.

using religion as their main tool. They even distributed 200 *sarık* [Islamic headgears] to the men and told the villagers of Abacılı that they will acquire merit before God according to the number of men they convince to wear the *sarık*⁶¹¹ as opposed to the European style brimmed hat that the Kemalists wear.

The influence of the *150likler* on the Sanjak population was most apparent in the political life of Antakya, where there were ardent supporters of the Kemalist nationalist cause, and the more conservative population living in Abacılı, Söğüt, Akbez and Hassa. The *150likler* living in the Sanjak directly reflected their politically active life style to the people of the Sanjak.

5.4.2 Turkish Nationalist Propaganda towards the Conservative Sunni Turks

Considerable effort was exerted by the nationalists of the Sanjak to include all those who accepted to adopt the life style that the Kemalist reforms imposed. On the other side, endeavors and religious sources were employed to state that these reforms did not oppose Islam to obviate the conservative Sunni Turks' reluctance on the same grounds. The profundity and effectiveness of the propaganda targeting conservative Sunni Turks of the Sanjak are open to discussion, because in the end, the emigration of the Sunni Turks from the Sanjak was simply ignored by the Kemalist nationalists just because they did not want to change their life style to be part of the new nation.

⁶¹¹ Report date: 11 December 1936, ATASE Archive, World War II Collection, Folder: 13, Document No: 16, 17.

Turkish nationalist propaganda approached other communities such as the Armenians and Christian Arabs by assuring them that they would be free to perform their religion and economic activities. Their hesitations about keeping their privileged position were answered in the Turkish nationalist propaganda by guaranteeing equal treatment as was also guaranteed to urban notables, conservative Sunni Arabs and the autonomists, but not much effort was made to convince the conservative Sunni Turks of Abacılı, Ceylanlı and Hassa to stay and become part of the new nation. Their cooperation with the already declared opponents as well as their reluctance to the change of life style can be counted among the reasons for the lack of insistence for nationalist propaganda towards the conservative Sunni Turks.

5.4.3 Reactions of the Conservative Sunni Turks

The conservative Sunni population of Abacılı, Ceylanlı, and Hassa regions prioritized religion above everything else and opposed Kemalist reforms, perceiving them as in opposition to their religious beliefs. Those wearing hats were termed infidels and the removal of women's veils was regarded as totally unacceptable. Even though they were part of the Turkish speaking population, they did not act along with the Kemalists of the Sanjak and at some occasions, even preferred French mandate rule under the condition that they could freely perform their religion. After an international electoral commission took over for the Sanjak elections, a number of identities were offered to the residents of the Sanjak and they were asked to register under one of these categories. Conservative Turks identified themselves firstly by their religion and took

advantage of the category of “other communities” and registered as “Sunni Muslims”⁶¹² in spite of all the “Register Yourself as Turkish!” [*Türk yazıl!*] propaganda of *Yenigün* targeting all of the Sanjak population.⁶¹³

Opposition to the Kemalist reforms in the Sanjak of Alexandretta led to the immigration of the conservative Sunni Turks to Damascus in the 1930s, turning the Sanjak into a unique case for the study of Turkish nationalism. The shared ethnic background or the promises of the Turkish Republic did not change the pious Sunni-Turkish groups’ decision.

As my interviewees from Abacılı⁶¹⁴ stated, Zeynelabidin of Konya was exiled from Turkey and came to the Sanjak with his nephew Ali Kutsi, who served as a general in the late Ottoman army. The two traveled in the Sanjak and stayed in the mountainous area of Abacılı for a while. People of Abacılı could not go down the mountains because of the fear of Armenian attacks. There were serious clashes between the Armenians and the people of Abacılı during the early 1920s when the *çete* fights took place. Zeynelabidin was a pious mullah who had some level of influence on the religious people of Abacılı. He stayed in Abacılı for a short time and moved to Syria and then to Saudi Arabia, but his nephew stayed with the people of Abacılı. A group of people from the village followed Zeynelabidin to Syria under the leadership of Ali Kutsi. They even aimed to go to Saudi Arabia, but Zeynelabidin contacted them and told them to stay in

⁶¹² Sanjian, “The Sanjak of Alexandretta,” 156.

⁶¹³ *Yenigün*, April 28, 1938, 1.

⁶¹⁴ W. M. and S. C., Interviews by the author, August 2013.

Damascus, because the climate in Saudi Arabia was not suitable for the people of Abacılı.

The piety of Zeynelabidin and Ali Kutsi influenced the religious villagers of Abacılı. While fighting against the Armenians, the villagers believed that they would rid the infidels off from their lands and live a religious life afterwards. However, when Kemalist reforms were introduced in the Sanjak, they thought “one infidel left, but a worse infidel has come”.⁶¹⁵ Since Zeynelabidin and Ali Kutsi were educated Ottoman officials, their opposition to the new regime sounded reasonable to the religious villagers. The fear of not being able to practice their religion⁶¹⁶ and their knowledge about the hadiths regarding Damascus as an important religious place⁶¹⁷ influenced their decision to emigrate from the Sanjak.

When all the immigrants from Ceylanlı, Akbez, Söğüt, Küreci and many more villages of Hassa, Kırıkhan and Iskenderun were counted, the number of the emigrating population reached approximately 6,000-7,000 including those who followed the first group of migrants from the Sanjak, within the same time period.⁶¹⁸ Ali Kutsi’s grave and

⁶¹⁵ “*Tam Ermenilerden kurtulunca Türkler geliyor. Onlar de şapka giymeye zorlayınca bir gavur gitti, daha büyük gavur geldi diye kaçıyorlar.*” S.C., Interview by the author, August 2013.

⁶¹⁶ F. K. and W. M., Interview by the author, August 2013.

⁶¹⁷ “‘Evvel-ül Şam, ahir-ül Şam’ diyor büyükler. Hadisler de olunca kurtuluş orda deyip Şam’a gitmişler” H.K., interview by the author, August 2013.

⁶¹⁸ Although it was not possible to reach any statistical information about their exact numbers, interviews conducted in the region enabled me to reach 6000-7000 in total. Also, local historians made similar approximations in their interviews in M. Yaşar Durukan, “Sakıncalı Türkler: Ankara’ya Söyleyin Bizi Vatandaş Yapsınlar.” *Aksiyon*, February 16, 2004.

a mosque named after him can be found in Damascus, Jabal Qasiyun region in the neighborhood predominantly composed of migrants from Abacılı.⁶¹⁹

When the reactions of the conservative population of the Sanjak are taken into consideration, it can be satated that they chose to resist by leaving rather than negotiation.⁶²⁰ The opposition to the Kemalist reforms in Hatay remained at the level of resistance in which the resisters left their venue of resistance at the end: most of the pious population of Ceylanlı, Abacılı, and Hassa chose to emigrate. The adopted strategy was defensive and it was subversion rather than confrontation, but constituted resistance all the same.⁶²¹

5.5 Registrations for the Elections

Registrations for the Sanjak elections was one of the most important issues in the short history of the Sanjak, because it was these registration results that were going to determine the number of seats each community will have in the Sanjak Parliament. Turkish claims on the majority of the Turkish population in the Sanjak made these registrations even more important, as through this registration the ethno-religious structure of the Sanjak would have a statistical picture based on the declarations of

⁶¹⁹ S. C., interview by the author, August 2013. Approximately 50,000 Turkish migrants live in the Jabal Qasiyun region.

⁶²⁰ The term “resistance” covers a variety of collective actions among which are pilfering, feigned ignorance, foot dragging, sabotage, arson and flight. See Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 87. for more information on ways of resisting the hegemony.

⁶²¹ Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular,” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory* (London: Routledge, 1981) and G. M. Sider, *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 119-128.

people. In order to better analyze the motives of people to register as they did and the effects of the nationalist propaganda, the population structure of the Sanjak should be taken into consideration in comparison with the registration results.

According to census data collected by the French officials during their mandate rule, the population of the Sanjak, according to religious origins, was as follows in 1926: Sunni 65,147; Alawites 37,678; Armenian Orthodox 9,128; Armenian Catholics 1,407; Greek Orthodox 8,222; Greek Catholics 171; Protestants 1,833; Assyrians 134; Latins 145; Syriacs 38; Maronites 182; Chaldeans 176; Jews 305 and the others 476; 125,052 in total.⁶²² These numbers represent only the religious groups. Therefore there was no mention of an Arab or Turkish population, but still the census gives an idea about ratio of various religious groups in the Sanjak.

The total population increased to 156,144 in 1931, but this population was only represented as 80,456 men and 75,688 women in official documents.⁶²³ In 1935, detailed census information was gathered again according to religious groups. The population according to the 1935 census was as follows: Sunni 103,932; Alawites 61,756; Armenian Orthodox 21,295; Armenian Catholics 2,391; Greek Orthodox 12,486; Greek Catholics 306; Protestants 2,858; Latins 932; Maronites 250; Chaldeans 227; Jews 465; Syriac Catholics 185; Syriac Orthodox 54 and others 92.⁶²⁴ As mentioned earlier, the dramatic increase in the Armenian population was mainly due to the change of the border to include the Armenian town of Kessab within the Sanjak borders.

⁶²² MAE, CP 313, Annual Report presented to the League of Nations (1926).

⁶²³ MAE, CP 567, Population statistics of the State of Syria as of June 30, 1931.

⁶²⁴ MAE, CP 567, Population statistics of the Sanjak of Alexandretta as of December 31, 1935.

The population statistics of 1936 census included references to the ethnic backgrounds of the people. According to this census, the population was as follows: Sunni population of 111,653 was divided into ethnic groups as Turks 85,242; Arabs 22,461; Kurds 2,964; Circassians 954 and Albanians 32. Alawites were 63,893 and they were also divided into ethnic groups as Arabs 62,026 and Kurds 1,867. Armenian Orthodox 22,590; Armenian Catholics 2,321; Greek Orthodox 13,038; Greek Catholics 329; Protestants 2,997; Latins 949; Maronites 258; Chaldeans 226; Syriac Catholics 199; Syriac Orthodox 55; Jews 474 and others 98. Total population was 219,079.⁶²⁵

One interesting point about these statistics is that Alawites also included Kurdish Alawites. As for the general usage today, the word “Alawite” refers to the Arab Alawites. Furthermore, Turkish nationalist propaganda claimed that they were Turks, but there was no mention of Kurdish Alawites. Most probably the Alawites’ close relations with the Kurds in the region resulted in the formation of such a group.

When these statistics are processed to find the percentage of the main groups within the general population in 1936, the following results are obtained: 38,9 % Turks, 28 % Alawites, 10 % Sunni Arabs, 8,16 % Christian Arabs, 11,36 % Armenians and 3,58 % others. According to the categorization of 1936 census results, Arabs- as an ethnic group including Sunni Arabs, Alawite Arabs and Christian Arabs- made more than 100,000 of the total population.

After looking at census information, the registration of the voters for the upcoming Sanjak elections deserves attention in order to be able to come up with some conclusions about the effects of the Turkish nationalist propaganda. The registration

⁶²⁵ MAE, CP 567, Population statistics of the Sanjak of Alexandretta as of October 22, 1936.

results were declared on August 1, 1938⁶²⁶ and according to these results 56,972 people registered in total: 35,847 (63%) of which registered under the category of Turks. There were 11,319 Alawites (20%); 5,504 Armenians (9.7%);⁶²⁷ 1,845 Arabs (3%); 2,098 Greek Orthodox (3.7%) and 359 people registered to the other groups in total. The 40 seats in the Sanjak Parliament were allocated according to these results giving 22 seats to the Turks; 9 seats to the Alawites; 5 seats to the Armenians; 2 seats to the Arabs and 2 seats to the Greek Orthodox community.⁶²⁸

Every community in the Sanjak region was somehow involved in the process leading to the annexation of Hatay by Turkey, despite each one possessing a different purpose. As clearly demonstrated throughout the thesis, community based homogeneity was not apparent and other priorities such as familial or even personal interests were safeguarded. Various motivations of different communities dragged them into this game of taking sides.

As for the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak, the need to prove that the Turks were the majority in the Sanjak resulted in the welcoming of all communities by the Turkish authorities to be part of the new nation; they only had to register themselves as Turkish. Methods of propaganda were carried out through a wide range of means from print media to public libraries and historical theories. Propaganda by local newspapers of the Sanjak and the national newspapers of Turkish Republic were

⁶²⁶ Only men over a certain age could register as voters.

⁶²⁷ The dramatic decrease in the Armenian population was mainly due to migration. According to British and French sources 4,000 Armenians left the Sanjak by the end of August, 1938.

⁶²⁸ BCA. (030.10.00.224).512.28

important to demonstrate the double nature of the propaganda: one targeting the residents of the Sanjak; the other, the citizens of the Turkish Republic and international actors. Inhabitants of the Republic needed to believe in the need for intervention in the Sanjak issue; on the other hand, the Sanjak population was to be convinced to register as Turkish. The Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory were actively used as means of propaganda, particularly by writing the history of the region in line with these theories.

In addition to newspaper articles, history books based on the Turkish History Thesis, public meeting and Kemalist reforms were important as part of the Turkish nationalist propaganda. Supporters of the Turkish cause immediately adopted the reforms and began to work on ways to disseminate them while other groups were cautious about adopting them, if not opposing them. The importance of these reforms for the Sanjak was apparent in the hat reform which evolved to be the symbol of the Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak. Opposition to the hat reform and the new alphabet on religious grounds were among the important issues when the Sunni Turk emigration is concerned. Adoption of the new lifestyle through the reforms was the prerequisite of membership in the new nation. Therefore, the reforms had become the hotly debated issues in the Sanjak during the propaganda process.

The impact of the Turkish nationalist propaganda was most apparent in the reactions of different communities. Alawites were one of the main targets of the Turkish nationalist propaganda. In addition to declaring them as *Eti Türkü*, the secular character of the new nation was emphasized so as to obtain their support and make them register

as Turkish. Unfortunately there is no statistical data as to show how many Alawites registered as Turks, but there are a few examples, one of which was Sheikh Hayyat.

If a comparison is made between the 1936 census results and 1938 registration results, one can get a general idea about the way certain groups had acted. Although there may be population changes due to various reasons within two years, an increase from 38% to 63% in the Turkish population suggests that people from other groups also registered under the category of Turks. In a similar manner, the percentage of the Alawites decreased from 28% to 20%.

In the case of the conservative Sunni Turks, opposition to the hat reform and the new alphabet was so strong that some even chose to leave their homeland rather than becoming part of the new secular and modern nation presented them through these reforms. How these conservative Sunni Turks acted in the registration process is not known due to lack of documentation. They may have registered under a different category or not registered at all. Either way, their percentage, in comparison to the Alawites, was so low that the Kemalist nationalists chose to ignore them.

The impact of the propaganda on other groups, including the Christian Arabs and Armenians, could be seen in their decision to leave or stay. Most opponents left the Sanjak even before the annexation. The ones, who chose to stay, adopted the modern and secular life style.

5.6 Becoming Part of the Turkish Republic

Turkish nationalist propaganda increased in 1936 after the signing of the Franco-Syrian Agreement in the same year. The ambiguous situation of the Sanjak alerted the Turkish authorities to take action in order to keep Sanjak from being part of the future Syrian state. Claims about the Turkish majority living in the Sanjak were transmitted through various means at the local, national and international levels.

The nationalist propaganda at the local level concentrated on persuading as many people as possible to register as Turkish in the registration for the upcoming Sanjak elections. The nature of the propaganda carried out in the Sanjak by the Kemalist nationalists was ethnic based at one level, but differently from some examples observed in several parts of Anatolia, religion and language were of secondary importance. It was inclusive- if not pragmatic- for all those supporting the Kemalist reforms and the emphasis was on the modern and secular characteristics of the new nation.

When the registration results and the allocation of the seats in the parliament are taken into account, Turkish nationalist propaganda seems to be effective on the diverse population of the Sanjak. The annexation decision of the Hatay Parliament, taken unanimously, also shows that the non-Turkish elements also joined the majority. On the other hand, migration was one of the most important indicators of various communities' perception of the new rule. Turkish rule was not welcomed by all members of the various communities of the Sanjak.

After the annexation some groups chose to leave while some others stayed. According to British sources, approximately 22,000 Armenians, which is 90% of the entire Armenian population in the Sanjak, left the region between the years 1938 and 1939. In addition to the Armenians, 10,000 Alawites, 5,000 Greek Orthodox and 12,000 Sunni Arabs left the region after the annexation.⁶²⁹ Although there is no mention of them in the official statistics, approximately 6.000-7.000 conservative Sunni Muslims left between the years 1938 and 1939.⁶³⁰ The number of people who have left the Sanjak during the annexation process was approximately one fourth of total population according to 1936 census data.

It is also crucial to look at the situation of the new Turkish citizens of Hatay after the annexation to see whether the inclusive approach applied during the propaganda process continued or not. When the end results were taken into consideration, according to my interviewees, supporters of the reforms and the opposing parties faced different treatment by the state especially concerning state related jobs and administrative posts. The Amik *Beys* were stratified into a status group and monopolized opportunities⁶³¹ especially in the political sphere. They were appointed to important posts by the Kemalists of Turkey. The Amik *Beys* continued this privileged situation even after the annexation. Many became members of the Turkish Parliament in the following years.

⁶²⁹ Davis to FO, Aleppo, 10.07.1939, E 5132 and 27.07.1939, E 5503/5132/44, PRO FO 371/23302 as cited in Berna Pekesen, "The Exodus of Armenians from the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the 1930s," in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*, ed. Hans Lukas Kieser (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 63.

⁶³⁰ These numbers are estimates based on the information gathered through oral history accounts conducted in the villages of the emigrant conservative Sunni Muslims of Hatay.

⁶³¹ Weber, *Economy and Society*, 935.

On the other hand, the conservative population of Ceylanlı was kept out of the group and even believed that they were punished because of their rejection of the Kemalist reforms. There is an ongoing rumor even today in the village that the state officials marked the names of the villagers as if they were traitors in official documents in order not to employ them in state related jobs.⁶³²

Examples about the treatment that the Sanjak residents experienced as Turkish citizens are not limited to the conservative Sunni Turks and the Amik Beys. It was observed in oral history interviews that every group had some negative experiences. A common incident was what the people from Hatay faced when they were recruited for their compulsory military service. According to the interviewees, all those from Hatay were employed in sub tasks within the military. They believed that they were not trusted by the state to serve as “normal soldiers.”⁶³³

The idea of mistrust by the state was apparent in every conversation with the non-Turkish communities of Hatay. According to a Sunni Arab from Reyhanlı, the state settled people of Turkish origin to their region to balance the population after the annexation. The interviewee stated that these settlements continued until recent years. Settlement of the survivors of an earthquake in Samsun or a flood in Trabzon as well as Uzbeks from Central Asia were all perceived to be part of the state plan to increase the ratio of Turks in Reyhanlı. The same interviewee stated that even though the Sunni Arabs of the relevant region acted on the side of the Turks, they were not trusted by the

⁶³² MK, in conversation with a villager from Ceylanlı, August 2013.

⁶³³ MT, interview by the author, November 2008.

state and people of Turkish origin were settled in that region.⁶³⁴ In the same manner, an Alawite interviewee talked about how the state did not treat them equally when the lands obtained by drying the Amik Lake were distributed to the local population. According to him, even though they lived very close to the lake area, Alawites were left out of the land distribution plans.⁶³⁵

The way the non-Turkish population of Hatay felt after the annexation gives us some clues about the duration of the inclusive approach of the Turkish nationalists -as was observed in the Sanjak before the registrations. It is hard to support the interviewees' claims with documents mostly due to lack of such documentation as well as the hardness of reading the intentions of the authorities in their actions and decisions, but it is also not correct to totally ignore the interviewees' experiences. Therefore, a balance between oral and written accounts was tried to be kept when analyzing the pragmatic inclusive approach of the Kemalist nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak. The pragmatism of Turkish nationalist propaganda was apparent, at first, in its approach to the conservative Sunni Turkish population of the Sanjak. The general feeling of segregation that the residents of Hatay had experienced after the annexation can be considered as the change of attitude towards the ethnically and religiously mixed population of the region. Pragmatically inclusive method of Turkish nationalism was abandoned after the process was completed and the non-Turk and non-Muslim elements of the region felt as second-class citizens despite their decision to stay.

⁶³⁴ SD, interview by the author, November 2008.

⁶³⁵ AY, interview by the author, November 2008.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

By studying the example of the Turkish nationalist propaganda, focusing on the years between 1936 and 1939, this thesis tried to show that the Sanjak of Alexandretta provides a special case for the study of Republican Turkish nationalism. Through the pragmatic and speculative ideological discourse of the Republican Turkish nationalism, a political conglomeration of as many supporters as possible was aimed to be formed under the concept of nation. In order to demonstrate this, this study focuses on how Turkish nationalism evolved and what the processes of Kemalist nationalist thought were while creating a nation out of the remnants of the multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire. Historical processes as well as the political atmosphere of the time period leading to the annexation of the Sanjak are among the main issues discussed in this work. A special attention is paid to the case of the Sanjak during the interwar era and the evolvement of Turkish and Arab nationalisms are also examined within the relevant time period.

As for the experience of Turkish nationalism in the Sanjak, attempts were made to include all those who could be convinced to join the cause as long as they accepted to support Kemalist reforms and decided to change their life styles according to the needs of a secular and modern state. All means were put into use to convince as many people as possible. It was such a pragmatist movement that while the Alawite peasants were informed that if they support the Turkish cause, they would be freed from the oppressive landlords; the landlords, on the other hand, were also drawn into negotiations for their influence on the countryside.

Turkish nationalist propaganda mainly targeted the Alawites of the Sanjak region, because they were one of the most populous groups making the 28% of the whole population in 1936. The propaganda towards the Alawites of the region emphasized religious freedom and promised economic prosperity once they chose to be part of the Turkish nation by registering under the category of Turks as well as declaring them Turks. On the other hand, there was a group of conservative Sunni Turks who opposed the Kemalist reforms and rejected the new life style that these reforms brought. Their opposition was religious based and they did not want to be part of the new nation envisaged by the Kemalist nationalists. Nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak simply ignored them and not much effort was made to win this opposing group even though they were ethnically Turks and religiously from the Sunni sect of Islam.

Kemalist nationalists' attitude towards the Alawites and the conservative Sunni Turks in the Sanjak is actually the representation of the pragmatic nature of Turkish nationalism. Kemalist cadres ignored the conservative Sunni Turks who migrated from

the region and focused on the Alawites who neither speak Turkish language nor share the same religious affiliation with the rest of the population of Anatolia, because convincing such a populous group would be more beneficial to prove the Turkish claim about Turks making the majority of the Sanjak population.

When these examples are taken into consideration as a whole, it can be stated that the Sanjak provides a unique case for the study of Turkish nationalism. Beginning with the organization of the Kemalist groups within the Sanjak and continuing with the promotion of the Kemalist reforms, the Sanjak was slowly constructed to be part of the Turkish state. However, the definition of “Turkish” was not confined to a certain religious or ethnic group but rather embraced all those who would be enticed to be part of the new nation.

The struggles to include within the Turkish nation whoever supported the Kemalist ideology- Arabs, Kurds or Circassians belonging to any religious group while excluding those Sunni Turks who chose to leave the Sanjak because they were disinclined to Kemalist ideology- show us that the Kemalist nationalist understanding aimed to form a social enclosure by using the discourse of nationalism. This newly identified group will support the Kemalist ideology and guarantee its continuation.

In the first chapter, the historical background of the Sanjak region is explained by keeping in mind the relations between the Sanjak residents and their rulers. By explaining the historical events relative to the Sanjak region, the evolvement of a remote area of the Ottoman Empire into an international issue is revealed. The local notables’ privileged situation during the Ottoman reign and the effects of the changing political

conditions on their behavior concerning their relations with the administrators is important to analyze the notables' reactions to the Kemalist reforms. It was due to these historical connections that the Amik Beys supported the Kemalist reforms from the beginning, while the traditional elite of Antakya opposed them at first.

The second chapter is about the emergence of nationalisms in the Sanjak region. Both Turkish and Arab nationalisms were influential on the Sanjak population. As a new ideology, how nationalism came to influence people's decisions about their future is observed in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Evolvement of Turkish nationalism from a religious based imperial heritage to a secular and modern perception of a nation is important to understand the nationalist propaganda toward the Alawites of the Sanjak. In a similar manner, Arab nationalism changed from the cultural revival struggles of Butrus Al-Bustani under the Ottoman protection to the claims of Zaki Al-Arsuzi's call for a united Arab nation.

The third chapter gives background information about the Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Propaganda strategies such as the print media and the youth and sports clubs are explained in detail before explaining the way Kemalist reforms were disseminated in the Sanjak. In addition to these, Turkish nationalism made extensive use of history in the nation formation process and the new national identity was mainly based on the common historical background of the people of Anatolia extending as far back as the Hittites. It was through this connection that the Sanjak population was accepted to be part of the Turkish nation no matter what their ethnic or religious backgrounds were. Arabic speaking Alawites of the region were

declared to be part of the Turkish nation through the “scientific evidence” provided by means of the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory. Faik Türkmen’s teleological study on the history of the Sanjak is analyzed in this chapter as an example of nationalist propaganda based on historiography.

In the fourth chapter, the social structure of the region is analyzed by delving into historical background of some of the communities living in the Sanjak. These communities are selected as the notables because of their active participation in the political life of the Sanjak; the Alawites, due to their population; the Armenians, as a result of the role they played both before and after the establishment of the French Mandate rule; and the conservative Sunni Turks, owing to their decision to leave their villages in the name of religion. The historical relations between these groups shaped the nature of the nationalist propaganda carried out towards them. While the Alawites’ opposition towards the Ottoman regime was taken into consideration when emphasizing the modern and secular character of the new nation, Sunni Turkish emigration was totally ignored due to their similarities with the opposition that the nationalists faced in Anatolia. In the same manner, the notables were already active in the politics of the region and had access to administrative posts. Their relations with the mandate rulers and the nationalists of the Sanjak determined the way they reacted to the reforms and the nationalist propaganda. Armenians were promised equal treatment under the new state if they chose to stay. The effects of the nationalist propaganda towards the above-mentioned communities of the Sanjak are also tried to be analyzed by looking at the available statistical information. The registration results and the census information give an idea about the reactions of these groups to the nationalist propaganda and the

Kemalist reforms. Finally, the situation of the various communities of the Sanjak after the annexation is touched upon through oral history accounts of the residents of the current city of Hatay to get an idea about how long the inclusive nature of the Kemalist nationalism continued.

Turkish nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak of Alexandretta aimed to introduce the reforms to as many people as possible without looking at their religious or ethnic backgrounds. Various tools, most of which are explained by the theorists of nationalism, were deployed to convince the Sanjak population to accept to partnership in the new nation. Turkish nationalists of the Sanjak were pragmatic in employing an all-inclusive approach. If the propaganda were based on Turkish ethnicity or Sunni sect of Islam approximately 6,000-7,000 conservative Sunni Turks would not have left the Sanjak. On the other hand, when the percentages in the 1936 census and the 1938 registrations are compared, there seems to be an increase in the number of people who have registered as Turks. Although there may be many other factors affecting the number of voters for each community-such as migration, fear of the Turkish dominance in the region and choosing not to register- Turkish voters increased.

As for the impact of the propaganda, it is important to keep in mind the challenge of categorizing the population of the Sanjak according to ethnic or religious affiliation because in such border areas, it is common for various identities to merge in one person. Therefore, the attempt of the French Mandate regime and the League of Nations to register people under certain ethnic or religious categories was problematic from the very beginning. Registering the population based on their own declarations

proved to be more useful. It is at this point that Turkish and Arab nationalist propaganda were effective in view of the fact that only in this way was up to the inhabitants to prioritize one identity over others. Promises of the nationalist propaganda as well as the historical relations were influential on the Sanjak residents' decisions. If the Arab nationalists could convince all the Arab population to register as Arabs, rather than their religious communities, then there would be a clear dominance with nearly 100,000 population. On the other side, if Turkish nationalists only targeted the ethnic Turks, the success at the end of the registrations could have never been reached.

Kemalist nationalist propaganda insisted on the inclusion of the Alawites while remaining silent about the emigration of the conservative Sunni Turks. In a similar manner, efforts were put into place to convince various ethnic and religious communities of the Sanjak to join the new nation by promising equal treatment and a modern and secular life style. As for the registration results, these efforts seemed to have worked. Keeping in mind that there might be other reasons for various communities to register under the category of Turkish, including the usage of force and the fear of being excluded, inclusive approach of the nationalist propaganda proved to be effective. Kemalist nationalist propaganda in the Sanjak was shaped in line with the new regime's need for support for its reforms. Therefore, all those who accepted the reforms were included within the new nation; opponents, on the other hand, simply ignored.

The oral history accounts suggest that becoming Turkish citizens after the annexation was not an easy process for the residents of Hatay. Not only non-Turkish elements, but also the Turks of more conservative regions experienced segregation as

part of Turkish Republic. Thus, despite their readiness to adopt most of the Kemalist reforms, and despite the official rhetoric promising that all those who did so would become full and equal Turkish citizens; they were exposed to discrimination. The non-Turkish or the non-Muslim elements believed that the state treated them in such a manner just because they did not belong to the majority ethnically or religiously. On the other hand, the Sunni Turks claimed that their segregation was mainly due to their opposition. Some even stated that they were treated as such, because Atatürk was the main defender of the Hatay case and since he died, other politicians did not embrace this issue as much as he did. At the end of the day, residents of Hatay were not considered Turks in the true sense, and not being considered Turks in the true sense meant that they were in effect not perceived to be a real part of the Turkish nation.

Keeping the change of attitude towards the Sanjak residents in mind, it can be suggested that claims of some scholars on Kemalist nationalism being based, in practice, on Turkish ethnicity and Sunni Muslim religion inside the Turkish Republic ring true here. On the other hand, it also had a pragmatic facet, namely that when it was faced with the task of winning over a population of diverse ethnic and religious origins, as found in the Sanjak, it could point out the adoption of the modern and secular Kemalist reforms as the basis of Turkish identity, dispensing if need be the support of the Turkish Sunni Muslims.

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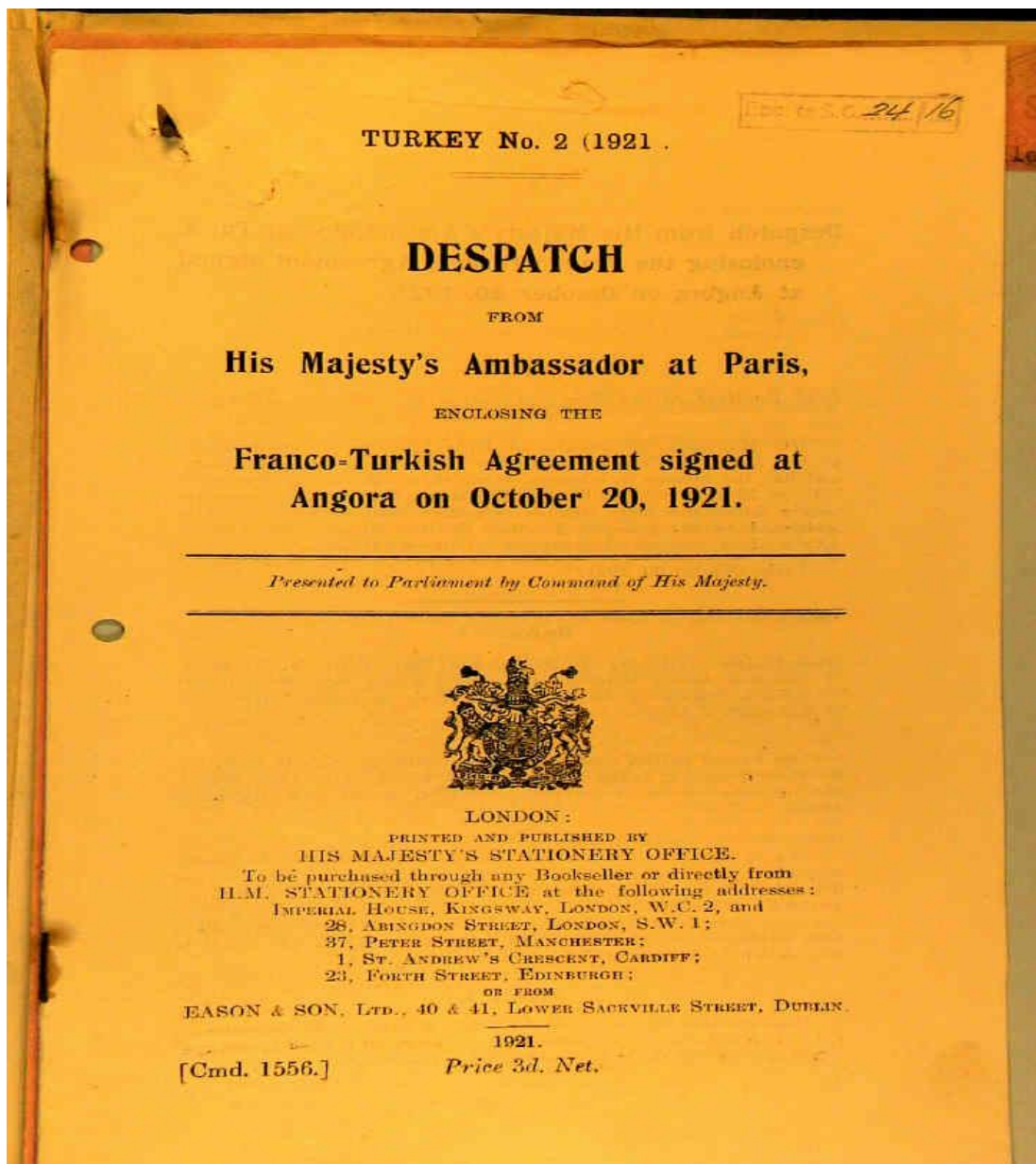
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ankara Treaty (October 20, 1921)



**Despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris,
enclosing the Franco-Turkish Agreement signed
at Angora on October 20, 1921.**

No. 1.

*Lord Hardinge to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.—(Received
November 1.)*

His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith a copy of an agreement between M. Franklin-Bouillon and the Angora Government respecting Cilicia dated the 20th October, together with copy of a letter addressed to M. Franklin-Bouillon by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Angora Government on the same date.

Paris, October 30, 1921.

Enclosure 1.

Accord signé à Angora, le 20 Octobre 1921, entre M. Franklin-Bouillon, ancien Ministre, et Youssouf Kemal Bey, Ministre des Affaires étrangères du Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée nationale d'Angora.

ARTICLE 1^{er}.

Les hautes parties contractantes déclarent que, dès la signature du présent accord, l'état de guerre cessera entre elles; les armées, les autorités civiles et les populations en seront immédiatement avisées.

ARTICLE 2.

Dès la signature du présent accord, les prisonniers de guerre respectifs ainsi que toutes les personnes françaises ou turques détenues ou emprisonnées seront remises en liberté et reconduites aux frais de la partie qui les détient dans la ville la plus proche qui sera désignée à cet effet. Le bénéfice de cet article s'étend à tous les détenus et prisonniers des deux parties, quels que soient la date et lieu de détention, d'emprisonnement ou de capture.

ARTICLE 3.

Dans un délai maximum de deux mois à partir de la signature du présent accord, les troupes turques se retireront au nord et les troupes françaises au sud de la ligne désignée à l'article 8.

ARTICLE 4.

L'évacuation et la prise de possession, qui auront lieu dans le délai prévu à l'article 3 seront effectuées selon des modalités à fixer d'un commun accord par une commission mixte nommée par les commandants militaires des deux parties.

ARTICLE 5.

Une amnistie plénière sera accordée par les deux parties contractantes dans les régions évacuées dès leur prise en possession.

ARTICLE 6.

Le Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée nationale de Turquie déclare que les droits des minorités solennellement reconnus dans le Pacte national seront confirmés par lui sur la même base que celle établie par les conversations conclues à ce sujet entre les Puissances de l'Entente, leurs adversaires et certains de leurs Alliés.

ARTICLE 7.

Un régime administratif spécial sera institué pour la région d'Alexandrette. Les habitants de race turque de cette région jouiront de toutes les facilités pour le développement de leur culture. La langue turque y aura le caractère officiel.

ARTICLE 8.

La ligne mentionnée à l'article 3 est fixée et précisée comme suit:

La ligne frontière partira d'un point à choisir sur le golfe d'Alexandrette immédiatement au sud de la localité de Payas et se dirigera sensiblement vers Meidan-Ekbes (la station du chemin de fer et la localité restant à la Syrie); de là elle s'infléchira vers le sud-est de manière à laisser à la Syrie la localité de Marsova et à la Turquie celle de Karnaba, ainsi que la ville de Killis; de là elle rejoindra la voie ferrée à la station de Tchoban-bey. Puis elle suivra la voie ferrée de Bagdad, dont la plate-forme restera sur le territoire turc jusqu'à Nousseibine; de là elle suivra la vieille route entre Nousseibine et Djéziré-ibn-Omer, où elle rejoindra le Tigre. Les localités de Nousseibine et de Djéziré-ibn-Omer ainsi que la route resteront à la Turquie; mais les deux pays auront les mêmes droits pour l'utilisation de cette route.

Les stations et gares de la section entre Tchoban-bey et Nousseibine appartiendront à la Turquie comme faisant parties de la plate-forme du chemin de fer.

Une commission composée de délégués des deux parties sera constituée, dans un délai d'un mois à partir de la signature du présent accord, pour fixer la ligne susmentionnée. Cette commission procédera aux travaux dans le même délai.

ARTICLE 9.

Le tombeau de Suleiman Chah, le grand-père du Sultan Osman, fondateur de la dynastie ottomane (tombeau connu sous le nom de Turc Mézari), situé à Djaber-Kalessi restera, avec ses

dépendances, la propriété de la Turquie, qui pourra y maintenir des gardiens et y hisser le drapeau ture.

ARTICLE 10.

Le Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée nationale de Turquie accepte le transfert de la concession de la section du Chemin de fer de Bagdad entre Bozanti et Nousseibine ainsi que des divers embranchements construits dans le vilayet d'Adana à un groupe français désigné par le Gouvernement français, avec tous les droits, privilèges et avantages attachés aux concessions, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'exploitation et le trafic.

La Turquie aura le droit de faire ses transports militaires par chemin de fer de Meidan-Ekbes à Tchoban-bey dans la région syrienne, et la Syrie aura le droit de faire ses transports militaires par chemin de fer de Tchoban-bey jusqu'à Nousseibine dans le territoire ture.

Sur cette section et ces embranchements aucun tarif différentiel ne pourra être établi en principe. Cependant, les deux Gouvernements se réservent le droit d'étudier, le cas échéant, d'un commun accord toute dérogation à cette règle qui deviendrait nécessaire.

En cas d'impossibilité d'accord, chaque partie reprendra sa liberté d'action.

ARTICLE 11.

Une commission mixte sera instituée après la ratification du présent accord en vue de conclure une convention douanière entre la Turquie et la Syrie. Les conditions ainsi que la durée de cette convention seront déterminées par cette commission. Jusqu'à la conclusion de la convention précitée les deux pays conserveront leur liberté d'action.

ARTICLE 12.

Les eaux de Kouveik seront réparties entre la ville d'Alep et la région au nord restée turque de manière à donner équitablement satisfaction aux deux parties.

La ville d'Alep pourra également faire à ses frais une prise d'eau sur l'Euphrate en territoire ture pour faire face aux besoins de la région.

ARTICLE 13.

Les habitants sédentaires ou semi-nomades ayant la jouissance de pâturages ou ayant des propriétés de l'un ou de l'autre côté de la ligne fixée à l'article 8 continueront comme par le passé à exercer leurs droits. Ils pourront pour les nécessités de leur exploitation, librement et sans payer aucun droit de douane ou de pâturage ni aucune autre taxe, transporter d'un côté à l'autre de cette ligne leur bétail avec le croit, leurs instruments, leur outillage, leurs semences et leurs produits agricoles, étant bien entendu qu'ils sont tenus de payer les droits et taxes y relatifs dans le pays où ils sont domiciliés.

Enclosure 2.

Yussouf Kemal Bey to M. Franklin-Bouillon.

Excellence,

Angora, le 20 octobre 1921.

Je me plais à espérer que l'accord conclu entre le Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée nationale de Turquie et le Gouvernement de la République française en vue de réaliser une paix définitive et durable aura pour conséquence de rétablir et de consolider les relations étroites qui ont existé dans le passé entre les deux nations, le Gouvernement de la République française s'efforçant de résoudre dans un esprit de cordiale entente toutes les questions ayant trait à l'indépendance et à la souveraineté de la Turquie.

Le Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée, désireux d'autre part de favoriser le développement des intérêts matériels entre les deux pays, me charge de vous déclarer qu'il est disposé à accorder la concession des mines de fer, de chrome et d'argent se trouvant dans la vallée du Harchite pour une durée de quatre-vingt-dix-neuf ans à un groupe français, qui devra procéder dans un délai de cinq ans à partir de la signature du présent accord à l'exploitation de cette concession par une société constituée conformément aux lois turques avec participation des capitaux tures jusqu'à concurrence de 50 pour cent.

En outre, le Gouvernement ture est prêt à examiner avec la plus grande bienveillance les autres demandes qui pourraient être formulées par des groupes français relativement à la concession de mines, voies ferrées, ports et fleuves, à condition que lesdites demandes soient conformes aux intérêts réciproques de la Turquie et de la France.

D'autre part, la Turquie désire profiter de la collaboration des professeurs spécialistes français dans ses écoles professionnelles. A cet effet, elle fera connaître plus tard l'étendue de ses besoins au Gouvernement français.

Enfin, la Turquie espère que dès la conclusion de l'accord le Gouvernement français voudra bien autoriser les capitalistes français à entrer en relations économiques et financières avec le Gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée nationale de Turquie.

Veillez agréer, &c.

(Signé) **YOUSSEUF KEMAL.**

(Translation.)

Enclosure No. 1.

Agreement signed at Angora on the 20th October, 1921, between M. Franklin-Bouillon, former Minister, and Yussuf Kemal Bey, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Angora.

ARTICLE 1.

THE high contracting parties declare that from the date of the signature of the present agreement the state of war between them shall cease; the armies, the civil authorities and the people shall be immediately informed thereof.

ARTICLE 2.

As soon as the present agreement has been signed, the respective prisoners of war and also all French and Turkish persons detained or imprisoned shall be set at liberty and conducted, at the cost of the party which detained them, to the nearest town which shall be designated for this purpose. The benefit of this article extends to all detained persons and prisoners of both parties, irrespective of the date and place of detention, of imprisonment or of capture.

ARTICLE 3.

Within a maximum period of two months from the date of the signature of the present agreement, the Turkish troops shall withdraw to the north and the French troops to the south of the line specified in article 8.

ARTICLE 4.

The evacuation and the occupation which shall take place within the period provided in article 3 shall be carried out according to a form to be decided upon by mutual agreement by a mixed commission appointed by the military commanders of the two parties.

ARTICLE 5.

A complete amnesty shall be granted by the two contracting parties in the regions evacuated as soon as they are reoccupied.

ARTICLE 6.

The Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey declares that the rights of minorities solemnly recognised in the National Covenant will be confirmed by it on the same basis as that established by the conversations on this subject between the *Entente* Powers, their enemies and certain of their Allies.

ARTICLE 7.

A special administrative régime shall be established for the district of Alexandretta. The Turkish inhabitants of this district shall enjoy every facility for their cultural development. The Turkish language shall have official recognition.

ARTICLE 8.

The line mentioned in article 3 is fixed and determined as follows:—

The frontier line shall start at a point to be selected on the Gulf of Alexandretta immediately to the south of the locality of Payas and will proceed generally towards Meidan-Ekbez (leaving the railway station and the locality to Syria); thence it will bend towards the south-east so as to leave the locality of Marsovn to Syria and that of Karnaba as well as the town of Killis to Turkey; thence it will join the railway at the station of Choban-bey. Then it will follow the Bagdad Railway, of which the track as far as Nisibin will remain on Turkish territory; thence it will follow the old road

between Nisibin and Jeziret-ibn-Omar where it will join the Tigris. The localities of Nisibin and Jeziret-ibn-Omar as well as the road will remain Turkish; but the two countries shall have the same rights to the use of this road.

The stations and sidings of the section between Choban-bey and Nisibin shall belong to Turkey as forming parts of the track of the railway.

A commission comprising delegates of the two parties will be constituted, within a period of one month from the signature of the present agreement, to determine the above-mentioned line. This commission shall begin its labours within the same period.

ARTICLE 9.

The tomb of Suleiman Shah, the grandfather of the Sultan Osman, founder of the Ottoman dynasty (the tomb known under the name of Turk Mezari), situated at Jaber-Kalesi shall remain, with its appurtenances, the property of Turkey, who may appoint guardians for it and may hoist the Turkish flag there.

ARTICLE 10.

The Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey agrees to the transfer of the concession of the section of the Bagdad Railway between Bozanti and Nisibin as well as of the several branches constructed in the vilayet of Adana to a French group nominated by the French Government, with all the rights, privileges and advantages attached to the concessions, particularly as regards working and traffic.

Turkey shall have the right to transport troops by railway from Meidan-Ekbez to Choban-bey in Syrian territory and Syria shall have the right to transport troops by railway from Choban-bey to Nisibin in Turkish territory.

In principle no differential tariff shall be levied over this section and these branches. However, should a case arise, the two Governments reserve the right to examine by mutual agreement any departure from this rule which may become necessary.

Failing agreement, each party will resume its liberty of action.

ARTICLE 11.

A mixed commission shall be constituted after the ratification of the present agreement with a view to the conclusion of a Customs Convention between Turkey and Syria. The terms and also the duration of this Convention shall be fixed by this commission. Until the conclusion of the above-mentioned Convention the two countries will preserve their liberty of action.

ARTICLE 12.

The waters of Kuweik shall be shared between the city of Aleppo and the district to the north remaining Turkish in such a way as to give equitable satisfaction to the two parties.

The city of Aleppo may also organize, at its own expense, a water-supply from the Euphrates in Turkish territory in order to meet the requirements of the district.

ARTICLE 13.

The inhabitants, whether settled or semi-nomadic, who enjoy rights of pasturage or who own property on one or other side of the line fixed in article 8 shall continue to exercise their rights as in the past. They shall be able, for this purpose, freely and without payment of any duty of customs or of pasturage or any other tax, to transport from one side to the other of the line their cattle with their young, their implements, their tools, their seeds and their agricultural produce, it being well understood that they are liable for the payment of the imposts and taxes due to the country where they are domiciled.

Enclosure No. 2.

Yussuf Kemal Bey to M. Franklin-Bouillon.

Your Excellency,

Angora, October 20, 1921.

I rejoice in the hope that the agreement concluded between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Government of the French Republic with a view to effect a definitive and durable peace will result in re-establishing and consolidating the close relations which formerly existed between the two nations, the Government of the French Republic endeavouring to settle in a spirit of cordial agreement all the questions relating to the independence and the sovereignty of Turkey.

The Government of the Grand Assembly, desirous on its part to promote the development of the material interests common to the two countries, authorises me to inform you that it is disposed to grant the concession for the iron, chrome and silver mines in the Karshut valley for a period of ninety-nine years to a French group, which, within a period of five years from the date of the signature of the present agreement, must begin to work this concession through a company constituted in accordance with Turkish law, in which Turkish capital shall participate to the extent of 50 per cent.

In addition the Turkish Government is prepared to examine with the utmost goodwill other requests for concessions for mines, railways, ports and rivers which may be put forward by French groups, on condition that these requests are in accordance with the reciprocal interests of Turkey and of France.

On the other hand, Turkey desires to benefit from the collaboration of French specialist instructors in her professional schools. To this end, she will at a later date acquaint the French Government with the extent of her requirements.

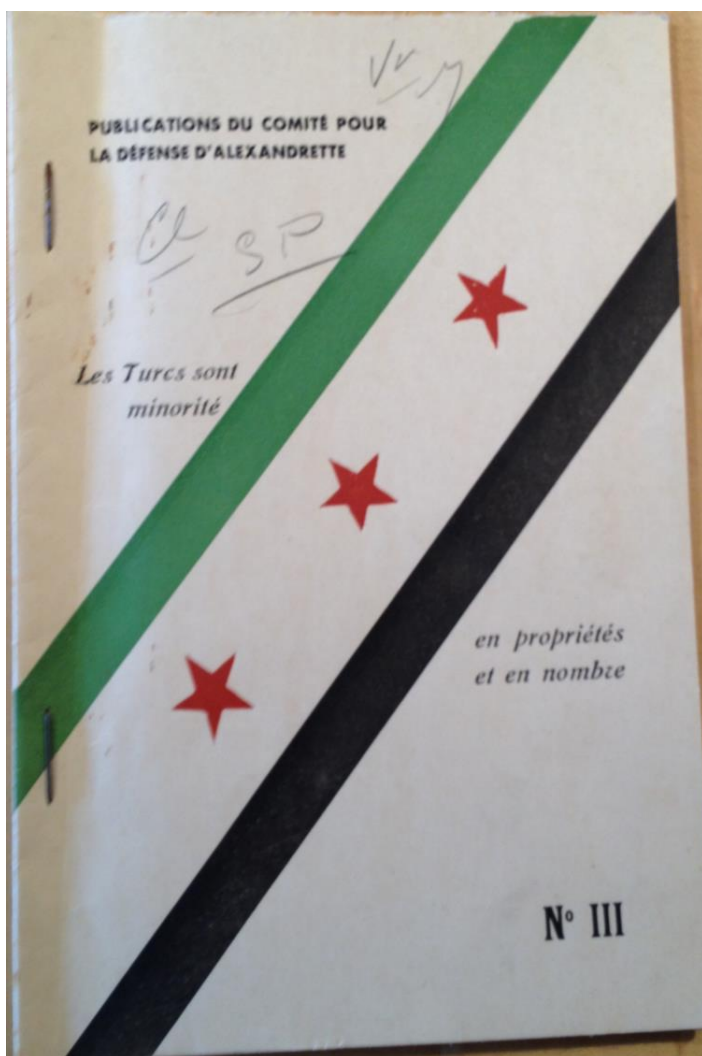
Finally, Turkey hopes that after the conclusion of the agreement the French Government will authorise French capitalists to enter into economic and financial relations with the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) YUSSUF KEMAL.

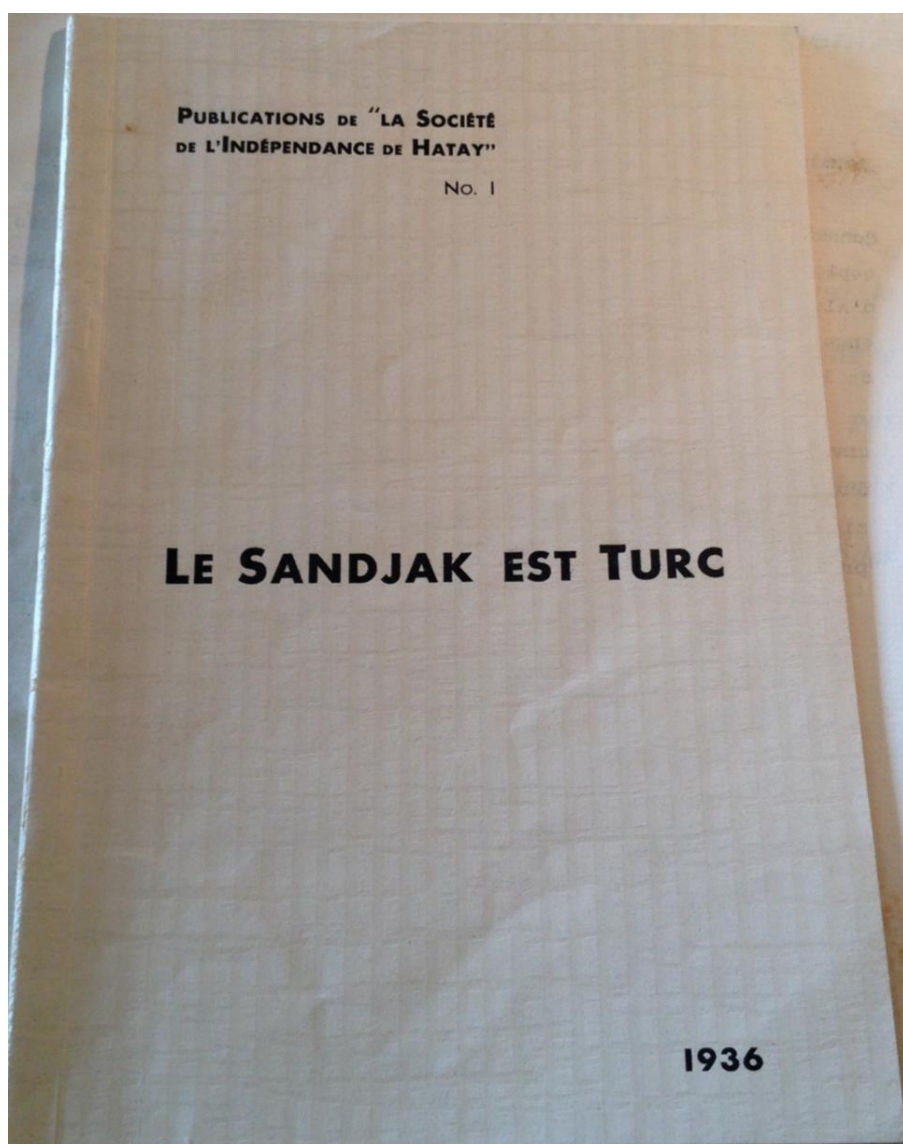
APPENDIX B: Arab Nationalist Propaganda Booklets

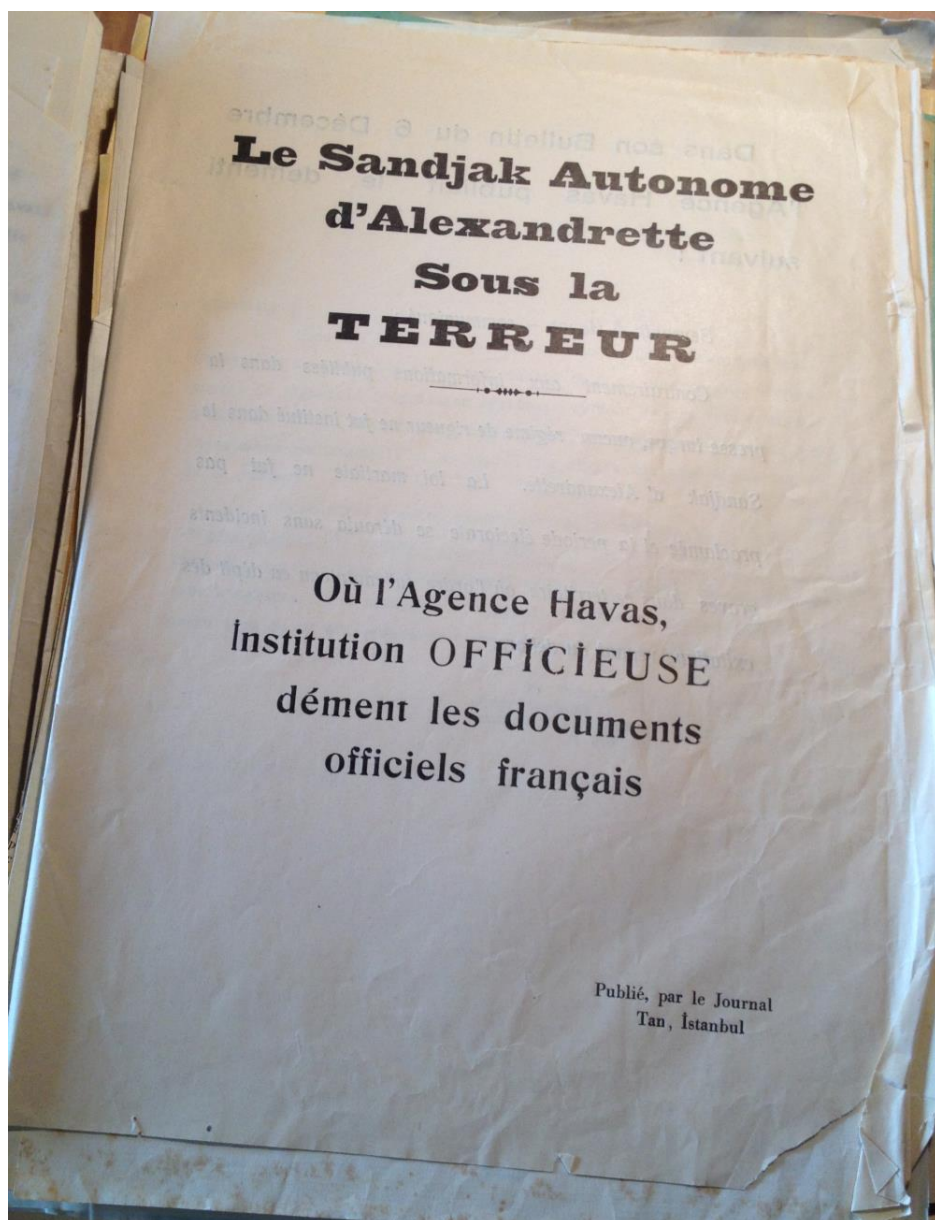




(Source: Archives Diplomatiques Center de Nantes)

APPENDIX C: Turkish Nationalist Propaganda Booklets



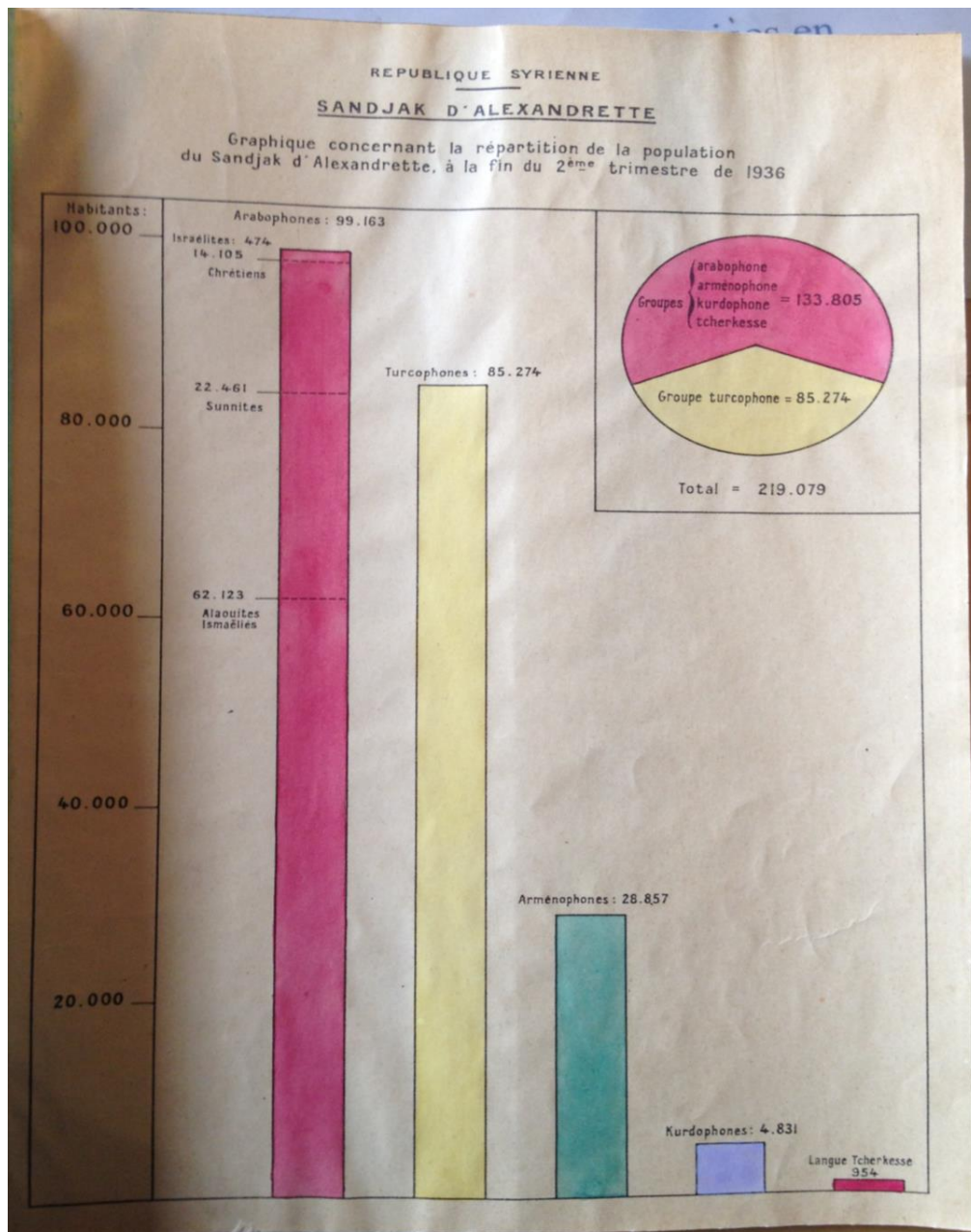


(Source: Archives Diplomatiques Center de Nantes)

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Translation au verso -

APPENDIX E: Population of the Sanjak in 1936 Divided According to Language



(Source: Archives Diplomatiques Center de Nantes)

APPENDIX F: Pan-Arabists

Zaki Al-Arsuzi in the middle, wearing a *sidara*.



(Source: Mihraç Ural personal Archive. First appeared in Sitkiye Matkap, “Reconsidering the Annexation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta Through Local Narratives.” Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2009.)

Pan-arabists march on the Antakya-Harbiye road in 1937



(Source: Pierre Bazantay (Rapport Nu. 3), *Conflic De Nationalites Au Proche-Orient*, (Le Sandjak D'Alezandrette 1934-1939).



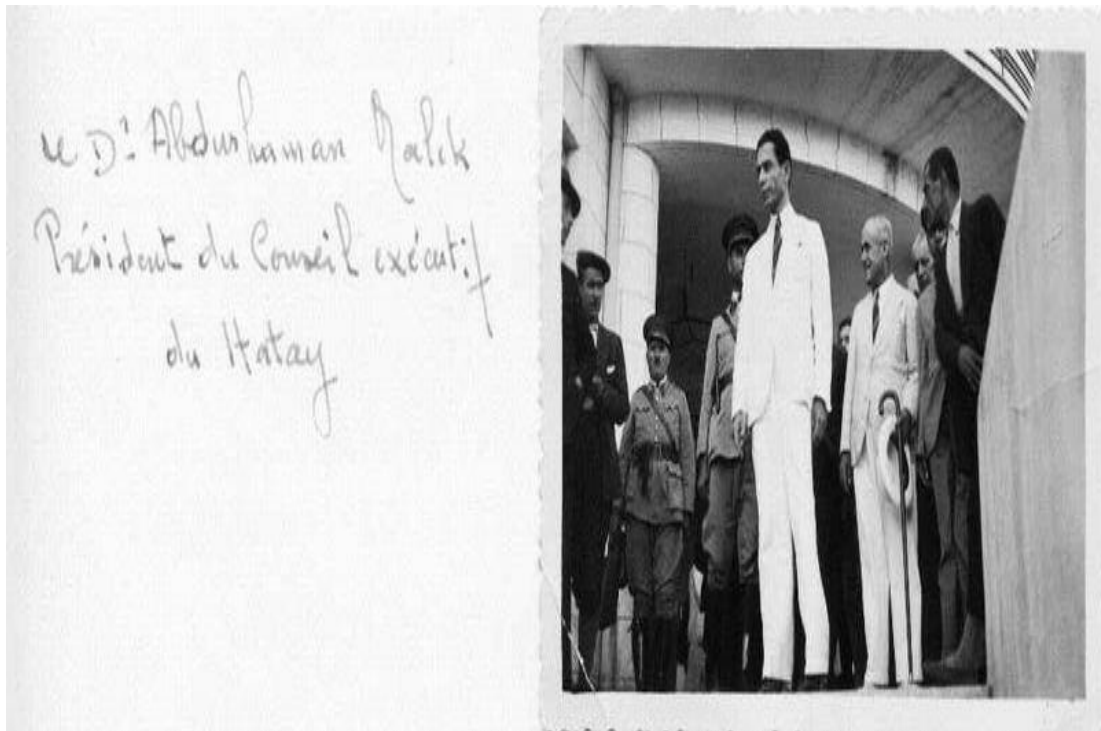
(Source: Mihraç Ural personal Archive. First appeared in Sıtkıye Matkap, "Reconsidering the Annexation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta Through Local Narratives." Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2009.)

APPENDIX G: Turkish Nationalists

Turkish nationalists march on the streets of Antakya.



(Source: Pierre Bazantay (Rapport Nu. 3), *Conflic De Nationalites Au Proche-Orient*, (Le Sandjak D'Alezandrette 1934-1939).



(Source: Pierre Bazantay (Rapport Nu. 3), *Conflit De Nationalites Au Proche-Orient, (Le Sandjak D'Alezzandrette 1934-1939)*).

APPENDIX H: The list of the 150 personas non-grata (*150likler*)

THE ENTOURAGE OF VAHIDETTIN

1. Yaver-i Has Kiraz Hamdi
2. Hademe-i Hassa Kumandanı Zeki
3. Hazine-i hassa müfettişlerinden Kayserili Şaban Ağa
4. Tütüncübaşı Şükrü
5. Serkarin Yaver
6. Yaverandan Erkan-ı Harp Miralayı Tahir
7. Seryaver Avni
8. Esbak Hazine-i Hassa Müdürü ve Defter-i Hakani Emini Refik

PEOPLE WHO SIGNED SEVRES TREATY AND WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE
KUVA-YİİNZİBATİYE (ARMY OF THE CHALIPHATE)

9. Esbak-şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri
10. Adliye nazır-ı esbakı Ali Rüşdü
11. Ziraat ve Ticaret nazır-ı esbakı Cemal
12. Bahriye nazır-ı esbakı Cakacı Hamdi
13. Maarif nazır-ı esbakı Rumbeyoğlu Fahrettin
14. Esbak Ziraat ve Ticaret nazır-ı Kızılhançerci Remzi

OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF THE SEVRES TREATY

15. Maarif nazır-ı esbakı Hadi
16. Ayan'dan Şura-yı Devlet reis-i esbakı Rıza Tevfik
17. Bern sefir-i esbakı Reşat Halis

MEMBERS OF THE KUVVA-YİİNİZİBATİYE

18. Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye Başkumandanı Süleyman Şefik
19. Yaveri süvari yüzbaşısı Bulgar namıyla maruf Tahsin
20. Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye Erkan-ı harbiye reisi miralay Ahmet Refik
21. Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye mitralyöz kumandanı ve Damat Ferit'in yaveri Tarık Mümtaz
22. Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye kumandanlarından İzmir Kolordu Kumandan-ı Sabıkı Ali Nadir
23. Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye mensubininden ve Nemrut Mustafa Divan-ı Harbinden
Kaymakam Fettan
24. Kuvay-ı-İnzibatiye mensubininden Çopur Hakkı

PEOPLE FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE AND ARMY

25. Esbak Bursa valisi Gümülcüne'li İsmail
26. Ayan'dan Konya'lı Zeynelabidin
27. Cebel-i bereket mutasarrıf-ı esbakı bulunan Fani zade Mesut
28. Hürriyet ve İtilaf fırkası lideri miralay Sadık
29. Malatya mutasarrıf-ı sabıkı Bedirhani Halil Rami
30. Esbak Manisa mutasarrıfı Girit'li Hüsnü
31. Esbak Dıvan-ı harp reisi Nemrut Mustafa
32. Uşak belediye reisi Hulusi
33. Adapazarı kaymakam-ı esbakı Hain Mustafa
34. Tekirdağ müftü-i esbakı Hafız Ahmet
35. Afyonkarahisar mutasarrıf-ı esbakı Sabit
36. Gazi Ayıntap mutasarrıflığında bulunmuş olan Celal Kadri
37. Hürriyet ve itilaf katib-i umumisi Adana'lı Zeynelabidin
38. Mülga Ayan'dan Evkaf nazır-ı esbakı Vasfî Hocat;
39. Harput vali-i esbakı Ali Galip
40. Bursa vali vekil-i esbakı Aziz Nuri
41. Sabık Bursa müftüsü Ömer Fevzi
42. İzmir kadı müşavir-i sabıkı Ahmet Asım
43. Esbak İstanbul muhafızı Natık
44. Dahiliye nazır-ı esbakı Ayan'dan Adil

45. Dahiliye nazır-ı esbakı Mehmet Ali
46. Esbak Edirne valisi ve Şehremini vekili Salim
47. Kütahya'da Yunanlılara mutasarrıflık eden Hocasah zade ibrahim
48. Adana'da valilik eden Abdurrahman
49. Karahisar-i Şarki mebusu esbakı Ömer Fevzi
50. İşkenceci namıyla maruf mülazım Adil
51. İşkenceci namıyla maruf mülazım Rıfkı
52. Esbak Kırkağaç kaymakamı Şerif
53. Esbak Çanakkale mutasarrıfı Mahmut Mahir
54. İstanbul Merkez kumandan-ı esbakı Emin
55. Kilis'de kaymakamlık eden Sadullah Sami
56. Esbak Dahiliye nezareti dava vekili ve Bolu mutasarrıfı Osman Nuri ETHEM

“THE CIRCASSIAN” AND PEOPLE, CLOSE TO HIM

57. Çerkes Edhem
58. Edhem'in biraderi Reşit
59. Edhem'in biraderi Tefvik
60. Kuşcubaşı Eşref
61. Kuşcubaşı Eşrefin biraderi Hacı Sami
62. İzmir'li sabık Akhisar kumandanı yüzbaşı Küçük Edhem
63. Düzce'li Mehmet oğlu Sami "Aço Fumpat"
64. Burhaniye'li Halil İbrahim
65. Susurluk'dan Demirköprülü Hacı Ahmet

PEOPLE WHO WERE DELEGATES OF THE CIRCASSIAN CONGRESS

66. Hendek kazasının Sünbüllü Karyesinden Bağ Osman
67. İzmit Mutasarrıf-ı Sabıkı İbrahim Hakkı
68. Brau Sait
69. Berzek Tahir
70. Adapazarı'nın Harman-tepe karyesinden Maan Şirin

71. Söke Ereğli'sinin Tekeli karyesinden Koca Ömer oğlu Hüseyin
72. Adapazarı'nın Talustanbey köyünden Bağ Kamil
73. Hamete Ahmet
74. Maan Ali
75. Kirmastı'nın Karaorman Karyesinden Harunurreşit
76. Eskişehirli Sefer Hoca
77. Bigalı Nuribey oğlu isa
78. Adapazarı'nın Şahinbey karyesinden Kazım
79. Gönen'in Tuzakçı karyesinden Lampaz Yaku
80. Gönen'in Bayramiç karyesinden Kumpat Hafız Sait
81. Gönen'in Keçe karyesinden mütekaid binbaşı Ahmet
82. İzmir'de Dava vekili Bazaduruğ Sait
83. Şam'lı Ahmet Nuri

POLICE

84. Esbak İstanbul Polis Müdürü Tahsin
85. Esbak İstanbul Polis müdür muavini Kemal
86. Emniyet-i umumiye müdür muavini Isparta'lı Kemal
87. Esbak İstanbul Polis Müdiriyeti Birinci Şube müdürü Şeref
88. Esbak İstanbul Palis Müdiriyeti Birinci Kısım başmemuru Hafız Sait
89. Sabık Arnavutköy Merkez memuru Hacı Kemal
90. Polis başmemurlarından Namık
91. Şişli komiseri Nedim
92. İzmit merkez memuru, Edirne Polis müdürü ve Yalova kaymakamı Fuat
93. Adana'da Polis müdürlüğü eden Polkeçen'li Yusuf
94. Unkapanı Merkez memur-u sabıkı Sakallı Cemil
95. Büyükdere Merkez memur-u sabıkı Mazlum
96. Sabık Beyoğlu İkinci Komiseri Fuat

JOURNALISTS

97. Serbesti gazetesi sahibi, Hürriyet ve itilaf azasından Mevlanzade Rıfat

98. Türkçe İstanbul gazetesi sahibi Sait Molla
99. İzmir'de Müsavat gazetesi sahibi ve muharrir-i sabıkı Darülhikme azasından
İzmir'li Hafız Cemal
100. Aydede gazetesi sahibi, Posta ve Telgraf Müdür-i Umumi-i esbakı Refik Halit
101. Bandırma'da Adalet gazetesi sahibi Bahriyeli Ali Sami
102. Edirne'de Te'min ve elyevm Selanik'de Hakikat gazeteleri sahibi Neyyir Mustafa
103. Eski Köylü gazetesi sermuharriri Ferit
104. Alemdar gazetesi sahibi Refii Cevat
105. Alemdar gazetesinden Pehlivan Kadri
106. Adana'da Ferda gazetesi sahibi Fanizade Ali İlmi
107. Balıkesir'de irşat gazetesi sahiplerinden Trabzonlu Ömer Fevzi
108. Halep'de Doğruyol gazetesi sahibi Hasan Şad
109. Köylü Gazetesi Sahip ve Müdürü İzmir'li Re'fet

OTHER PERSONS

110. Tarsuslu Ramilpaşazade Selami
111. Tarsuslu Kâmilpaşadaze Kemal
112. Süleymaniyeli Kürt Hakkı
113. Mustafa Sabri Hoca'nın oğlu İbrahim Sabri
114. Fabrikatör Bursalı Cemil
115. İngiliz casusu meşhur Çerkeş Ragıp
116. Fransız zabıtlığı yapan Haçinli Kazak Hasan
117. Eşkîya reisi Süngülü Çerkeş Davut
118. Binbaşı Çerkeş Bekir
119. Bursalı fabrikatör Cemil'in kayınbiraderi Necip
120. İzmir sabık Umur-u İslamiye müfettişi Ahmet Hulusi
121. Uşak'ta Madanoğlu Mustafa
122. Gönen'in Tuzakçı karyesinden Yusuf oğlu Remzi
123. Gönen'in Bayramiç karyesinden Hacı Kasım oğlu Zühtü
124. Gönen'in Balcı karyesinden Kocagöz'ün Osman oğlu Şakir

125. Gönen'in Muratlar karyesinden Koç Ahmet oğlu Koç Ali
126. Gönen'in Ayyvacık karyesinden Mehmet oğlu Aziz
127. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Balcılı Ahmet oğlu Osman
128. Susurluk'un Ayyıldızkaryesinden Molla Süleyman oğlu İzzet
129. Gönen'in Muratlar karyesinden Hüseyin oğlu Kara Kazım
130. Gönen'in Balcı karyesinden Bekir oğlu Arap Mahmut
131. Gönen'in Rüstem karyesinden Gardiyan Yusuf
132. Gönen'in Balcı karyesinden Ömer oğlu Eyüp
133. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Talustan oğlu İbrahim Çavuş
134. Gönen'in Balcı karyesinden Topallı Şerif oğlu Hüseyin
135. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Topal Ömer oğlu İdris
136. Manyas'ın Bolca Ağaç karyesinden Kurh oğlu İsmail
137. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Muhtar Hacıbey oğlu Canpolat
138. Marmara'nın Karapınar karyesinden Yusuf oğlu İshak
139. Manyas'ın Kızık karyesinden Alibey oğlu Sabit
140. Gönen'in Balcı karyesinden Deli Hasan oğlu Selim
141. Gönen'in Çerkeş mahallesinden Makineci Mehmet Oğlu Osman
142. Manyas'ın Değirmenboğazı karyesinden Kadir oğlu Kamil
143. Gönen'in Keçidere karyesinden Hüseyin oğlu Galip
144. Manyas'ın Hacı Yaküp karyesinden Çerkeş Sait oğlu Salih
145. Manyas'ın Hacı Yakup karyesinden Maktul Şevketin biraderi ismail
146. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Abdullah oğlu Deli Kasım
147. Gönen'in Çerkeş mahallesinden Hasan Onbaşı oğlu Kemal
148. Manyas'ın Değirmenboğazı karyesinden Kadir oğlu Kamil'in biraderi Kazım Efe
149. Gönen'in Kızık karyesinden Pallaç oğlu Kemal
150. Gönen'in Keçeler karyesinden Tuğ oğlu Mehmet

(Source: *Ceride-i Resmiye*, 7 Kanunsani 1340 as appereared in Şerife Özkan“Yüzellilikler and Süleyman Şefik Kemali: A Legitimacy and Security Issue.” Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2004.

APPENDIX I: The Interviewees

Interviews conducted in 2008

(The names of the interviewees are not given due to security concerns)

M.M.- From Iskenderun, Teacher, Member of a notable family of the Amik Plain.

S.D.- From Reyhanlı, Arabic speaker of Kurdish origin, farmer

A.Y.- From Antakya (Çekmece), Alawite, Director of an Alawite religious foundation

N.Es.- From Antakya (Harbiye), Alawite Sheikh

Interviews conducted in 2013

(The names of the interviewees are not given due to security concerns)

M.K.- From Ceylanlı, 40-45 years old, works as a janitor at a government school in Iskenderun, many of his relatives went to Damascus during and after the annexation of Hatay.

W.M.- From Abacılı, 45-50 years old, he was born in Damascus, owner of a small market in Damascus, escaped from the civil war in Syria, works at constructions in Hatay, many of his relatives went to Syria during the annexation process.

S.C.- From Abacılı, 50-55 years old, lived in Damascus, history teacher in Damascus, Escaped from the civil war in Syria, lived at his relatives' house at the time of the interview, his grandfather went to Syria together with Ali Kutsi.

H.K.- From Ceylanlı, 72 years old, lived in Damascus, worked as a teacher at a religious school in Damascus and was the imam of the *Muhacirin* mosque in Damascus, went to Damascus to study, escaped from the civil war in Syria, lives in Ankara with his children, his maternal uncle went to Syria during the annexation.

F.K.- From Ceylanlı, 70-75 years old, lived in Damascus, housewife, one of her sons was killed in the civil war in Syria and another one is in jail, escaped from the civil war in Syria, Lives in her relatives' house.

M.K.- From Ceylanlı, 81 years old, lived in Damascus, husband of Fadıma Köse, went to Damascus to find a job, escaped from the civil war in Syria, his uncle went to Syria during the annexation.

A.Ç.- From Hassa, 77 years old, lived in Damascus, farmer, escaped from the civil war in Syria, lives at a house he rented in Aktepe, his father went to Damascus after the annexation.

APPENDIX J: Examples from the 2008 Interviews

M.M. INTERVIEW

(Elindeki gazetelere göz gezdirip kaynak hakkında bana bilgi verirken)

M.M. Odacısından cumhurbaşkanına kadar alınan şeyler... Maaşlar.

ED Maaşlar evet.

MM Hatay Devleti reisi ayda bin lira alıyormuş. Yılda oniki bin lira alıyormuş. Ben size bunları vericem. Geri almak şartıyla ama.

ED tabi tabi. Ben kontrol ederim geri size veririm.

MM Hocam bak, ilk defa. (kendi yazdığı kitabı hediye ettikten sonra)Şimdi kitabı verdim mi ben?

ED evet evet burda.

MM 1926- 28 yılları... Bunlar hep yurt dışına kaçırılırken elime geçti. Bunlar istihbarattan geldi bana. Görev verildi. Mesela bunlar Paris'ten çıktı, o kitabın içindeki (kitabın içindeki cd yi kastediyor.)

ED evet, zaten bunlar genelde Fransız kaynakları falan.

MM Şimdi en büyük kaynak kimde biliyor musun? Benden fazla mı az mı bilmiyorum. Hani şu bir tane soytarı var Harbiyeli; gazman, Hamdi Alkan. Dedemin özel mektupları bile onda çıkıyor. Ama bunlar olmadığı için, bunlar hep bütündür.... ben Suriye'ye kaçırılmak üzereyken aldım bunları. Dokuz sene önce dört buçuk milyon lira para veriyorum. Yani beni bitirdi bu kitap maddi olarak. Ama manevi olarak çok büyük şeref duyuyorum. Maddiyat önemli değil. Şimdi bakın 14 ağustos 1938 den başlıyor bu. Pazar gününden. Türk, Arap ve Ermeni müteahhisaneleri seçilmiş... yani milletvekilleri. Burda hangi alevi camiasından kim başvurdu, kim atandı, kim Hatay devletine karşı çalıştı, kim ajanlık yaptı, kim Suriye gazetelerine beyanat verdi ... Mesela burada bir şey var ben onu okuyunca ağladım. Hani bazen bazı kişiler Atatürk'e diyorlar ya kafir diye; bir müslümana kafir demek zaten çok haramdır. Şimdi burada Atatürk'ün ölümünün, şey ulufetinin, ulufet ölüm demekmiş... ulufet değil ufulet. Beyrut'ta ... ııııı... Beyrut'ta Mısır, İran Irak ve Suriye başkonsoloslukları Atatürk'ün ölümünün 40. Günü bir şey hazırlıyorlar... mevlüt merasimi. Bütün bu devletlerden gelen islam alimleri; büyük islam alimi hocalar Kuran okuyor. Ama mevlüt merasimini en son yapan hoca bu bölgenin, yani İran'ın ,Irak'ın, Suriye'nin, Hatay'ın, Tükiye'nin ve Mısır'ın en büyük Kadiri tarikatının şeyhi geliyor. Kafir olan bir adamın, yani bir inasanın şeyi okunmaz, mevlüdü okunmaz. Hele hele; benim büyük dedem Kadirli tarikatının mensubuydu zamanında Bağdat'ta anlatırlar annemgil , çok kolay bir şey değil bu. (...)

Şimdi burdan başladık (gazetenin ilk sayfasına bakıyor), mesela Suriye başvekili Paris'e hemen hareket ediyor. Şey kurulmuş o zaman.. Ağustos, eylül....bakalım ...Türk ordusu girmiş.

ED evet, temmuzda giriyor

MM Temmuz... o yok... o zaman hiçbirşey yok. çünkü fransız ordusu yasaklamış herşeyi. Bu Hatay tekrar ve Türk harfleriyle çıkarken(gazeteden bahsediyor). Onbeş günlük tatilden sonra diyor. Bunun öncesini bulamadık. Arapça olanı var. Bunun Arapçası var. Ama 26-28 dönemi. Yaklaşık 10 yıl öncesinin. Şimdi onu geçiyoruz... bir de bu gazetenin özelliği hocam; dünya gazetesi gibi. Şimdiki ulusal basın halt yemiş. Amerika'dan var mesela Hitler'in bir beyanatı var. İnanamazsınız. Tabi ki hocam, hepsi var. Şimdi ben okuyacam. Diyo ki benim en büyük hayran olduğum kişi diyor Atatürk. Bunu açıklayan Hitler. Bunu açıklasak, beni ya mezarda ziyaret edersiniz ya hapisanede (gülüyor). Yani ben sizle ortak da çalışabilirim. Her türlü kaynağı verebilirim. Bir de bu elinizdeki film, Türkiye'de eşi benzeri yok. Hocalarınıza bunlardan bahsedin ben bunları toparlayıp vereyim.
(Gazeteden uluslararası haberlere örnekler okuyor.)

Artı Hatay devletinin resmi gazeteleri, artı hatay devletnin resmi pulları onları verebilirim size. Artı ondokuz yaşındayken şeyin... neydi adamın adı?... eski dışişleri bakanımız Vahid Halefoğlu'nun pasaportu. Artı dedemin kardeşi Abdurrahman Mursaloğlu'nun Hatay Devletinde'ki milletvekili kimlikleri.

ED ha, evet onlardan bahsediliyordu diğer kaynaklarda da.

MM Bunların hepsini birden başka bir bu konu üzerine çalışan birine verdim.

(Gazetelerden örnek haberler okumaya devam ediyor.)

Gazeteden o dönem seçilen milletvekillerinin isimlerini okuduktan sonra:

ED Ordan bulduğunuz isimler mi var, yani daha sonra görüştüğünüz?

MM şimdi biz bir şey hazırlıyoruz bir bayanla birlikte. Hatay Parlementosu'na o dönem seçilen milletvekilleri. Hepsinin tek tek isimlerini çıkardık. Hepsini sadece iki tanesi kaldı.

ED ailelerini buldunuz yani

MM hepsini

ED peki ben de görüşmek istesem görüşürler mi?

MM neden olmasın?ya burda ya da mersindedirler.çünkü ben ona emanet verdim. Bakın Hatay Meclisinin gelecek hafta içinde Gündüz sinemasında toplanması muhtemeldir diyor. Devlet kuruluyor artık. Albay Fevzi Mengüç geliyor hemen buraya. Şükrü Kanatlı'dan sonra. Bazı istihbarati çalışmalar yapıyorlar. Çünkü herkes şunu biliyor... mesela ben size şunu diyim: Kırk asırlık Türk yurdu düşman elinde esir kalamaz diye bir laf yoktur. Yanlıştır.

ED Yoktur?

MM Kesinlikle

ED Herkes öyle yazıyor.

MM Kesinlikle. Ben bile yazdım. Ama böyle bir şey yok. Kırk asırlık Türk yurdu ecnebi elinde esir kalamaz, Kırk asırlık Türk yurdu esir kalamaz. Bunların bende fotoğraflı belgeleri var. Öyle bir laf yok. Çünkü yurтта sulh cihanda sulh diyen bir insan... çünkü Arapları hiçbir zaman şeye almamış yani şey saymamış. Muhatap saymamış. Fransızlarla devamlı Atatürk... en son da Franklin Buyon'a diyor ki devletine söyle ya bu işi adam gibi çözün ya da ben çizmelerimi çıkartıp.. pardon, potinlerimi çıkartıp çizmelerimi giyip Hatay'a girecem diyor. İsmet İnönü'nün küskün gitmesinin sebebi Hatay devletidir. Hatay davasıdır. Bunu hiç kimse bilmiyor. Bunu açıklayan

rahmetli Cemal Kutaydır. Birfiil azından dinlemişim ben, canlı olarak. Birfiil Cemal Kutay İskenderun'a....; çünkü burda da belgeleri var; Hatay'a gidip geldiğini öğrendikten sonra İsmet Paşa, çok etkilemeye çalışıyor Atatürk'ü. İkinci gün veya üçüncü gün yaverine diyor ki yarın sabahleyin şeyi toplayın diyor bana... bakanlar kurulunu. En son giriyor içeriye. Buyrun beyler diyor. Paşam diyor İsmet Bey'e otur diyor. Paşam diyor sizi görevden azlettim diyor. Emredersiniz diyor, ne yapmam gerekiyor diyor. Çıkın dışarı diyor. O çıkış. Bir daha İsmet Paşa Atatürk'le görüşmüyor. Bunun davası Hatay davasıdır. İsmet Bey buranın alınmasına pek taraftar değil. Niye? İhtiyatlı İnönü deniyor ya. Atatürk'ün sağlığını da göz önüne alarak tekrar bir savaşı göze almıyor. Ama Atatürk'ün siyasi dehası çok büyük burda. Korkunç bir siyasi deha varmış. Tunceli, Dersim... Kayıt, ses kaydım yapılıyor mu?

ED Evet

MM Onu da söylüyüm; Tunceli'deki Dersim, Dersim'deki Tunceli isyanının çıkartılmasının sebebi Hataydır. Atatürk'ün manevrasını bozmak için.

ED O arada karışıklık çıkacak ki...

MM Tabi. Mehmet Nuri Dersimi, Mohses Potikliyan... Mehmet Nuri Dersimi isminde bir Kürt; ama kürt derken Türkiye'deki Türk şeyine yakışmayan bir kürt. Dış güçlerden. Şimdiki kuzey Irak gibi. Öbürü de Mohses Potikliyan adında Suriye'den, Halep şehrinde gelen bir Ermeni. Artı Belen'de bir kadın, yaşlı teyzemizle buluştum. Bir türlü gidip de elini öpme nasibim olmadı. O burada 38 senesinde Türk askerinin, Beyruttan gelen Ermani askerlerinin Fransız şeyleri, üniformaları giyerek 30 tane askerinin bizim Belen'deki senatörün zehirlenerek öldürülmesine şahit olmuş. Belgelerini ben daha gidip alamadım. Çünkü ben çok büyük bir kaza geçirdim. Bundan dolayı o bayandan da alabiliriz. (gazeteden bölümler okumaya devam ediyor. Orda gördüğü bir isim üzerine) Mesela Kamil Zilek(?) burada çok yakın bir öğretmen arkadaşımızın büyük dedesi. Şeyi söyleyim, mesela bu şeydeki ... ıııı.... Renault bayisi var, Reles, Antakya'daki. Onlar Aydın'dan konar göçer, büyük bir alevi aşiretidir. Öz mü öz Türktür. Ama onun dedesi buraya geliyor, Mahmut Selim, Hatay Devleti'nde millet vekili oluyor. Ve gene de sağolsunlar, okul yaptırarak, Hatay'daki birçok insana hizmet ederek o Türklük gururunu yaşıyorlar. Onu söyleyim. Şimdi son dakika haberi var(gazeteden okuyor). 24 Ağustos 1938 de "Tayfur Sökmen yarın sabah Hatay'ı şerefendiriyor." Dedem Atatürk'ten aldığı emir üzerine Hatay'a geliyor.

ED Onun görevi ne?

MM Boş. Boş değil pardon.

ED Antalya millet vekili miydi?

MM O sonra. O "L nin yerine K yi koyma zamanı gelecek" diye bir olay. Çok şık bir şey. O şey.. Kuvay-i milliye çete reisi. O 1921den sonra, Ankara Anlaşması'ndan sonra bir vatandaş olarak bölgesine hizmet ediyor. Herhangi bir görev yok, makam yok. Çünkü kendisine şey verildiği zaman, cumhurbaşkanlığı görevi, reddediyor. Kabul etmiyor. Ben bir diyor nahiye müdürlüğü bile yapmadım. Böyle büyük bir görevi nasıl yaparım? Kabul etmem diye de sayın paşama arz ederim diyor. Bunu söylediği kişi de Hasan Rıza Süer. Cumhurbaşkanı genel sekreteri o dönemde. Atatürk de hemen birşey gönderiyor. Diyor ki bu saatten sonra güvenilecek bir Türken aşireti çocuğu olmadığı için bu emri efendi efendi kabul edecek diyor.

(gazeteden parçalar okumaya devam ediyor.)

Bakın řu da ok nemli, İřkenderun Limanıyla Hayfa Limanını bir tutuyorlar. İřkenderun’u istemelerinin bir nedeni de bu.

ED O dnemde Suriye gazetelerinde ok byle karřı yazı ıktıėından bahsediyorlar.

MM Hepsi burda var. (gazeteden okumaya devam ediyor.)Bunu okusanız ok... Dokuz seneden beri bende daha hala yeni grdėm řeyler var. O zamanki teknikteki gazeteye bak. (gazeteden paralar okumaya devam ediyor.)

ED Zaten daha ok řey gibi bu gazeteler arasında...mesela Suriyede ıkanlar daha ok o yne řeyapıyor. Sanki daha ok yazılarla atıřılıyor.

MM Tabi. Siyasi mcadelede daha ok by soėuk savařlar esmiř. Fransızlar sz vermiřler Hatay’ı alıp size vericez diye. İřte Atatrk’n 37den itibaren “potinlerimi ıkartıp izmelerimi giyerim diye 38deki Mersin geidi, o filmde var. Greceksiniz. Giririm demesi bir kere řeyleri ok telařlandırmıř Fransızları. Tekrardan Atatrk’n, ld lecek der gibi, baktı ki canlı ve ideali hala devam ediyor o zaman diyor savařı gze alamayız Trklerle diyor. Ondan sonra ıkıyor. (gazeteyi okuyarak) mesela Tayfur Skmen’in gazetecilerle hasbihali var. Meclis aılırkenki gazete var. Kurtulan Yurt diye bir ilmi gazete ıkıyor. Kocaeli mebusu Hatay’a geliyor. Hatay meclisi bugn toplandı ve hemřerimiz Tayfur Skmen’i seti diye haber var. Sizin istedikleriniz burdan itibaren bařlıyor. Doėru mu ?

ED Evet.

MM Besim Tecer’in parlamentoda aıldıėı bir yazısı var. Dedemin, rahmetli Tayfur Skmen’in, Hatay Meclisini itham etmesiylemecliste okuduėu yazısı var, virglne kadar. Getik. Bu arada yař haddinden dolayı gbekte řimdi Mado aıldı ya kprbařında...

ED evet.

MM Adadan beride. Onun sahibi dedemi ilk Fransızlara teslim eden adamdır.

ED yle mi?

MM Tabi. Onun iin Antakyalıları ok yaktılar onlar. Adanalılar Kuseyriler. Kuseyriler kızlarına Fransız bayraėını kesip elbise yapıp yrten insanlar. Tabi Sabahattin ... falan var ya milletvekili...

ED řenkyller?

MM Yok onlar biraz daha inanlı, islami. Hatta biraz daha řey yařamıřlar. Daha deėil ok daha gzel yařamıřlar. Bakın... Ama nolorsunuz, bunları sylyorum ama bacı...

ED Tabi canım, zaten isim falan vermiycem ben, sadece yle..

MM řimdi bak mesela, dedem buna raėmen yař haddinden dolayı Mehmed Ada diye meclisi ama grevi veriyor. Onun konuřması.

ED Evet onu grdm.

MM Ondan sonra Abdulgani Trkmen’in konuřması. Getik. Hatay millet meclisinin ikinci meclisinde Atatrk’e minnet ve řkranla ilgili bir kanun vardı diyor. (tayfur skmenin cumhurbaşkanı olarak hataya geliřiyle ilgili haberi gazeteden okuyor.)Getik bacı... Kabine kuruluyor. Dedem kabineyi kuracak bařbakanı tayin ediyor ve git kabineni kur diyor. Kabine kurmak iin grevleri, gerekleri...

ED Peki řeyle alakaları nasıl, Abdurrahman Melek’le?

MM İyi deėil.

ED İyi deėil, deėil mi?

MM Hayır.

ED Neden peki? Orda Fransızlara daha yakın olduğu için mi? Biraz öyle birşeyi var galiba?

(burada kayıt yapılmamasını istiyor ve Tayfur Sökmenle Abdurrahman Melekin ilişkilerinin neden kötü olduğunu anlatıyor. Bu noktada Antakya kökenli aileler ve Türkmen olup Hatay'a yerleştirilen Mursaloğlu ailesi arasındaki çekişmelere değiniyor. Daha sonra gazeteyi inceleyerek anlatmaya devam ediyor.)

MM Devletimizin adı Hatay, merkezi Antakya'dır. İşte devlet kuruluyor. Burda Hatay anayasa kanunu var. Bayrak asma kanunu var. Bayrağın hangi saatlerde asılıp çıkartılacağı kanunu var. Esra Hanım, bundan sonra devamı şöyle: Hatay bayrağı talimatnamesi...Ne zaman ve nerde çekileceğine dair talimatname. Sizin söylediğiniz; Hayasızca iftiralar.Suriye gazetelerinin horlamaları artık tahammül edilemez bir hal aldı.

ED Evet, bundan çok bahsediyorlar.

MM (Gazeteden haberleri okumaya devam ediyor.) Dedem o zaman dış ülkelerin cumhurbaşkanlarına telgraf çekiyor ben Hatay'ın cumhurbaşkanıym diye..... Dedem af çıkartıyor. Sadece ıııı.. sadece, af buyurun, tecavüze yeltenenler, hırsızlık yapanları affetmiyor dedem. Kazayla mazayla böyle adi suçlar olmadan onları affediyor, diğerlerini affetmiyor. Bir de Fransa cumhurbaşkanından tebrik geliyor. Hatay cumhurbaşkanlığını tebrik ederiz diye. Kabul ediyolar çünkü mecburlar. (gazeteden haberler okumaya devam ediyor.) Devlet reisi Tayfur Sökmen'e ait bir makale; Asım Örs yazıyor. O zamanki kurum gazetesi. Ondan sonra zaten Cumhuriyet oluyor. Kolonel Colum; yani Türkiye'ye gelip Fransızları temsil eden kolonel. Kolonel albay demek. Kolonel Colum'un bir nutku var: "Ordular arasında antat tamdır". Anlaşma tamdır. Çünkü Suriyeyle biz sınırla ne bir anlaşma ne bir antlaşma yapmamışızdır.

ED Zaten Suriye Cumhuriyeti olarak, yani devlet olarak sonradan bağımsızlık veriliyor.

MM Tabi. Hatay içinde bir ahenkli bir inkişaf göreceksiniz diyor albay Colum. "Hatay şoförleri Halep'te çeşitli bahanelerle tehdit ve tahrik ediliyorlar." Çok yapmışlar. Ama bakmışlar ki 38den sonra yapacak birşey yok. Mesela ben bunu çok önemli bir yer var; çekmiş ve evime de asmışım, çalışma odama: Hatay'daki Türkler Türkiye'yi isteriz diye bağırıp nümayiş yapıyorlar. Hatta 13 kişi ölüyor.

ED Antakya'da?

MM Hayır canım Suriye'de. Türk bayrağı çekiyorlar. 13 kişi. Yaşasın Türkiye, yaşasın Atatürk diye bağırıyorlar. Suriye'de. Times da yazılan bir makale var. İşler çok karıştı. İngilizler anlaşma imzalamak için Fransaya gidiyor. Ortalık çok karışık onun için Hatay Cumhuriyetine bulaşamıyorlar. (haberleri okumaya devam ediyor.) "Hakkı batıla boğmayız. Başkaları hakkı batıla boğmak istiyorlar." Suriyede Ebabil gazetesinin yazdığı yazı. Çok önemli bir yazı bu. Şam'ın bazı yobazlarına çok güzel bir cevap veriyor. Ebabil muhariri Kaşki "keşke bizde Hatay gibi vefak, ittifak ve söz birliği olsaydı" diyor. Düşünebiliyor musunuz? Çok önemli bir yazı.

ED Evet. Çünkü şey diyolar, ben birkaç yerde okudum yine, Halepteki bazı Arap şeyler bile Türkiye'yi istiyorlar. Yani Türkiye'ye bağlanın daha...

MM Evet yönetimdekiler. Vatan kitlesi var...

ED Tüccarlar da dahil.

MM Kesinlikle

ED Daha çok şey gibi hani, bu tarafla işi olanlar burayı görüp artık durumu gördükten sonra galiba...

MM (haberleri okumaya devam ediyor) Mesela tarihin gizli sayfalarından bir yazı var: Emevilerin kanlı rezaletleri. Emevi halifesi Velid, estağfurullah, Kuran'ı idam etmek istemiş, Abdülmelik de haşa Kuran'ı tekmelemekten çekinmemiştir. Hatayla ilgili... Amik Ovası bataklık belasından kurtulacak.

ED Daha o zaman kurutulmamış.

MM Evet. Şimdi çok önemli size birşey okuycam. Neredeydi..? 21 Eylül 1938 Çarşamba diyor. “Bundan 50 sene sonraki insanlar. Nasıl yaşayacaklar, nasıl gezecekler, nasıl eğlenecekler? 1988 senesinde herkesin hususi taksi veya teyyaresi olacak. Vagonlar hem demir yolunda hem asfaltta gezip dolaşacak.” Bu oluyor. “Tek kişilik mini mini elektrikli otomobiller mekik dokuyacak ve gazete yerşne mini mini bir sessiz sinema kutusuyla dünyanın her tarafı takip edilecek.”

ED Televizyon.

MM “ancak diyor, tek şart alimler harp aleti bulmaktan vazgeçmeli.” (Gazeteye göz gezdirerek konuşuyor.) Türk askeriyle ilgili çok şiirler var, Tayfur Sökmen’le ilgili çok şiirler var. Mesela bu haberde de diyor, Suriyeli yöneticiler devamlı Ankara’ya gidiyor. Paris’e gidip geliyorlar. Bakın size bir şey daha okuyum. “Son affı umumiden istifade ederek çıkan mahkumlardan Kırıkhan’ın ileri gelenlerinden Ermeni vatandaş Berlos Keşişyan, büyük bir (...) ile Atatürk’e şumunet ve bağlılık telgrafını sunmuştur: Sayın Atatürk, büyük dehanızla kurduğunuz Hatay Cumhuriyetinin istediği umumi af ile bütün Hatay yeni bir risalete kavuşmuştur. Bize dünya içinde Hatay’ı, Hatay içinde de dünyaları bağışlayan Türk milletine sonsuz minnet ve şükranlarımı arz eder ve büyük surur ile mübarek ellerinizden öperim. Berlos Keşişyan” Kırıkhanlı bir Ermeni vatandaş. Hatay’da o dönemde Arap mektepleri kapatılmıyor. Çok önemli bir şey bu . Bakın bir yerde Fransız okulları var, Arap okulları var ama maarif vekilinin verdiği beyanatta kapatılmadığı söyleniyor. Kapatılmıyor hiçbir okul. Peki şeyi biliyor musunuz siz, Hamburg olayını?

ED Hayır.

MM Yahudi göçünü?

ED Hayır onu bilmiyorum.

MM 1938 yılında buraya bir vapur geliyor. Hamburg, Almanya’dan kalkan bir gemi. Cinsiyetleri, cibiliyetleri hiçbirşeyleri belli değil. Yani bie evrak adına hiçbirşeyleri yok.

ED Evet.

MM Atatürk’e telgraf çekiliyor. Diyolar ki Paşam böyle böyle. Diyor ki milliyetini falan öğrenin. Biz diyo Almanya’dan geliyoz, yahudiyiz diyolar. Atatürk de sakın ha indirmeyin diyo, geri gönderiyorlar. Şimdi indirilseydi burayı... şeye... İsrail devletinin burda kurulma çalışmaları yapılacak ve şeyin ...Amik gölünün karşılığında da Samandağı denizine bağlama projesi varmış. Yani Amik gölünü Samandağ’daki denize bağlayacaklarmış . Çıkış olsun diye. Onun için Hamburg’dan kalkacak gemi almışlar. Ve de bir tane daha Hamburg’da iki tane de Rusya’da bekleyen Yahudiler varmış.

ED Hepsi buraya gelecekti yani. Ne zaman peki bu?

MM 38. 38- 39 başları. (gazetelerden haberler okumaya devam ediyor.) iktisat ve terakki cemiyetinde Celal Akyüz’ün- Celal Akyüz Hatay cumhuriyetinde adaylığını koyup seçilemeyenlerden-. Ama müsteşarlık şeyine getirmişler. Zaten biliyorsunuz Hatay Devleti 10 ay 16 gün 8 saat sürmüştür. Celal Akyüz’ün sözleri: kurulacak olan

anonim şirket, bütün Hatay şirketlerine yardım edecektir. (Gazeteleri okumaya devam ediyor.) İlçelerin Belediye meclislerinde ve okullarında görevlilerin isimlerini okuyor. “Anavatanla aradaki bütün hudutlar kaldırıldı.” Payas’ın şeyi açılıyor.

ED Peki bu arada Ermenilerden nasıl birşey var? Göç falan, gelen giden?

MM Eeee... Ermeniler...Günümüzde mi o dönem mi?

ED O dönemde.

MM O dönem göç hiç yok. Okuyorum size bakın öğretmenleri özellikle okudum.

ED Hı hı. Peki bu Musa Dağı olayı falan bahsediyorlar, öncesinde ya da sonrasında.

MM Musa Dağı daha sonra. Kitabımda da var. Şimdi ben bir kitap yazıyorum. Adı çok enterasan: Hatay’daki Fransa 1938. Genelkurmay’a da ilettim. Yıl ver dediler. Çünkü Hatay’daki Fransa dersin sanki daha devam ediyormuş gibi. Hatay’daki Fransa 1938, hepsini, Ermeni olaylarından başlıyorum, Fransızların Adana’da, bu bölgede yaptıkları mezalimden Hatay devletine, Hatay mücadelesine... şimdi bulamadım, burda birşey vardı.... 1940-41 yılına kadar burdan hiçbir Ermeni gitmemiştir ki; bunun şeyini vermiyorlar bana ama çok kişilerden duydum, çok yetkili kişilerden duydum Atatürk emir gönderiyor kuryeyle. Sakın diyor Hatay’daki Ermenileri diyor çıkartmayın. Sakın ola ki. Bakın bugün çıkmasaydı Ermeni diasporasında, Ermeni şeyinde....eee... ne derler soykırımı, sözde soykırımı burda biz çok yakın; vatandaşlarımıza anlatırdık. Şimdi ben Halep’te birçok Ermeni ailesiyle görüşüyorum. Hep burdan gitme; Kırıkhan’dan, Soğukoluk’tan, Atık’tan gitme. Adamların hala evinde Atatürk resmi, Türk bayrağı var. Ama varlık vergisi çıkartıyor İsmet Paşa...

ED O yüzden gidiyorlar. Daha sonrasında.

MM Kesinlikle 38’de giden Ermeni beş parmağı geçmiyecek kadar az sayıda.

ED Hepsi varlık vergisiyle gidiyorlar yani. Peki bazı yerlerde şey diyorlar....

MM Tehcir yasası Hatay’da kullanılmamıştır.

ED Şey diyorlar; Fransızlar onlara birtakım vaatlerde bulundu. Birlikçiler o yüzden gitmek zorunda kaldılar.

MM Hah! Tamam. Çok doğrudur. Mesela şunu da duydum ben, yeni Yayladağı’nda bir çalışma yaptım; Fransızlar şunu söylemişler: Hatay’da hangi Ermeni, Hristiyan ya da hangi Alevi toplumundan giderse direk olarak Fransa hükümeti sizi vatandaşlığa alıcak diye vaatte bulunmuşlar. Birçoğunu da almamışlar. Giden olmuş, almamışlar.

ED Evet evet. Onu bahsediyorlardı. Ben de duydum o şekilde almadıklarını.

MM Almamışlar.

ED Hatta birinden duydum burdaki Ermeni şeylerinden; iyi ki de gitmemişiz. Onlar rezil oldular, biz inanmadık, gitmedik diyorlardı.

MM Evet. (gazetelerden haberler okumaya devam ediyor.) Bakın hocam burayı iyi dinleyin ben size hepsini okuyum. Hatay Arap ajansının verdiği malumat: “Hatay bilakayduşart Türkiye’ye verilecek ve Türkiye Suriye hudutları yeniden tahkik edilecektir.” Şam’daki Arap ajansı veriyor bunu. Burada şunu da söylüyüm; Fransayla İngiltere kendi arasında anlaşma yapıyor Hatay’ı Türkiye’ye vermek için, o zamanki cumhurbaşkanı İsmet İnönü’ye sunuluyor. İsmet İnönü de diyor ki biz Misak-ı Milli de sınırlarımızı çizdik, kimseden ne bir toprak parçası alacaz ne de verecez diyor. İstemiyor. Ama İngilizler ve Fransızlar, devamlı, mütemadiyen Hatay’ı, Arap yanını, Suriye devletini tamamiyle Türkiye veriyor. Bunu kabul ediyorlar.

ED Neden vermek istiyorlar peki?

MM Başa çıkamıyorlar çünkü hocam. Tabi. (gazeteleri okumaya devam ediyor.) Bakın Suriye meselesi. Türk Fransız anlaşması şlan edildikten sonra halledilecek Suriye meselesi. Çok önemli. Yani Suriye de diyor ki hani söz verdiniz Hatay'ı bize verecektiniz diyor. Anlaşamadık diyor, yapamadık diyor. İskenderun'a mukabil de Trablus limanı verilmeye kalkıyor. Düşünebiliyor musunuz? (haberleri okumaya devam ediyor.) Fransız komiseri Bay Pierre gelip sadece Türkiye'de birileriyle görüşüyor. Suriye'den kimseyle görüşmüyor, çünkü verdikleri sözleri tutmamışlar. Bir yerde tükürdüklerini yalıyorlar. Burda Mezhep ayrımı yaparak, Müslüman, Hristiyan ayrımı yaparak burayı alacaklarını zannediyorlar, olmuyor. Hani Hatay deniyor ya dinler şeyi, şehri işte. 1938 de onunla ilgili bir yazı var. "Hatay'ın minarelerinde sela, kiliselerinde çan sesleri ağlayıp duruyor. Papaz, imamla haham başbaşa, müşterek matem tutuyorlar" diyor. Bakın, Zahle Rum despotunun beyanatı: "Hatay'ın dünyanın en modern kanunlarına ve ebedi şerati anavatana kavuşmasını bizi tatmin edici birşeydir." Bunları Rumlar açıklıyor. Yani burada herhangi bir kaçma, korkutma yok. Fransızlar, buranın şeyi gitsin diye, burada referandum yapılsın diye bu sözü veriyorlar. Bu olmayınca, biz İskenderun'u, İskenderun sancağında yaşayan gayri müslimler olarak burada yaşamak istiyoruz. Bu toprağı biz vatan edindik, yaşamak istiyoruz diye beyanatları var. Dedemin seçtiği, zaten birçok misalde gayri müslimler seçilmiştir. Varlık vergisinden sonra da kimse kalmıyor burda. "Bayır Bucak nahiyelerinin Hatay'a ilhakına Fransa muvafakat etti mi?" ...

ED Etmemiş.

MM Keseb'in verilmesinin sebebi, yani Yayladağındaki, verilmesi nin sebebi İskenderun....aaaa...Reyhanlı'daki Cilvegözü'nü bize vermeleridir. Onun karşılığında vermişiz. Bunu da yeni duydum ben, bir hafta önce.

ED Cilvegözü ne ki? Bir köy var orda?

MM Olur mu? Cilvegözü ortadoğuya, ortaasyaya açılan tek kapı.

ED Yol için?

MM Ha ordan yol yapmışlar bize. Araplara bırakmamışlar, açmamışlar ordan kapı. Bir tek Keseb'i, orası Ermeni bölgesidir, Kesebi verin, biz de size Cilvegözü'nü verelim diye.

ED Nerden duydunuz peki bunu?

MM Komşudan. Gayri müslimlerden, aaa şeyden hristiyanlardan. Onla daha konuşcaz. Arıyor beni ara sıra. (gazeteden okumaya devam ediyor.)

ED Peki, dedenizin Atatürk'le ilişkileri çok iyi. Neden başka... hani sonuçta burda başka gruplar da var öyle çete gibi kurulup mücadele veren.. neden sizin dedenizle böyle daha çok şey var?

MM Eee tarihteki şeye bakıyorsunuz, görünüşe bakıyorsunuz. Yani o dönemde o kadar karışık bir bölge ki bura. Tarihteki soy ağacımıza, soyumuza baktıkları zaman özbeöz Türkmenlerin, Oğuzların Batur boyundan olduğumuzu... Ve dedem Atatürk'ü ilk defa 1918'de yanılmıyorsam Halep'in Baron otelinde yemek yerken karşılaşıyorlar. Kim bu beyefendi diyo. Atatürk diyo. Hemen gidiyo diyo ki ben Hataylı Tayfur Sökmen diyor, elini öpüyor. Diyo ki bizi bırakmayın Paşam diyor. Bizi gavur ellerine bırakmayın diyor. Burası özbeöz Türk yurdu diyor. Burada Oğuzların boyları, Türkmenlerin boyları var diyor.

ED O deminki Kırk asırlık türkyurdu sözünün aslı orda soruluyor, cevap veriliyor.

MM Evet evet. Tabi. Bu arada kendisi Kuvayi milliyede MAH teşkilatına, şimdiki milli istihbarat teşkilatına kaydoluyor. Kod adı Tarıktır. Eeee... Kırıkhan- Hassa yol yapımında çalışıyor. Ve burdan çıktıktan sonra, bu yol yapımının bitiminden çıktıktan sonra savaşa katılmak istiyor. Askerlik şeyine gidiyor, askerlik dairesine, diyorlar ki bitti, savaş bitti. Yani artık askere almıyorlar. Bunun üzerine Fransızlarla Suriyeden, Arapların burda bu şekilde davranmalarından dolayı dedem Kuvayı Milliye çetesini kuruyor. Ondan sonra başlıyor bu işlere. Ordan başlıyor. Yani vatan parçasını savunmak.

ED O savaş dediği 1. Dünya savaşı değil mi?

MM Evet. (elindeki fotoğrafları göstererek) Bakın Esra Hanım, ben size şuradan göstereyim; şurda benim Atatürk'ün Hatay'a, Dört Yol'a gelişi. Atatürk Dört Yol'dan aşağıya inmemiştir.

ED Ha, evet.

MM Kesinlikle.

ED Peki daha öncesinde gelmiş olduğu söyleniyor. Yayladağ taraflarından falan.

MM Üç kere. Yayladağında söylendiğine ben şey değilim. Bana gazete kupürlerini de getirdiler. Sahih değil, yani sahik dediğimiz şeyler, islamiyette deriz, yani tam kesin değil. Ama üç defa şuraya geldiği kesin. İstihbaratta falan da var. İki kere gizli gelmiştir. Bir defa da resmen gelip burda....

ED Tarihlerimizde fazla yok. Adana'ya gelişi falan var.

MM Adana'ya gelişi var hocam. Bir kere gizli geliyor. Yumurtalıktan kayıkla Adana'ya geçiyor burdan. Ama Payas'ı görmüyor. (başka bir fotoğrafı göstererek) Bakın ilk 1912'de İskenderun'a gelen İngiliz gemisi, yanlış yazmışız o zaman Alman gemisi.

ED O geri gönderilen gemi?

MM Evet hocam. İstihbarat çalışmaları yapılıyor burda. İskenderun'un stratejik konumunu yazıyor. (fotoğraflara bakarak devam ediyor) Sonra İngiliz casusu Lawrence'ın İskenderun hakkında görüşleri var. 6 madde. Fransız askerlerinin buraya gelişi ve onları bekleyen Fransızlar. Birçok Ermeni ayrılmış. İlk 1918'de.

ED O tehcir kanununun kapsamında mı?

MM Yok o tehcir pek şey olmamış. Burda Fransızlar işte burda Musa Dağıyla ilgili bir oyun yapmışlar. Aslında bir.... şimdi şey burda değil flash diskim, orda var Musa dağı olayı. Şimdi büyük olasılıkla Musa Dağı olayının filmini çeviriyorlar. Şey oynuyor, Silveater Stallone. Film yapıyorlar Amerika'da. İskenderun Sancağı ve limanının Fransızlar için önemi. (fotoğrafları göstermeye devam ediyor) Ordan başlıyoruz. Atatürk'ün ordan ayrılması, ilk kurşunun burda atılması... İskenderun sancağı üzerindeki pazarlıklarla Musul petrolünün önemi ... İlk yazdığım kitapta bunlar. İskenderun'un işgali. Bakın yine işgal kuvvetleri.(fotoğrafları açıklayarak gösteriyor.) şimdi burda İskenderun liamnının önemi ve pazarlık konusu olması var. Ondan sonra da Türk ordusu giriyor. Bir de şunu yazın: kesinlikle 5 Temmuz sabahı Şükrü Kanatlı İskenderun'a gelmemiştir. Buradaki komutan binbaşı Süleyman Dinçer.

ED Öyle mi?

MM Bir de Esra Hanım, şuraya çok dikkat eder misiniz? Bakın, yüzlere ve şapkalara. Görüyor musunuz? Bunlar Fas, Cazayir, Tunus ve Hindistan'dan gelen lejyonerler. Hiçbir zaman Fransa askerlerini kullanmamıştır burda. Onu geçtik. İşte İskenderun'a giriş başlıyor. Bu Anadolu ajansı(?), bu gazeteciler, bu.. bunlar hala duruyor bakın.

Burası 5 Temmuz caddesi, bu şey... hani demin resim var dı ya(odaya girerken duvarda asılı olan resmi kastediyor). Bakın “Kırk asırlık Türk yurdu esir olamaz”. İşte onun belgesi. Atatürk dememiştir düşman elinde esir kalamaz diye. Kırk asırlık türk yurdu esir olamaz.

ED Onu yazan...şey halk mı deyim?

MM İskenderun... a şey, Hatay halkı. Bakın insanlar, hala bisiklet çok burda. Sonra Yaşa Varol Atatürk. Bakın, Türkiye’den gelen yazı bu: Kırk asırlık Türk yurdu esir kalamaz. Görüyor musunuz?

ED Düşman eli falan yok.

MM Düşman diye bir laf yok hocam. Halk tarafından karşılama. İşte şimdi Şükrü Kanatlı giriyor.

ED Haaa, o zaman giriyor.

MM Fevzi Mengüç albay, daha rütbeli. Türk askeri giriyor. Şimdi daha iyi ispat ederiz. Burada askerler karşılıyor kendisini. Fransızlar, gidecekler artık. Bakın biraz önce bahsedilen dönem. Tabi o zaman sulu tarım yapılmadığı için... Kırıkhana burası. Görüyor musun pamukları? Susuz pamuk. Yani ben hep ispatladığımı düşünüyorum. Çünkü bunları bulduğumda ben üç sene yatamadım ya. Bakın üç ay değil ha bacı, üç sene kendime gelemedim. Görüyor musunuz, Hindistan’dan gelen askerleri? Burası Hatay.

ED Ve elbiseler Fransız usulu değil, ordan geldiği gibi.

MM Tabi hocam, nasıl gelmişse. İşte bizim Türkmenlerin girişi. Reyhanlı Türkmen akıncıları. Ey şerefın büyüklüğünün fermanı, ey kavgalar tarihinin destanı diye de yazı yazmışım ha. Bak Atatürk bunu aynen söylemiştir: Bu memleket tarihte Türktü, halde de Türktür ve ebediyyen Türk kalacaktır. Bakın Hatay Devleti’nin bayrağı. Yıldızın içi boş. Reyhanlı Arapları. Rahmetli babaannem Müjgan Mursaloğlu çiftliğinde ayran dağıtılması mola verilmesi. Höyük var ya onun orası. Bak burda net görünüyor bacı. Bu Belen’e girerken. Topboğazı. Bak ne yazıyor burda? (farklı bir şekilde yazılmış tabelayı gösteriyor)

ED (heceleyerek okuyorum) Topboğazı. Nereden buldunuz peki bunları? Hangi kaynaklardan?

MM Valla arayan mevlasını da bulur belasını da bulur. Bunlar şans eseri. Çoğu da Samandağından çıktı.

ED Öyle mi? Peki saklanıyor mu orda, yoksa şey mi?

MM Kapatalım şunu da... (kayıt yapılmasını istemiyor)

(kayıt yeniden başlıyor) Atıyorlar peçeleri. İslamiyete veya dinimize karşı değil, biz Arap değiliz diye. Bak dikkat edersen hepsinin başı atılıyor. Nereye? Öğretmenler önünde ordunun tarafına. Burası Antakya çarşı. Antakya’ya gelen zırhlılar, arabalar. Hatay cumhurbaşkanının ailesi ve Hatay Devlet bayrağı. Halalarım bunlar. Hepsi öldü. En son geçen Necla halam öldü. Bu Türk bayrağının çekilişi. Hatay’a gelen şeylerin, Türk ordusunu karşılama reisi. Hatay’ı ilk teslim eden, Fransızlar’a teslim eden Süryani Katolik cemaati namına Maksumedir.

ED Maksume Lisesi var ya.

MM Maksume Lisesi... onlar

(son olarak da elinde bulunan 1938 dönemine ait bir Cdyi gösteriyor.)

ED Teşekkürler

MM Ben teşekkür ederim. Her türlü yardıma da hazırım.

N. Es. INTERVIEW

(He did not want voice recording, because he believed that voice recording would not allow an intimate interview. The following conversation is put together from the notes taken during the interview.)

ED Aileniz ne zamandan beri Hatay'da yaşıyor? Buraya bir yerden göç etmişler mi? Bahsedilen bir göç var mı?

NEs. 250 yıldır Harbiye'de yaşıyoruz. Lazkiye'den buraya göç etmişler.

ED Aileniz uzun süreden beri Antakya'da yaşıyor. Sınırın belirlendiği 1938 dönemini ve sonrasını aile büyükleriniz size anlatır mıydı? Nasıl anlatırdı?

MEs. 38den önce hayat Aleviler için zor. Türkiye'ye ilhak edince iyi günler geliyor.

Aleviler hakkında kötü şeyler söylendi. Aleviler kötü değildir. Söylenenler doğru değildir.

Emeviler de Hz. Ali'ye sövdüler ama Ali kötü değildi. Bu onların kendi kötülüklerinden.

ED Size Nusayri deniyor. Bu ne demek ve neden dendiğini biraz anlatır mısınız?

NEs. Nusayri kelimesi Ensar'dan geliyor. Ensar çoğul bir kelime. Hicret sırasında iki grup var: muhacir ve Ensar. Yani Medine'ye gelenleri ağırlayanlara Ensar deniyor. Halife kuvveti Şam'a fethe geliyor. Şam'da zor duruma düşüyor ve Medine'den takviye kuvvet gönderiliyor. 450 kişilik bir kuvvet göndermişler. Gelen grup buralar yaşamak için daha uygunmuş deyip buraya yerleşiyor. Yani Lazkiye, Şam civarına. Nusayriler o ensarın torunları. Bundan kitabımda da bahsediyorum. Gelen bu kuvvete "Nasret" adını verdiler. Yani Zafere ulaştıran anlamında.

ED 38den sonra iyiye gidiş var dediniz, bu nasıl oluyor?

NEs. Osmanlı'nın gerileme döneminde haksızlıklar var. Allah katında zulüm yok. Mülkü o yüzden ezeli ve ebedidir. Adil olmayan devlet yıkılmaya mahkumdur. Aleviler de Osmanlı'nın son döneminde zulme uğruyor. Laiklik ve cumhuriyet Alevilere rahatlık veriyor. Eşitlik oldu. Savaşlarda biz de şehit verdik. Biz de vatan savunmasında rol aldık.

Bundan dolayı Aleviler genelde Atatürkçüdürler. Atatürk'e dinsizdir diyenler yanılıyor. Salih Münir Paşa diye bir zat var. Onun kitabı var bende. Orda okudum. Bu kişi 14 yıl Osmanlı'nın Fransız büyük elçiliğini yapıyor. Kitabında diyor ki: "Bir saat adalet bin saat ibadetten hayırlıdır." Adalet hepsinden önemli. Sen adil olmadıktan sonra, zulm ettikten sonra, kıldığın namazın ne anlamı var. Mühim olan adalet sağlayabilmek.

1938 döneminde de bizim ailemiz Türkiye'yi tercih ediyor. Şeyh Mahmud Eskiocak belediye reisi olarak Atatürk tarafından atanıyor. Hatta Atatürk o zaman Adana'ya geldiğinde bu aileye yakın din adamlarını Alevilere gönderiyor. Türkiye gelirse neler olacak diye onlara anlatıyorlar. Aleviler'i ikna etmek için onların da tanıdığı, saygı gösterdiği din adamları görevlendiriliyor Atatürk tarafından. Böylece ikna oluyorlar.

ED Suriye'de hala akrabalarınız var mı?

NEs Suriye tarafında akrabamız yok. Tanıdıklarımız var. Ben 68 yaşındayım bir kez Suriye'ye gittim o da Hicaz'a giderken. O zaman karadan gidiliyordu. Suriye üzerinden geçtik.

Akrabalardan Adana'ya gidenler var. Mersin'e gidenler var. Ama onlar da Türkiye sınırları içinde.

ED Hatay'ın Türkiye'ye bağlanması sürecinde ve sonrasında çeşitli etnik ve dini gruplardan Hatay'a gelen ya da gidenler olmuş. Bu göçler hakkında neler biliyorsunuz?sizin tanıdıklarınızdan da gelen-gidenler var mı? Alevi nüfusunda o dönemde ne gibi değişiklikler olmuş?

NEs Az kişi Suriye'ye giden de oldu. Ama bu çok az kişi yani. Birkaç kişiyi geçmez.

ED Suriye'deki Alevilerle ilişkiler nasıl?

NEs Çok yakın. Diğer Arap ülkelerinde ibadetlerde değişiklik çok ama Suriye'dekilerle daha yakın.

ED Ailede Arapça mı konuşuluyor genelde? Türkçe'yi nereden öğreniyorsunuz?

MEs Okula giden Türkçe'yi öğreniyor. Ailede Arapça konuşulurdu ama ne yazık ki artık yeni nesilde Arapça kayboluyor. Hatta aileler çocuklarına sadece Türkçe öğretmek istiyor ama bu bir kayıp. Sadece kültür olarak değil, din açısından da Arapça önemli.

Bizim inancımıza göre tefsir zamandan zamana değişmeli. Her şey ilim ve fenden önce zaten Kuran'da var. Bizde Allah, Muhammed, Ali, Ehlibeyt ve Kuran'a inanç temeldir. Herşey Kuran'a dayalı. Bizim için Kuran çok önemli.

1938 öncesinde mesela bazıları Aleviler'in kitabı yok diyorlardı. Hatta çocuklarına Kuran satmazlardı. Mesela biz Kuran kursuna gitmek istediğimizde Kuran satmazlardı. Gidince de çok dalga geçer, eziyet ederlerdi. Çocukken ben çok eziyet gördüm "alevi" diye. Kursa gittim diploma almak için ama çok eziyet gördüm. Okumayı biraz öğrenince artık bıraktım, evde babam öğretti. Ama 20 yıl sonra çocuklara Kuran öğretmek için bir diploma lazımdı. Ben de müftülüğe gittim. Dedim benim 51 yılında falan kursa kaydım var ama diplomamı alamadım. Ben şimdi Kuran okurum, tecvid de bilirim. Bana bu diplomayı verim dedim. Müftülüktekiler o zaman sana bir sınav yapalım dediler. Okuttular, okuyorum. Bir tanesi sana bir soru soracağım, beni ikna et diplomayı sana verelim dedi. "neden namaz kılmıyorsun?" diye sordu. Ben de ona bir ayet okudum. Ayette diyo ki: "Güneş, ay... Allah'a secde ediyolar" zaten bütün kainat ona secde halinde benim de camiye gidip namaz kılmam şart değil ki. Ayette diyor zaten herşey ona secde ediyor. Ben böyle deyince tamam dedi. Böyle bir ayet var doğru. Sana diplomanı vereceğim. Ve ben 71 de 20 yıl sonra aldım diplomamı. (duvarda çerçevelenip asılmış diplomayı indirip bana gösteriyor.) Namaz kılmıyorsunuz, caminiz yok diyenlere benim dediğim bu. Edeb ve terbiye çok önemli. Namazı kılıp da adalet olmadıktan sonra hiçbir şey olmaz.

ED Aleviler olarak 1938 döneminde, öncesinde ve sonrasında nelerle karşılaştınız? Neler oldu o dönemde? Hatırladığınız ya da size anlatılan başka ne gibi olaylar var? Mesela dini nedenlerden dolayı biz artık burda yaşayamayız deyip gidenler olmuş. Sizde de böyle şeyler var mı?

NEs Dediğim gibi 38 öncesi biraz zor bir dönem. Ama ondan sonra eski yazı toplatıldı falan diyorlar. Öyle bir şey olmadı. Yani bizde vardı öyle kitaplar onlar hala duruyo. Bir işte ihtilal döneminde arama falan oluyordu onda da silah arıyorlardı. Ama şimdi o yüzden Suriye'ye gitmeyi de kimse düşünmez. Şimdi bile hangisi daha rahat? Suriye mi Türkiye mi? Tamam Arapça konuşuyoruz ama şimdi bir referandum yapılırsa çok az insan dışında kimse Suriye'yi istemez. Türkiye'de refah varken neden Suriye olsun.

Başka neler oldu...Mesela Kuran almaya gittiklerinde Alevilere satmazlardı o dönemde. Sizin inancınız yok diye.

Göç edenler de oldu. Burdan oraya giden çok az insan var ama ordan buraya gelen var. Onlar da burda çok fakir. Eskiden de zaten atalarımız Suriye’den geldiğinde fakir. Malları, mülkleri yok. Murabi derler, ¼ hak alır çalıştığı bahçeden. Hepsi ağaların bahçelerinde murabi olarak köle gibi çalıştırılıyorlar. O zaman onlara çok zulm ediliyor. Ama Türkiye Cumhuriyeti gelince bunların hepsi bitiyor. Herkes eşit oluyor. Önceden mal alma hakkı da yok Alevilerin. Sonra oluyor.

Muraba olduğumuzda da çok çalıştık. Hristiyanların ve Sünni Türklerin yanında çalıştılar. Çok çalışıp para kazandılar ve zamanla çalıştıkları bahçeleri satın alıp şehir hayatına geçtiler.

ED Peki çevrenizdekiler genel olarak o dönemde nasıl bir tavır takındılar? Arap olarak Suriye’yi mi desteklediler yoksa Türkiye taraftarı mıydılar?

Nes Şimdi büyük bir grup. Tabi farklılıklar var. Suriye’yi destekleyenler de var, Türkiye’yi destekleyenler de var. Aile içinde bile farklı görüşler ortaya çıkıyor. Ama o dönemde bütün Alevilere tanıdıkları hocalar geldi. Türkiye’ye bağlanırsa nelerin beklediğini anlattılar. Camiler kapatılıyomuş, kitaplar toplatılıyomuş gibi söylentilerin doğru olmadığını, Türkiye’de durumun nasıl olduğunu anlattılar. Bizimkiler de Türkiye tarafında oy kullandı. Tabi başka kullanan da oldu. Ama genel olarak bizim atalarımız Türk tarafını destekledi.

ED Buradaki Alevilerin kültürleri, ibadetleri nasıl?

Nes Emevi döneminde Hz. Ali’ye hutbelerde, vaazlarda sövülünce Aleviler camiden uzaklaştı. Ehlibeyt’in büyükleri bu ibadetleri camide yapmak zorunda değiller dediler. Sünni din adamları eskiden Aleviler hakkında kötü konuştular ama şimdi en güvenilir en güzel yer diye hepsi etlerini Harbiye’den alıyor. Çünkü en temiz et yiyen Alevilerdir. Çok özen gösterirler kesimine.

Kötü hareketlerde bulunan ne Alevidir ne de insan. Zaten bizim inancımızın özü bu. İnsanlara adaletli, iyi davranmak.

Biz de Kuran okuyoruz, biz de tefsir yapıyoruz. Biz herşeyin Kuran’a dayandırılması gerektiğini düşünüyoruz zaten. Ama bizde farklı olarak Kuran’ın batını tefsiri var. Hani Elif Lam Mim gibi Kuran’da anlamı bilinmeyen bazı bölümler var ya biz onların anlamını biliyoruz işte. Bizim büyüklerimiz bunları biliyorlar ve bu bilgi sadece bize mahsus. Batını tefsirle bu ilme ulaştık.

Ebu Hanife var ya o mesela Cafer el Sadikun’un yanında 2 yıl ders görür. “Bu iki sene olmasaydı Ebu Hanife helak olurdu” diyor.

Bir de biz reenarnasyona inanıyoruz. Ruhların dünyaya tekrar tekrar geldiğine inanıyoruz. Mesela küçük bir çocuk ölüyor. Çocuk bir yaşında ölüyor. Dünyada bir yıl kalan çocuğa neden hesap sorulacak? Bir ruh cennete gidecek sevaba haiz olmazsa yeniden gelecek.

Alevilerin dayandıkları tek merci Kuran ve Ehlibeyttir.

ED Sizin aileniz de Antakya’nın eski ailelerinden. 1938 döneminde söz sahibi olan diğer ailelerle ilişkileri nasıl?

Nes Harbiye’de Sünni aileler vardır. Onların pek çoğu Alevi ailelerden iyi ahlak öğrendiler.

Burda toprak sahibi olan, atalarımızın topraklarında çalıştıkları, Adalı ve Kuseyri aileleri var mesela. Onlar dedelerimizle çok iyi geçinirlerdi. Topraklarında çalışan atalarımıza mallarını güvenip rahatça bırakırlardı.

Çok çeşitli insan var Antakya'da ama en uyumlu yaşayanlar Alevilerdir. Daima ortalığı yatıştırmak için çalışırız. Bu konuda gençleri toplayıp konuşmalar yapıyorum ben. Onları birlikte huzur içinde, uyum içinde yaşamaya davet ediyorum. Bunu aşılamaya çalışıyorum. Burada yapılan medeniyetler buluşması toplantılarına da katıldım(katılım belgesini duvardan indirip gösteriyor) Her toplantımızda da gençlerimize bu konuda öğütler veriyorum.