

**OTTOMAN WOMEN AND THE STATE DURING WORLD WAR I**

**by**

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**Sabanci University  
June 2014**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History  
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# OTTOMAN WOMEN AND THE STATE DURING WORLD WAR I

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This dissertation is about the ways in which Ottoman women related to the state during World War I. Focusing on printed press, petitions, and telegrams, it analyzes the discourses and practices defining women as citizens within a context of military crisis. It offers a close reading of articles on women's responsibilities during the war that appeared on the pages of periodical press, specifically women's journals. It then discusses the content of petitions and telegrams written by Ottoman women to the state between 1914 and 1918.

Ottoman women with different ethnic, religious and class identities wrote petitions to the state on financial matters, to complain about military officers, civil servants and local notables, about their relatives who were arrested and deported or those who were kept as prisoners of war in foreign lands, and finally, to apply for religious conversion or to become Ottoman subjects. All of these women identified themselves as "mothers", "wives", "sisters" or "daughters" in the petitions and the telegrams they sent to the state.

The relationship between Ottoman women and the state during WWI in terms of citizenship practices is complex and complicated. Focusing on this relationship, on the one hand, highlights the hegemonic perspectives about women and womanhood of the period. On the other hand, war circumstances reveal the already existing tensions while at the same time opening up new possibilities of relationship between women and the state. The discourses defining "ideal" citizenship for women by stressing women's duties as mothers of "the nation", point at a gap between women as "ideal" and "real" citizens.

# BİRİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI'NDA OSMANLI KADINLARI VE DEVLET

Zeynep Kutluata

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Danışman: Yusuf Hakan Erdem

Anahtar kelimeler: Birinci Dünya Savaşı, kadınlar, Osmanlı Devleti, vatandaşlık, arzuhal, annelik, dulluk

Bu tezde Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı kadınları ve devlet arasındaki ilişki biçimlerine odaklanılmaktadır. Basılı yayınlar, arzuhaller ve telegraflar üzerinden askeri kriz döneminde kadınları vatandaş olarak tanımlayan söylem ve pratikler analiz edilmektedir. Kadınların savaş dönemindeki sorumlulukları hakkında dergilerde, özellikle kadın dergilerinde, yayınlanan makalelerin yakın okuması yapılmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, 1914-1918 arasında, Osmanlı kadınları tarafından yazılan arzuhal ve telgraflar incelenmektedir.

Farklı etnik, dinsel ve sınıfsal kimliklerden kadınlar ekonomik güçlükler hakkında, ordu mensupları, memurlar ve eşrafla ilgili sıkıntılarını dile getirmek üzere, tutuklanan ve sürülen ya da savaş tutsağı olan akrabaları ile ilgili olarak, din değiştirmek ya da Osmanlı tabiiyetine geçmek için devlete arzuhaller ve telgraflar aracılığıyla başvuruda bulunmuşlardır. Bu kadınlar, devlete gönderdikleri telgraf ve arzuhallerde kendilerini “anne”, “eş”, “kızkardeş” ve “kız evlat” olarak tanımlamışlardır.

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı kadınları ve devlet arasındaki vatandaşlık ilişkisi karmaşıktır. Bu ilişkiye yoğunlaşmak, bir taraftan dönemin kadınlara ve kadınlıklara ilişkin hegemonik perspektifleri açığa çıkarmaktadır. Diğer taraftan da savaş koşulları kadınlar ve devlet arasındaki ilişkide halihazırda var olan gerilimleri görünür kılmakta ve yeni ilişki olasılıklarını gündeme getirmektedir. Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda kadınlar için “ideal” vatandaşlığı “milletin” anneleri olarak görevlerini yerine getiren kadınlar üzerinden tanımlayan söylemler, “ideal” ve “gerçek” anneler arasındaki boşluğa işaret etmektedir.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### *Abbreviations of Institutions, Books, and Documents*

<b>ATASE</b>	Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt
<b>BOA</b>	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
<b>BEO</b>	Bâb-1 Âlî Evrak Odası
<b>DH.ŞFR</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Evrakı
<b>DH.EUM</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti Belgeleri
<b>DH.EUM.ECB</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye, Ecânib Kalemî
<b>DH.EUM.MEM</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Kalem-i Umumî Müdüriyeti
<b>DH.EUM.MH</b>	Muhâsebe Kalemî Belgeleri
<b>DH.EUM.SSM</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti Seyrüsefer Kalemî
<b>DH.EUM.THR</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Tahrirat Kalemî Belgeleri
<b>DH.EUM.VRK</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti Evrak Odası Belgeleri
<b>DH.H...</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Hukuk Evrakı
<b>DH.İ.UM.</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti İdare-i Umumiye Evrakı
<b>DH.İ.UM.EK</b>	Dahiliye Nezâreti Evrakı Dosya Usulü Envanter Kataloğu
<b>DH.İD.</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti İdare Evrakı
<b>DH.KMS</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti Belgeleri
<b>DH.MB.HPS.M</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Mebânî-i Emîriye ve Hapishâneler Müdüriyeti Belgeleri
<b>DH.ŞFR</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Evrakı
<b>DH.SN.THR</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Sicill-i Nüfus İdâre-i Umumiyesi Belgeleri
<b>DH.UMVM.</b>	Dahiliye Nezareti Umur-ı Mahalliye ve Vilayat Müdürlüğü Evrakı
<b>HR.SYS.</b>	Hariciye Nezareti Siyasî Kısmı Belgeleri
<b>MF.MKT.</b>	Maarif Nezareti Mektubi Kalem

### *Abbreviations of Hicrî and Rumî Months and Days*

<b>M</b>	Muharrem
<b>S</b>	Safer
<b>Ra</b>	Rebiyyü'l-evvel
<b>R</b>	Rebiyyü'l-ahir
<b>Ca</b>	Cumade'l-ula
<b>C</b>	Cumade'l-ahir
<b>B</b>	Receb
<b>S</b>	Şa'ban
<b>N</b>	Ramazan
<b>L</b>	Şevval
<b>Za</b>	Zi'l-kade
<b>Z</b>	Zi'l-hicce

**Ka** Kanun-i evvel  
**K** Kanun-i sani  
**Ta** Teşrin-i evvel  
**T** Teşrin-i sani

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about how Ottoman women related to the state and citizenship during World War I. It focuses on the printed press, petitions, and telegrams to trace the ways in which women practiced citizenship. It also examines the responses given by the Ottoman state to petitions and telegrams sent by women under the conditions of war. It offers a close reading of articles that appeared on the pages of periodical press on women's responsibilities during the war. Besides presenting data and drawing a general picture about women's demands and complaints resulting from or reshaped by the war, this dissertation also opens up structural questions about the constitutive role of gender on the practices of citizenship in a period of crisis.

The literature on the relationship between gender, nationalism, militarism and war has been a growing field since the late 1980s.<sup>1</sup> These studies demonstrate that

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the pioneering books and articles in the field are Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994; Floya Anthias, Nira Yuval Davis, *Women-Nation-State*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990; Cynthia Enloe, *Does khaki become you?: The Militarization of Women's Lives*, London : Pandora, 1988; Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, Berkeley : University of California Press, c2000; Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*, Berkeley : University of California Press, c1993; Sylvia Walby, "Women and Nations" in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, no:1-2, vol:33, pp.81-100, 1992; Joanne Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, no:2, vol.21, 1998, pp:242-269; Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question" in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, K. Sangari and S. Vaid (eds.), Rutgers University Press New Brunswick, N.J., 1990.

nationalization, militarization and war are gendered processes. Certain policies are developed to manipulate and reconstitute femininity and masculinity in the service of nationalization, militarization and wars. The scholarly literature on World War I has been influenced by feminist studies, which aimed at not only highlighting the activities of women during WWI but also drawing attention to how gender was instrumentalized in the service of war.

The literature focusing on the relationship between women and WWI or analyzing WWI as a gendered process, mostly stress motherhood as the leading concept in understanding the mobilization of women during the war. Motherhood is also a key concept for my research to analyze the data I collected from the archives and also to analyze the discourse in the periodicals that I examine. Thus the literature on motherhood during WWI in the European context helped me to develop my analysis and arguments. Susan Grayzel's books *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*<sup>2</sup> and *Women and the First World War*<sup>3</sup> are among those works that inspired my research, especially by her analysis of motherhood as a vehicle in mobilizing women for war effort in the European context. She argues that motherhood is defined as women's primary patriotic role and the core of their national identity. Mothers give birth to soldiers and thus produce the state's most valuable commodity. Maternal body is also utilized in the public sphere as workers in the munition works. Grayzel goes further to argue that life-giving mother is the ultimate emblem of female citizenship.

Grayzel analyses motherhood, as wartime activity put in the service of the nation during WWI. Motherhood, like soldiering, was a gender-specific experience and, at least in the ideological propaganda level, endorsed to provide national and social unity. Women, as mothers, would pursue a task that they had already been doing in the private sphere, in their families, that is, they would ease the population in a period of turmoil as to prevent actual or potential upheavals. As stated by Grayzel, women were expected and promoted to perform their "historical" and "natural" role and duty of being mothers during the war. As

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<sup>2</sup> Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War*, Chapel Hill, N.C. : University of North Carolina Press, c1999.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, Harlow: Longman, 2002.

mothers, they were expected to reproduce sons to fight in the fronts and encourage them for the war effort and enforce moral values to enhance national war policies. In an article published in August 1914 in England, patriotic duty of women was defined as such: “To send them cheerfully on their way, and enter fully into their enthusiasm, while minimizing their anxieties with regard to those they are leaving behind is a sacred duty which England demands they (women) should perform with the same readiness which she asks of her sons in volunteering for the field.”<sup>4</sup> This passage sets a specific role model for a patriotic mother who should knit almost professionally the tunnel that a soldier passes through from his home to the front. At first, the patriotic mother herself would recognize that sending her son to fight is a joyful event itself and transmit this “pleasure” to her son and enjoy his eagerness. Leaving women behind would make soldiers restless; therefore another duty of patriotic mothers is to convince their sons that they are capable and strong enough not only to take care of themselves but also their son’s families, their wives and children. State and nation demanded patriotic mothers both to feel and display willingness to “contribute” to the “actual” fight in the field by emotionally surrounding the male population fighting against the enemies.

Besides her analysis of motherhood under war conditions, Grayzel’s studies are also critical in the sense that it presents data on how women joined the process of war both as supporters of war efforts and also as opponents. Women were political actors, participants of war and “ordinary” survivors of the conditions of war. Women were in the political arena as suffragettes defending women’s rights, as pacifists developing policies against war or as nationalists supporting their states. Besides political arena, they were also in the labor market, working in the factories, filling the ranks that had been emptied during the war, since men who used to fill those ranks were taken under arms. They also took part in war as ambulance drivers, as nurses or in certain cases even as soldiers.

Grayzel’s studies also highlight the ways in which war conditions and women’s inclusion into labor market raised concerns about women’s moral behavior, their alcohol consumption and illegitimate births and their remunerative war work. Increase in

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<sup>4</sup> “The Call to Arms,” *Evening Standard*, 26 August, 1914 cited in Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*, Chapel Hill, N.C. : University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

illegitimate birth rates was a critical concern for the state during WWI. Women's bodies, as "maternal body" and women's labor became the focus of states through family policies and regulations in work places. Since the states in war were in need of women's labor both in "reproduction" and "production", these two functions had to be regulated in relation to each other. Together with propaganda to draw women as mothers to the arena of world war, policies were developed in the health services and also in the financial policies.

In parallel with Grayzel, Kathleen Kennedy also focused on the role of women as mothers in the war effort and analyzed motherhood as a militarist and nationalist concept during WWI. As she states, the identity of patriotic motherhood doesn't have to be something imposed on women but also an identity that some women internalize. According to Kathleen Kennedy, the identity of patriotic motherhood was based on an idea of maternalism and had been a hegemonic identity, which many women were called into and acted according to throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In her book *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* she defines maternalism, as a set of "ideologies and discourses that exalted women's capacity to mother and applied to society as a whole, the values they attached to a role: care, nurturance and morality."<sup>5</sup> According to Kennedy, it is significant to analyze the practices and discourses of paternal motherhood in relation to other discourses –about citizenship, class relations, gender difference, and national identity, to name only a few- and in relation to a wide array of concrete social and political practices.

Similarly, Elizabeth Domansky's<sup>6</sup> study on reproductive policies in WWI in Germany shows how war conditions resulted in a process of redefining motherhood which was accompanied by an unprecedented emphasis on women's reproductive work. However this redefinition didn't change women's subordination to men according to Domansky. It rather changed the reasons of subordination. While before the war subordination of women was based on their roles in the private sphere as wives and mothers, during the war it

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<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Domansky, "Militatization and Reproduction in World War I Germany," in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870-1930*, Geoff Eley (ed.), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997, pp. 427-460.

resulted from their role as “mothers of the nation” in the home front. The mission of being the mothers of the nation brought significant restrictions to women’s reproductive freedom. According to Domansky, in order to understand these restrictions we need to observe two conditions; material and social. In terms of material conditions, the war resulted in men’s absence, women’s poverty, exhaustion, malnutrition and illness, which decreased women’s ability to give birth to and to take care of their existing children. In terms of social conditions, the political significance of women’s reproductive work increased due to war conditions and women’s bodies and their reproductive work became contested sites where medical, demographic and racial discourses clashed. As a result, both material and social conditions constrained women’s reproductive freedom.

Studies which focus on the normative constructions of gender identities during the war, such as the ideal image of womanhood; and compare them with the everyday experiences of women during the period are also critical for my research, given that on the one hand I analyze the discourse in the periodicals aimed at mobilizing women into war effort and on the other hand I attempt to catch individual stories and experiences of women through petitions. Thus, for example the work of Maureen Healy,<sup>7</sup> whose work specializes on the years of WWI in Vienna is inspiring for my research. She demonstrates that virtues attributed to feminine identity proved to be wrong in the everyday experiences of women. According to Healy, the gap between the feminine virtues promoted by the state and the everyday experiences of women resulted in a crisis of an “Austrian *Frauenidee* – an idea that women could be expected to behave in a certain way publicly and politically due to a distinctly feminine nature” which was fundamental to understand the crisis of the Austrian state.<sup>8</sup> The family was central to Austrian state’s efforts to recruit and mobilize civilians for war. However, the family metaphors were addressed to call individuals into the service of the nation. Healy gives the example of sisterhood in order to show how sisterhood instead of citizenship was utilized in order to promote women’s voluntary work during the war. The redefinition of familial roles resulted in the deterioration of the family and of the

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<sup>7</sup> Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

disentanglement of society more generally. Healy's account also shows that certain virtues were attributed to femininity and the roles women were supposed to take during the war were legitimized through them. The war was a teacher and the women were ready to learn from it due to their natural capacities such as their capacity to love. Women were defined as loving beings and their services to the whole were described as "acts of love". They "were experts in nurturing and "drying tears"; they possessed natural defenses against hate, vulgarity and greed that characterized wartime period. Women were there to heal the wounded souls and bodies of the war with their capacity for love.

Scholarly literature on WWI pays special attention to the new meanings attributed to the private sphere, which has been constructed as a "shelter" for women in "peace times." The petitions and telegrams that I collected for my research also present how private sphere threatened during the war by the absence of men, since men were either taken under arms or deported or arrested by the state. In either cases, women had reorganize the private sphere to adopt war conditions. Mindy Jane Roseman's article "The Great War and Modern Motherhood: La Maternité and the Bombing of Paris" was critical for my research in analyzing the transformation of the private sphere during the war. She underlines the transformation in the nature of home during the war. The privacy of home was deeply challenged in the absence of "the man of the house." The absence of man for Roseman referred to the displacement and dislocation of activities of caring, nurturance and reproduction which were previously associated with home. Roseman summarizes these conditions as follows: "the idea of home became unimaginably threatened and weakened, which led to the dislocation and displacement of caring, affective relations on to other institutions at best, or into fantasies and anxieties at worst."<sup>9</sup>

The literature on the Ottoman Empire during WWI focusing on home front, mobilization of the population and propaganda is a growing field.<sup>10</sup> However there is a

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<sup>9</sup> Mindy Jane Roseman, "The Great War and Modern Motherhood: La Maternité and the Bombing of Paris," in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, Nicole Ann Dombrowski (ed.), New York: Garland, 1999, pp. 41-50.

<sup>10</sup> Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War*, Brill, 2012; Yiğit Akin, *The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society, and Culture*, unpublished dissertation, Ohio State University, 2012; Erol Köroğlu,

lacuna in the scholarship on women's experiences during the war and the policies implemented by the Ottoman State on the basis of gender lines. Compared to the literature on women's experiences of WWI in European historiography, women's experiences of WWI in the Ottoman Empire are quite limited and often remain as side notes to the larger discussion on women's movement in the Ottoman Empire. In Serpil Çakır's book *Osmanlı'da Kadın Hareketi*,<sup>11</sup> for instance, although there is not a specific focus on WWI, the author gives information about the perspective of the women's rights activists on the issue of war in general and how they reacted to WWI both in terms of activism and in terms of political perspective.

In the biographical works on the prominent Ottoman Muslim women activists such as Halide Edip Adıvar or Nezihe Muhittin, although limited, it is possible to trace information about their war time activities. In Ayşegül Baykan's and Belma Ötüş-Baskett's *Nezihe Muhittin ve Türk Kadını 1931*, Nezihe Muhiddin's activities during WWI is mentioned in the introduction chapter, which stresses that all women were active agents during WWI and the War of Independence by working not only in the lands as peasants but also in the front together with men. Yaprak Zihnioğlu's book *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*<sup>12</sup> includes a section on the "Great War and Women's Revolution" (*Büyük Savaş (Harb-i Umumi) ve Kadın İnkılabı*), where the author evaluates the rise in women's employment during the war by providing examples of

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*Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı, 1914-1918: Propagandadan Milli Kimlik İnşasına*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları. 1994. Also see: Serpil Çakır, "Osmanlı Kadın Dernekleri," *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 53, Spring, 1991, pp.139-159; Serpil Çakır, "Kadın Örgütleri: Osmanlı Dönemi," *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. IV, İstanbul: Türkiye Toplumsal ve Ekonomik Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994, pp.354-355.

<sup>12</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003.

women's rights activists's attitude towards women's participation in the public and political life during the war.<sup>13</sup>

In Ayşe Durakbaşa's book *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*<sup>14</sup> it is also possible to find about Halide Edip's political activism and intellectual work during WWI. *Memoirs of Halide Edip*<sup>15</sup> with an introduction by Hülya Adak, on the other hand, is one of the significant sources of WWI as a memoir by a prominent woman political activist of the period.

Şefika Kurnaz's<sup>16</sup> book *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını* (Turkish Woman before the Republican Era) also covers the period between 1839 and 1923 and present limited data about women during WWI.

In Mithat Kutlar's book *Nuriye Ulviye Mevlan ve Kadınlar Dünyası'nda Kürtler*,<sup>17</sup> there is limited information about the ideas of Ulviye Mevlan, as a Kurdish woman on WWI about the financial policies of the Ottoman state and philanthropic activities conducted by women during the war.

*Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Feminist Ermeni Yazar* edited by Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal,<sup>18</sup> focuses on five prominent Armenian women writers among whom three of them, namely, Zabel Asadur, Zabel Yesayan and Hayganuş Mark were politically active during WWI. Their writings and personal experiences present

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<sup>13</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Feminizm," in *Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekin (eds), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 348-362.

<sup>14</sup> Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, Piscataway, NJ : Gorgias Press, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını*, İstanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Mithat Kutlar, *Nuriye Ulviye Mevlan ve Kadınlar Dünyası'nda Kürtler*, İstanbul: Avesta, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal, *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Feminist Ermeni Yazar*, İstanbul: Aras Yayınları, 2006.

data and perspective not only on Armenian women and community during WWI, but also about the political and social context of the Ottoman society in general.

Besides these studies which present some data about Ottoman women during WWI there are also studies focusing specifically on women and gender relations during WWI in the Ottoman context. Yavuz Selim Karakışla's work on *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women, 1916-1923*,<sup>19</sup> is a study specifically about women and WWI<sup>20</sup>. Karakışla focuses on women's joining the work force during the war, with reference to the case of Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women. His research reveals the policies developed by the Ottoman State not only to utilize women's labor in the service of war effort, but also to control and regulate women's lives who were left on their own when male members of their family either went to the front or died. As Karakışla argues, the main concern of the Ottoman State was to create job facilities for Muslim women so that they would cope with poverty and thus would not be inclined to become prostitutes.<sup>21</sup>

Nicole van Os' works especially on Muslim Ottoman women's philanthropic activities also sheds light on women's activism of middle and upper class women during WWI.<sup>22</sup> Besides philanthropic activities led by women, her study presents quite rich data on how the homefront was organized and politicized through women during the war.

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<sup>19</sup> Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women, 1916-1923*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Research Center, 2005. Also see: Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti: Kadın Askerler ve Milli Aile", *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol.IX, no.51, March 1988, pp.34-38.

<sup>20</sup> Although quite limited, researches on women during WWI are increasing in number. For example see: İkbâl Elif Mahir Metinsoy, *Poor Ottoman Turkish Women during World War I: Women's Experiences and Politics in Everyday Life, 1914-1923*, unpublished dissertation, Atatürk Institute, Boğaziçi University, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Duben and Behar also describe the familial structure of the Ottoman society during and after war and how high inflation and decrease in incomes affected families and women. Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility, 1880-1940*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Nicole van Os. *Feminism, Philanthropy, and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University, 2013.

Ottoman women's activities in the labor battalions have also been a subject of research<sup>23</sup>. The emphasis of these works is that during WWI women were "allowed to", "invited to" or "promoted to" do the jobs that were by definition in men's field. Women's being in the army, even if they were not taken under arms but work in the labor battalions, is considered as an exception made possible by war conditions.

My dissertation contributes to the historiography on WWI in the Ottoman Empire by analyzing the hegemonic discourses about womanhood during the war with specific reference to the discourses supported by or produced by women's rights activists and by focusing on the relationship between the state and women through the petitions written by women. The relationship between the Ottoman state and women during the war highlights, on the one hand, how the policies of the state affected women as Ottoman citizens during the war and on the other hand, how women reacted to these policies as citizens.

I argue that the Ottoman state recognized women and positioned them within certain categories. In return, women utilized those categories within which they were classified by the state in order to voice out their demands, problems, and complaints. I, consequently, contend that gender became instrumental for the state as a tool of governance and regulation within the context of war.

My approach to gender as an analytical category is informed by Joan W. Scott's definition. According to Joan W. Scott, the task of the historian is to explore the particular contexts within which gender roles were determined, the effects that emerged out of these determinations and the roles that were excluded by them. Rather than taking gender roles as biological and constant, this dissertation simultaneously attempts to historicize citizenship, gender and gendered citizenship.<sup>24</sup>

In the complex and conflicting relationship between gender and the state, motherhood and the "category of mother" is definitive with regard to the way women

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<sup>23</sup> Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Amele Taburları*, İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Enver Paşa'nın Kurduđu Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu: Osmanlı Ordusu'nda Kadın Askerler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol.XI, no. 66, June 1999, pp.15-24.

<sup>24</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender as A useful category of historical analysis," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 5, 1986, pp. 1067-1068.

communicate with the state. Especially, during the war, women raised their demands and complaints as “mothers” and in return, the state took these demands and complaints into consideration by positioning them *vis a vis* the category of motherhood. I argue that in its attempt to categorize women, the state situated the motherhood at the center, as the main point of reference and evaluated and classified other experiences of womanhood in relation to it. At instances that various experiences of women differed from those of mothers, or did not easily fit into the category of idealized national motherhood, the state and the authorities seem to define these womanhood experiences as deviations.

My main primary sources in this dissertation are documents, which are preserved at the Ottoman State archives, the periodicals that are published immediately before and during the war period and literary works of the period. The former one includes petitions and telegrams that women wrote to the state during the war, papers that documented information collected by the state pertaining to women, and their evaluation by the state officers.

Petitions and telegrams written by women are critical sources for a research focusing on women in a period of crisis, in this case during the WWI. First of all, petitions allow the researcher to “hear” the voices of women from different ethnic, religious and class backgrounds. Given that written material about women and by women are quite limited, and more than that they were mostly produced by or about upper class or upper-middle class women, still, petitions are rich documents reflecting the demands, complaints and requests of women with different identities. Despite the fact that, in the Ottoman context petitions are physically written by *arzuhalcis* (petitions) in an official pattern, they still carry individual and unique stories of women written from a personal perspective. Secondly, petition writing is one of the common and widely used practice of citizenship. Thus, examining petitions also opens up paths to analyze the practices of women during the war as citizens. Such an analysis would not only highlight women’s demands and complaints as they were, more than that, would draw attention to the responses given by the Ottoman state to those demands which would at least give clues about the gendered (and also ethnicized) policies followed by the state

In this dissertation, besides archival documents, journals published right before or during the war are important primary sources. Among these journals, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, as

a feminist journal published between 1913 and 1921, constitutes the main source of research. It was published by women and the articles and literary works published in it were also written by women. This policy of the journal differentiates *Kadınlar Dünyası* from other women's journals published before or after it. Furthermore, there are also articles and literary work sent by the readers to be published in journal. Although there are different voices with various political perspectives/positions among the writers, the dominant political perspective is colored by Turkish nationalism. There are apparent discussions between Ottomanists and Turkish nationalists in the journal, however the number of Ottomanists is quite limited compared to that of Turkish nationalists. Accordingly, it is possible to argue that the journal follows a feminist political line within a nationalist perspective. *Kadınlar Dünyası* presents rich data on how women's rights activists of the period ideologically legitimized their activism from within a nationalist discourse right before WWI. The journal was not published during the war since most of its publishers dedicated themselves to wartime activities. It continued to be published right after the war.

*Türk Kadını* and *Türk Yurdu* are other journals I refer to in my discussion. I often contrast the arguments raised in these journals with those of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. *Türk Kadını* is a women's journal published between 1918 and 1919. Unlike *Kadınlar Dünyası*, men are "allowed to" publish their work in this journal. Turkish nationalist perspective is more apparent in *Türk Kadını*, not only with reference to its title but also in relation to its content. The journal promotes women's rights as long as those rights go hand in hand with norms of public morality and those of family life, and promotes Turkish nationalism.

*Türk Yurdu* is another journal I use as a primary source in this dissertation. This journal reflects discussions among prominent Turkish nationalists of the period. The journal includes articles and literary work on the relationship between war and women. I focus on the issues covering the war years, where I trace the discussions on how to utilize women's labor during the war and the role Turkish women should play in the development of Turkish nationalism.

The main reason of analyzing the discourse in the above-mentioned journals is to understand the hegemonic ideological discourse(s) about women during WWI and to analyze the connection between these discourse(s) in the petitions and telegrams written by

women to the state, as well as the responses given by the state. The connection in question highlights the motives and reasons of the state in its responses to the complaints and demands of women during the war. Consequently, it also points out the gaps between the demands and complaints of women and the responses given by the state officers.

Documents in the state's archives suggest that in general, women as legitimate subjects/citizens appear as mothers, sisters, daughters, that is, as a member of a family in their relation with the state institutions. During the war, on the other hand, women mostly raised their demands and complaints as "mothers." The ideology of motherhood is also promoted in the journals and literary work published during the war.

The first chapter of the dissertation focuses on how motherhood is instrumentalized in a way to mobilize women during the war to serve the nation and the country. In the first part of the chapter theoretical debates on the relationship between motherhood, nationalism and militarism is presented together with cases in European historiography on the mobilization of women as mothers during WWI. In the second part of the chapter, journals and literary works are focused on in order to analyze how mothers and motherhood are represented and promoted in these works within the language of women's rights activism and the nationalist perspective that dominated the war period.

In the second chapter, petitions written by women during WWI are focused on as manifestations of women's practices of citizenship. Women with different ethnic, religious and class identities wrote petitions to the Ottoman State with various demands, requests and complaints. Some of these demands and complaints were created by war conditions and some of them were reshaped under war conditions. Despite the differences in the identities of women writing petitions and the differences in the issues raised, all of the petitions were signed by women using their familial titles such as mothers, sisters or daughter. Among these titles, widely used one was the title of mother and the position used to legitimize the demand, request and complaint in the petition was motherhood.

In the third chapter, I focus on the experience of motherhood especially of women who were related to soldiers. During the war, women wrote petitions and sent telegrams to the state stating their complaints, mostly on poverty and hunger, as the representatives of soldiers' families. Most of these women are Muslim peasant women, however there are also petitions and telegrams written by non-Muslim women, specifically Armenian women,

who wrote petitions and telegrams to the state institutions as soldiers' families. Similar to the petitions written by women in general, most of women who represented soldiers' families also presented themselves as mothers, whose children or husbands were drafted in the army. The latter group was left alone with their children in the absence of their husbands. I examine the petitions and telegrams of women representing soldiers' families in relation to the discourses in the journals and literary work of the period on peasant women in general.

In these three chapters, by focusing on how motherhood was utilized and promoted in the ideological terrain and how the relationship between women and the state (in the practice of petitioning) was established and reestablished through the familial ties of women, I aim to trace and define the position for women as citizens under the conditions of war. In the last chapter on the other hand, I raise the case of widows and analyzed the relation between the state and women who were not defined as mothers or wives. In order to study this change, together with the state documents, I consulted to journals and literary work presenting the discourse on widowed women during the war. Both in the literary work and in the state archives, widowhood appeared as an uncanny position in contrast to motherhood which was promoted as the identity of ideal national(ist) woman. The gap between widowhood and motherhood referred to the gap between "ideal identity" for women and the deviations from the ideal.

## CHAPTER 1:

### RETHINKING FEMALE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH THE IDENTITY OF MOTHERHOOD

#### 1.1. Introduction

Go... Go, without a second thought... Go like your father... Go like your brother... (...) crash, break, burn, kill, destroy everything that is alive and has been built, established, erected lately. So that they can smell the first blood their mothers dropped. -If- anyone asks you what is it that you are doing? Do not ever hesitate my child and reply... I am looking for the bones of my father and my brother which have not decayed yet and taking the revenge of my sisters, go!

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As it is discussed in detail in the *Introduction* chapter, this dissertation focuses on the interaction between the state and the women during World War I in the Ottoman Empire. The thesis attempts achieve two goals simultaneously; on the one hand, it uncovers the categories and the ways the state used to relate to the Ottoman women during the war period, on the other hand it analyzes the ways women expressed or tried to express their demands, troubles and complaints through these categories. By doing this, the thesis

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<sup>25</sup> “Git... Git, hem nasıl git? Baban gibi... Kardeşin gibi git..... bu yerlere, sonradan yapılan, kurulan, dikilen, yaşayan ne varsa ez, kır, yak, öldür, yaşatma. Ta ki analarının ilk damlattıkları kanın kokusunu duyabilesin. -Belki- sana yaptığın bu nedir? diye soranlara hiç durma evlâdım, söyle.. Babamın, kardeşimin henüz çürümeyen kemiklerini arıyor ve hemşirelerimin intikamını alıyorum de, git!”

“Anne Ben de Gidiyorum” by Fehamet Handan from Şehzadebaşı, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no: 22, 25 Nisan 1329 (May 8, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 234.

questions the ways the state utilizes gendered categories in the processes of government and regulation during the war period and how the women face the state with positions and demands which were both shaped by these categories or which subvert or at least, challenge the homogeneity of these categories. This chapter focuses on motherhood among these categories, which appeared to be critical factor in determining the complex and conflictual relation between the state and the women.

Ottoman Empire faced structural changes starting with *Tanzimat*, which continued in the rest of the nineteenth century and also in the twentieth century. Such changes were also reflected in the policies affecting women's lives. Adjustments in education as to include women<sup>26</sup>, adjustments in the rules regulating marriage<sup>27</sup> were some of such policies brought tremendous change at least for a certain group of women. Especially the changes in the field of education opened path for the development of (Muslim) women's movement whose members would be graduates of those schools. By the end of the nineteenth century Ottoman Muslim women would join the public political sphere to develop women's rights.<sup>28</sup>

It was in this ideological situation that the voices of women themselves begun to be heard in newspapers and journals of the period. Starting with the *Muhadderat* in 1868, the supplement of the *Terakki* newspaper, these publications include *Şükûfezar* (1886), *Aile* (1880), *Ayine* (1875), *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (1895), *Demet* (1908), *Mehasin* (1908), *Kadın* (1908), *Kadınlık* (1914), *Hanımlar Alemi* (1914), *Kadınlar Dünyası* (1914), *İnci*

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<sup>26</sup> Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908 : Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline*, Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2001; Mehmet Ö Alkan, "Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism," in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), Leiden [Netherlands]; Boston: Brill, 2000; Ekrem Işın, "Tanzimat, Kadın ve Gündelik Hayat," *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol.9, no.51, March 1988, pp. 22-27; Şefika Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, İstanbul: M.E.B. Yayınları, 1996.

<sup>27</sup> Mehmet Ö. Alkan. "Tanzimattan Sonra Kadın'ın Hukuksal Statüsü ve Devletin Evlilik Sürecine Müdahalesi Üzerine," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 50, Summer 1990, pp.85-95.

<sup>28</sup> Writings of Serpil Çakır on the women's movement during the Ottoman period or the working of Ayşegül Baykan and Belma Ötüş on Nezihe Muhittin highlights the positioning of women during the late Ottoman and Early Republican Period, with respect to their demands to be citizens like men.

(1919), *Süs* (1923). Most of these journals were owned and published by men. Some of them had male owners but were actually published by women, and a few were owned by women and had only women writers. Some of these journals were reflecting Westernized lifestyle and they focused on issues like child care, family and society, housework and health. Their attempt was to educate women on issues which would serve society. Another group of publications, rather than focusing on the “modernization” of the traditional roles of women, focused on the problems and demands of the women.

As Aynur Demirdirek mentions<sup>29</sup>, these journals demonstrates that, women had begun their struggles for their legal rights after the initiation of modernization process of the empire, for being equal citizens with men, tried to expand their social life and space and organized to achieve their goals. These women were generally educated women from major cities such as İstanbul, Selanik, and İzmir. They were either graduates of the new schools for girls or were educated at home by private tutors. Graduates of the Teachers Training Schools for Girls (*Dariülmualimat*), which had been established in 1870, set the ground for most of the writers and readers of these journals. Most of these journals stated that their pages were open to all Ottoman women, however the political language used and the issues raised in these journals also gave the impression that their audience was Muslim-Turkish women. The journals also contained news, photographs, and opinions about women from all over the world, but with a special emphasis on Western women.

As can be followed from these journals, the demands of the Ottoman women were in parallel with the demands of the women’s rights movement of the West. These demands included the right to education, the right to work outside home, the opportunity to be a good mother, and the right to make one’s own decisions about her life, her education and her marriage. What they underlined was the fact that living in an Islamic society created different conditions for women. When they discussed their demands within the framework of Islam, they provided supportive examples from “*asr-ı saadet*” but they refused to compromise.<sup>30</sup> As will be discussed in detail in the next part on *Kadınlar Dünyası*, although

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<sup>29</sup> Demirdirek, Aynur, “In the Pursuit of Ottoman Women’s Movement”, in Zehra Arat (ed): *Deconstructing the Images of “The Turkish Woman,”* New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1998, pp.65-81.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

Ottoman women rights activists developed a political language stressing individual rights as women, their discourse was built on the idea that women could be citizens through motherhood, by giving birth and raising future generations of citizens.

The issue of “woman” was not only the concern of women activists. Issues such as women’s rights, feminism and women’s position in society were discussed by different political positions in relation to the topics like Westernization, Europeanization, modernization, Islam and tradition. Despite certain differences among these political positions, the only common point among them was that, they all defined and described woman in relation to family and womanhood in relation to motherhood. Thus, their focus was more on family as the most important social unit and bearing children as the most important social activity than on women as citizens and women’s rights as a field of activism.<sup>31</sup>

The arguments made by the conservatives/Islamists about familial life in Ottoman society were developed around the idea that Europeanization was like a poison for the Ottoman family life. For example according to an article published in *Beyanü’l Hak* by Ahmet Şükrü, those who aspired to the European way of life and undervalue Ottoman traditional way of life were unable to recognize how family as an institution was in decline Europe. First of all, European did not respect “natural” gender division of labor, thus all family members work to earn money, including women. Being tired at work all day, they were unable to communicate at dinner table in the evenings. After dinner at home or in a restaurant, they went to nightclubs or theaters. Such an order, which did not allow communication and socialization among family members, would kill family life. They would be tired individuals alienated to each other. Such families were destined to die.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ottoman State also followed certain policies to organize marriages: Zafer Toprak, “Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti, Kadın Askerler ve Milli Aile,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol.9, no.51, Mach 1988, pp.34-38; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, “Arşivden Bir Belge (41): Karadeniz Ereğlisi Evlendiriciler Cemiyeti (1910),” *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol:28, no:104, August 2002, pp.26–29; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women (1916-1923)*, İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> “Öteden beri Müslümanlarda hayat ve maişet tarzı, Avrupa hayat tarzı ve maişetine benzemez bir halde devam ettiğinden kendi göreneklerimizi Avrupa’da görmeyenler bu milli hayatı, milli bir itiyat, fakat taasuptan doğan bir hayat olarak telakki, ediyorlar...

Another article written by Ahmet Şükrü continues with a similar argument that Muslim families, on the other hand, were healthy families with happy individuals who enjoy their familial time in the evenings after a hard day at work. Muslim families would keep their peace as long as they keep away from European influences.<sup>33</sup>

It is possible to argue that Islamists' perception of woman and womanhood was similar to the Westerners in the sense that all women were considered to be mothers/wives or potential mothers/wives. For example, according to an article written by Fevziye Abdürreşid in *İslam Mecmuası*, women were indispensable part of the family, they were the guardians of the family.<sup>34</sup> Difference was in the practice of womanhood/motherhood. All

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*Avrupa hayat tarzı bizim hayat tarzımıza taban tabana zıttır. Avrupalılar gerçi içtimai bir hayata malik iseler de, aile hayatından cidden mahrumdurlar, diyebilirim. Fıtrat kanunu bir kez düşünülürse, göz önün getirilirse ihtyari bir çalışma zorunluluğunda bulunan ne kadar canlı varsa hepsi aile hayatı hususunda fıtraten işlerin bölünmesi kuralına riayet ettikleri görülür. (...) Vakıa Avrupalılar, bütün aile fertleri çalışır kazanır. Fakat aile geçimi hususunda erkeğe düşen vazifenin ayrı, kadına düşen vazifenin ayrı olduğunu takdir etmiyor. Bir aile erkani gündüz çalışma ve iş peşinde koşar, akşam olduğu gibi sığınakları ya bir apartmandır, yahut bir lokantadır. Bu umumi sofralarda ne yediklerini, ne içtiklerini bilmeyerek bir defa karınlarını doyurdular mı yine sığınakları mutlaka ya bir gazino ya bir tiyatrodur.... Böyle bir hal sürdükçe aile fertlerinden aile duygusu söner, mahvolur... (..) böyle gece gündüz çalışmakla beraber her nerede bulunurlarsa misafir gibi kalırlar. Hiçbir zaman istirahat nedir bilmezler. Şayet meselenin rengi değişir de iş bir kere ailece sefahate dökülürse artık o aileden rahat beklemek seraptan şarap ummaya benzediğini unutmamalıdır. Neticesinde o aileden ya toplu olarak veya tek tek intiharı beklemelidir.”* Konyalı Ahmet Şevki, “Müslümanlarda Aile Hayatı”, *Beyanü'l Hak*, v.3 no. 71, 19 Temmuz 1326 (August 1, 1910), pp.1392-1393, in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul'unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.14-15.

<sup>33</sup> “Müslümanlar, ta İslam aleminin başından beri bütün aile halkı gündüzleri işle güçle uğraşarak geceleri çoluk çocuk ile evine çekilip geceleri lazım gelen ibadet, mütalaa gibi şeylerle meşguliyyete alışmış olduklarından Avrupa adet ve ahlakıyla ihtilat sebebiyle eski adetlerini bırakan birkaç mahalli istisna edecek olursak çoğu yerlerde İslam aileleri sefahatten masun kalmakta bir sebat kurabilmişlerdir.” Ahmet Şevki, *Beyanü'l Hak*, vol.4, no:79, 13 Ağustos 1326 (August 26, 1910), pp.1523-1525 in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul'unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.19

<sup>34</sup> “(...) aile hayatı, genel ahlak ve düzenin yaslandığı binanın temel taşı, kadınlar için hayatın zulmetinden kendilerini koruyabilecekleri yegane ruhani bir sığınaktır. Kadın için ailesi, aynı zamanda iffetli bir saadet kaynağıdır. Ailesiz münevver bir toplumun varlığı mümkün değildir. Aile olmadıkça iyilik isteklisi olarak eğitilmiş insanlar yetişmeyecek, insani ve milli kıymeti takdir edecek kadınlar ve erkekler bulunmayacaktır. Kadının genel vazifesi, hakiki kıymeti, en pak saadeti hep ailesine bağlıdır.” Fevziye Abdürreşid,

women's hearts should have been filled with the love of their religion, their country and their husband. They should have concentrated on the education of their children, on the protection of religion and country and on the well-being of their husband. The negative image of women, on the other hand was depicted as a woman who played piano all day, who was after catching up with the fashion, who was a consumer almost exploiting the income of her husband.<sup>35</sup>

The issue of women's covering their faces was a critical topic about women during the period.<sup>36</sup> Thus, *tesettür* was also a reference point in discussing women, family and Westernization between different political perspectives. For Islamists *tesettür* was also a mean for women to draw borders for themselves and thus for their families, to become ideal mothers, to raise ideal children.<sup>37</sup>

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“Kadınlık Meselesi”, *İslam Mecmuası*, year:3, no:53, 15 Mayıs 1333 (1917), p. 1054-1058, in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.340.

<sup>35</sup> “Biz bütün Müslümanlar arzu ederiz ki kadınlarımızın kalplerinde şefkat hissinden dini, vatani ve kocalık sevgisinden başka şeyler yer tutmasın. Onların bütün düşünceleri çocuklarının iyi eğitimi, din ve vatan korunması, kocalarının iyi bakılması noktalarına yönelmiş olsun. Yoksa her zaman piyano başına oturmaktan lezzet alan, her zaman zamanın değişmesi ile değişen modaları hayal eden, her gün değişen süslü ince, uzun dar, kısa fişanlara malik olabilmek için kocasını rahatsız etmekten sıkılmayan kadınlardan bu millete hayır değil, aksine milli servetimizin büyük bir kısmını Avrupa’ya dökmeye vesile oldukları cihetle zarar verdiğine emin olmalıyız.” M. Şükrü, “Kadınlarımız”, *Beyanü'l-Hak*, vol:4, no:98, 7 Nisan 1326 (April 20, 1910), pp:1832-1834 in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.41.

<sup>36</sup> As Aynur İlyasoğlu states, the limit of modernization is discussed in relation to women and religiosity all throughout the history. Women's covering themselves or leaving their headscarves and different ways of experiencing religion always constituted the basic criteria for modernization. However, it is again through the ethnography of modernism, in this case through the ethnography of women and religion that the ideology of modernism which is based on the duality of traditional and modern can be challenged. For further discussion see Aynur İlyasoğlu , *Örtülü Kimlik, İslamcı Kadın Kimliğinin Ögeleri*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> “Örtünmenin (...) birçok faydaları vardır. (...) onlara ana olmaları için gerekli olan eğitimi tamamlama kudreti verir. Kendilerini dışarıdaki işlerde erkeklerle beraber bulunmak belasından alıkoyar. O beladan ki sırf maddi olan günümüz medeniyetinin iliğini kurduğu Avrupa, Amerika kıtalarındaki alimlerin şahadetiyle sabittir. Başkaca ailelerini,

As could be followed in an article written by Abdullah Cevdet in *İctihad*, similar to Islamists, for Westerners, family was the key to development of society in general and women were responsible for the wellbeing of the family as an institution and family members as individuals, specifically of the children.<sup>38</sup> However, contrary to the Islamists, they represented European families as models where women succeeded to the development of the civilization of their countries as being good well-qualified mothers.<sup>39</sup> Women's education was also legitimated through motherhood; women would educate themselves to

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*hükümetlerini kendilerinin geçimlerini makul vasıtalarla sağlamaya zorlar. Karı kocayı ailevi hayatın lezzetlerinden faydalandırır. Örtünmenin devamı ile beraber evladının İslamiyet alanında terbiyesine muktedir analar bulunabilir. Örtünmeye riayet eden ümmette açık ve kapalı organları tamamıyla faal, bünyesi sağlam bir insan gibi olur.”* Ferid Vecdi, “Müslüman Kadını (mütercim: Mehmet Akif)” *Sıratı müstakim*, 6 Teşrinisani 1324 (November 19, 1908), vol.1, no:13, pp. 203-204 in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.93.

<sup>38</sup> “*Aile teşkilatında kadının üste çıkan rolü bir derecededir ki bunların ictimai mukadderatları, mensup oldukları akvamın ve hükümetlerinin şekil ve mukadderatını tayin ve tahmin için salih ve muteber bir ölçüdür. Mesela bir İngiliz ailesinin mütalaası, bir İngiliz ailesinde kadının ve çocuklarının hukuk ve vazifelerinin tetkiki bütün İngiltere’nin ictimai ruhunu tetkik ve rü’yet demektir. Ve kadınların ictimai vaziyetini takrir eden hükümet değil, aksine hükümetin durumunu, uzun uzadıya etkilerle, şekillendiren kadının ve ailenin ictimai vaziyetidir. Bununla beraber milletlerin aile teşkilatı, hükümet teşkilatlarının “minyatürü” küçük fakat tıpkı tıpkısına bir örneği demektir.”* Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “Kadınlarda gaye-i hayat”, *İctihad*, vol:1, no: 28, 1 Ağustos 1327 (August 14, 1911), pp. 798-800, in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.360.

<sup>39</sup> “*(...) ayrıcalıklarla mümtaz olan insanlar, nefsinin havasına uyan analardan değil, kutsal vazifesini bilen ve hayatının gayesinin ev idare etmek ve insan yetiştirmek olduğunu hakkıyla takdir eden annelerden gelir. Muazzam Goethe, meşhur Hugo, anneleri tarafından telif ve tertip olunmuş canlı birer büyük irfan ve fazilet kitabı oldular. Brütüs... Ölüme yaklaşmış Roma’ya hayat suyu akıtan kılıcın letafetini, karısı Borjiya’nın fazilet ve ulviyet şaşaasından istinbat etti. (...) Ey kadınlar, sizin ezeli mukadderatınız ve ebedi ulviyetiniz, tekrar ediyoruz, aileler ihya ve büyük insanlar yaratmaktır. Sizin göz dikeceğiniz yer Solanlar, Brütüsler yetiştirmek olsun. Sizlerden başka şeyler istemek, mutena pek çok şeyleri bilmeyerek, heder etmektir.”* Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “Kadınlarda Gaye-i Hayat”, *İctihad*, vol.1, no: 28, 1 Ağustos 1327 (August 14, 1911), pp.798-800. in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.362

be patriotic citizens and then teach their children to love their nation and country and devote themselves for their country.<sup>40</sup>

Pro-western, modernist political perspective argued that the emancipation of women was a prerequisite of civilization. Women as mothers and wives were responsible for the well-being of the Ottoman man and for the creation of future enlightened generations.<sup>41</sup> To create responsible citizens, it was necessary first to educate and enlighten women who were the mothers of the modern citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Women imprisoned in tradition could not fulfill this role. The major obstacles for the education and liberation of women were traditionally arranged marriages, divorce laws, polygamy and the isolation of the sexes from each other.<sup>42</sup> By contrast Islamists argued that the Koran provided an already existing design for the organization of social life<sup>43</sup>, and that any deviation from these regulations would lead to corruption and moral depravation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “*Vatan ve millet ne demek olduğunu zaten tanımış bir genç ana ile yine o dünya kışmetinde hakikatlere vakıf, ateşli ve genç bir ilkokul erkek veya kadın öğretmeni kadar milletin fikirlerini aydınlatacak iki ilahi nur yoktur. Esasen bir milletin ihyası babalardan değil, çocuklardan başlar. Yenilik bahşeden hayat suyu, bir çocuğa anası kucağından itibaren katre katre akıtılmak lazımdır.*” Kılıçzade Hakkı, “Kadınlar ve Mekatib-i İbtidaiye Muallimleri”, *İctihad*, no: 60, 4 Nisan 1329 (April 17, 1913), pp.1310-1312 in Sadık Albayrak, *Meşrutiyet İstanbul’unda Kadın ve Sosyal Değişim*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2002, p.383.

<sup>41</sup> Nühket Sirman, “Turkish Feminism: A Short History”, *Dossier*, no. 5-6, December 1988 – May 1989 (on web), pp.3-4.

<sup>42</sup> Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar ve Siyasal Toplumsal Hayat*, İstanbul: Birikim Publications, 1982.

<sup>43</sup> Judith Tucker, in her article “The Fullness of Affection: Mothering in the Islamic Law of Ottoman Syria and Palestine” focuses on the perception of mothering with reference to the concepts of fathering and parenting in the Islamic Law, with reference to the *fatawas* delivered by *muftis* of 17th and 18th centuries in Syria and Palestine. As Tucker states, mothering was defined in relation to the wellbeing of the child. Mother was responsible for reproduction and for the bearing and nurturing of children. Motherhood and fatherhood were gendered roles defined as “complementing” each other. Judith Tucker, “The Fullness of Affection: Mothering in the Islamic Law of Ottoman Syria and Palestine”, *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Madeline C. Zilfi, Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Sirman, 3-4.

Palmira Brummett's article on the images of women in the Ottoman cartoons<sup>45</sup> also demonstrates how the ideal of motherhood itself became a channel to convey the conflict in the mainstream politics between "the modern" and "the tradition". By focusing on the cartoon space of 1908-1911, Brummett argues that, although the representation of women in cartoons were limited, they symbolized "the nation, its honor, and vulnerability; they were the centerpieces of satire on the threat of European cultural hegemony; they represented the poles of modernity and tradition."<sup>46</sup> Ottoman women were represented as "alafranga" women who were the corrupted figures of society in cooperation with "the enemies" in weakening the cultural and social strength of the Ottoman society. They were the unconscious imitators of Western fashion and manners. The antidotes of *alafranga women*, as Brummett puts, were the female figures representing "the nation" and the figure of "sister-citizen".<sup>47</sup> The Ottoman nation was usually depicted as a mother, a wife or a daughter representing the honor of the nation who needed protection. There were also

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<sup>45</sup> Palmira Brummett, "New Woman and Old Nag: Images of Women in the Ottoman Cartoon Space," in *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, Fatma Müge Göçek (ed.), Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1998, pp. 13-59.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> It is also possible to follow similar stereotypes for women during the Early Republican Era. New woman identity that was tried to be constructed during the Early Republican Era, was both modern and Turkish, which meant Western and traditional. New Turkish woman was against the femininity of the West and she would be the educated woman of her country representing both the Turkishness and modernity of Turkey. New Turkish woman was deprived of her sexuality both in Western and Oriental sense. She would be an educated and honored woman who had the mission of sacrificing herself for the good of the nation. With the missionary modernization process of the Republican state, the previous image of urban women among the conservative Ottoman elite which could be summarized as "fitna kadın" was replaced by an identity of urban woman who had the ability or choice of being an intellectual, social, and honored woman. So, urban woman could be freed from her identity of "fitna kadın" by desexualizing herself and thus freed from being the target of social paranoia: "*Asri kadın.. önce sosyal kadın demektir. Asri kadın diri sosyetenin kadını demektir. Bu diri kurumlar, bilim ve endüstridir. Asri kadın bilim ve endüstridir. Asri kadın bilim kültürü ve endüstri kültürü almış olan kadındır. Kadının analık ödevine gelince onu her zaman yapmıştır, gene de yapmalıdır. Ancak çocuk doğurmak, karılık bir meslek değil, cisimsel ihtiyaçlar ve ödevlerdir, erkeğin çocuk vermesi gibi...*" *Yeni Adam*, no. 96, p.5, cited in Ayşe Durakbaşı, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Kemalist Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu," *Tarih ve Toplum*, March 1988, p.91.

cartoons in which the figure of nation as woman was depicted as resisting the threatening powers. The sister-citizen, on the other hand was an ordinary woman who would sacrifice herself for the good of the nation. She was a mother, sister or daughter with daily, lower class costumes representing the opposite of the selfish *alafranga* consumer woman. As stated by Brummett, in the cartoons, the power of women lied in the capacity of bearing children, in other words, bearing “new patriot-citizens” which made them “Ottoman sister-citizen mothers”. “There is nothing *alafranga* about them. Their costumes suggest the glories of the past; but they are new women. The child, the new generation will translate those glories into a military power of the future \_ a baby soldier to protect the motherland.”<sup>48</sup>

As could be followed from the brief discussion above, family and motherhood had already been part of the political discussions in the Ottoman context in relation to nationalization, modernization, conservatism, religion and women’s rights before WWI. Motherhood was redesigned as a “public service” given by women with “national” and “patriotic” concerns. Mothers were not only responsible for taking care of their children but also of the whole nation. The idea of family being national-political unit and motherhood as public political activity was also supported by the women’s rights activists of the period. Articles, poems, stories that were published in women’s publications mostly involved depictions of sacrificial, patriotic mothers. Among those publications journals of *Kadınlar Dünyası* particularly comes to the front as a site where motherhood as a political activity was presented not only promoting the nation and the country but also women’s rights. *Kadınlar Dünyası* was a feminist journal and it advocated for enhancing the conditions of women in the society. Their feminist perspective did not involve a radical redefinition of motherhood practice or parental duty. Instead of that, they acknowledged “sacredness” of motherhood and used this to advocate for women’s rights. They accepted the patriotic mission of motherhood and appropriated this discourse to strengthen women and legitimize the demand for women’s rights.

In this chapter, first, I am going to present the literature on the relationship between nationalism, militarism and gender. Then the journal of *Kadınlar Dünyası* will be analyzed with reference to the discussions on family, motherhood and women’s rights as discussed

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<sup>48</sup> Brummett, 37.

in the journal. Besides *Kadınlar Dünyası*, *Türk Yurdu*, *Türk Kadını* will also be mentioned as they complement the discussions raised in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. This chapter will present the ideological debates on family and motherhood right before and during WWI among women's rights activists who aimed at opening a space for women in the political, social and economic arena as citizens. Presenting those debates, hence, will open a path to analyze and contextualize the practices of women as citizens during the war through the petitions they wrote as mothers or as family members in the second chapter.

## 1.2. Gender and Nationalism

There has been a growing literature on gender and nationalism since the 1990s. As a response to the gender blindness of the literature on nationalism feminist scholars introduced gender as a central category of analysis for the studies on nationalism.<sup>49</sup> These scholars questioned the differentiated inclusion of women and men in national projects and explored the nationalist presuppositions regarding manhood and womanhood. In addition to analyzing how womanhood and manhood were constructed by nationalist projects, feminist studies on nationalism also revealed the gendered construction of the nation itself. Thus,

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<sup>49</sup> For discussions and arguments about the relationship between nationalism and gender see: Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997; Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.), *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, Oxford University Press, 1994. Constance R. Sutton (ed.), *Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism*, Arlington, VA: The Association for Feminist Anthropology/American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the International Women's Anthropology Conference, 1995; Lois A. West (ed.), *Feminist Nationalism* New York: Routledge, 1997. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (eds.), *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997; Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri (eds.), *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1998; Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us : Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict*, London ; New York: Zed Books, 1998; Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner (eds.), *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1999; Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Mino Moallem (eds.), *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999; Rick Wilford and Robert L. Miller, *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Politics of Transition*, London; New York : Routledge, 1998.

using “gender” as an analytical tool<sup>50</sup> for understanding the complex interaction of gendered conceptualizations in the nationalization processes, the feminist scholars aimed at unfolding the complex material, political, and symbolic processes involved in the articulation of various national projects.<sup>51</sup>

Anthias and Yuval-Davis, in their pioneering work on the differentiated incorporation of women in nationalization processes revealed the central roles women play in national projects. The scholars categorized the ways women take part in national projects concentrating on their reproductive, ideological, cultural and military roles. According to this categorization women are central to national projects:

- as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;
- as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups;
- as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;
- as signifiers of ethnic/national differences as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories;
- as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.<sup>52</sup>

Similar to the arguments of Floya Anthias and N. Yuval Davis, Elleke Boehmer also argues that men’s and women’s participation in national projects are different from each other. However, different from Anthias and Davis, she focuses more on the discursive aspects of the nationalist projects. She uses the terms “metonymic” and “metaphoric” to illustrate the differentiation of men’s and women’s functions in national projects. According to this terminological distinction, while men’s role in the nationalist projects is described in a ‘metonymic’ form as if they were the real actors of the nation, women are

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<sup>50</sup> Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 5, Dec. 1986.

<sup>51</sup> For a detailed discussion, see: Zeynep Kutluata, *Gender and War During the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods: The Case of Black Fatma(s)*, M.A. Thesis, Sabanci University, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval Davis, “Introduction,” in *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan, 1989, p.7.

imagined in a 'metaphoric or symbolic role' which obscures their being actual members of nation.<sup>53</sup>

Although these different paths describe the most common and obvious channels about how women are involved or instrumentalized in nationalist projects, they are far away from representing the whole picture about the relationship between women and nation. In her critique of Anthias and Yuval-Davis, Sylvia Walby, in her article "Woman and Nation" raises the question about whether these five positions encompass all the major ways that gender and ethnic relations intersect. Her first point is that this categorization privileges the ideological or cultural level and the gendered division of labor is absent from the list. Second, this categorization underemphasizes that conflict, and the maintenance of boundaries between ethnic/national groups is also a matter of different forms of social hierarchies, not only of different cultures.<sup>54</sup> So, Walby points to women's differential involvement in the national projects, rather than the participation of women in the national projects. And, further, she argues that women and men have different identifications with national projects and may have different commitments to different types of macro-level groupings.

Thus, women's relation to nations and nationalisms is more complicated and it cannot be subsumed under simple dichotomies. In addition to the symbolic functions of womanhood in the construction of nationhood, women engage in nationalization processes in their everyday life through various and complicated ways. Thus, women aren't "passive recipients" of these processes but they are actual actors who are not only affected by nationalization processes but also affect them. Kandiyoti also attracts attention to the interaction between women and national processes and identifies two distinct paths through which women's involvement in national processes can be analyzed more thoroughly. According to her theorization, feminist theorists should focus on women simultaneously

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<sup>53</sup> Elleke Boehmer, "Stories of Women and Mothers: Gender and Nationalism in the Early Fiction of Flora Nwapa," in *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing From Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*, Sushella Nasta (ed.), London: Women's Press, 1992, p.169.

<sup>54</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Women and Nation," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, A.D. Smith (ed.), New York: E.J. Brill, 1989, pp.82-84.

“as *representations* of the nation and as *social actors* implicated in national processes in specific ways.”<sup>55</sup> And, this symbol and actor position of women is not that obvious and thus could not be separated from each other. Nationalist projects encompass both the logic of popular sovereignty and the expansion of citizenship rights and the reaffirmation of authentic cultural values. And women were defined both as co-citizens and as the privileged custodians of national values.<sup>56</sup>

### 1.3. Gender and Militarism

War, both as a social process and as a subject of historical analysis, is a field where the most conventional perceptions about sexual identity stereotypes can be traced. As agreed by most of the scholars, the relationship between war and women is usually considered to be a conventional one, in the sense that men make war and women make peace. According to these conventional narratives, men, as the representatives of their nations or social groups, involve in combating, while women stay in their homes as protected by men. However women have been involved in the processes of war through different identities and positions, and this process of involvement is based on gendered division of labor most of the time. In order to understand war as a gendered and gendering process, it is significant to ask Cynthia Enloe’s famous question, “Where are the women” when nations or social groups decide on and make war? Such a question will force us to dig for women even at sites where their existence is most obscured. This practice of digging for women will bring light to gendered effects of war and the ways the concept and practice of war is gendered.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “The awkward relationship: gender and nationalism”, *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2000, pp. 491-94.

<sup>56</sup> In some cases, Turkish nationalist-modernist project might be one of them, the burden of the nation’s ‘backward look’ towards a traditional rural past was placed upon women, while men could appropriate the nation’s present and future.

<sup>57</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarization of Women's Lives*, London: Pandora, 1988; Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (eds.), *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990; Constance R. Sutton (ed.), *Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism*, Arlington, VA :

Acknowledging the social construction process of sexual identities, next task is to understand the working of gender structure during wars and in the militaries: “Is women’s relationship to war really more complex than that of men? The answer is yes, if only because society, with its traditional gender divisions of labor, has assigned the official task of fighting to men. What happens to our standard ideals of “feminine”, “masculine”, “family” and country when women fight? How is the category of woman, itself a social construction, further modified when women become warriors?”<sup>58</sup>

War times witness apparent and almost unchallengeable power of military and militaristic values.<sup>59</sup> One of the basic debates about war and women is shaped around the sexual stereotypes on manhood and womanhood: Are women and men fundamentally different from each other? While conservatives answer “yes”, their answer leads to the policy conclusion that men should fight wars and women should support them in distinctly feminine, maternal ways. Ironically, some feminists have also answered “yes” but concluded that women as natural peacemakers should resist wars, and that women should be given more power over world affairs so as to make the world less violent.

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The Association for Feminist Anthropology/American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the International Women's Anthropology Conference, 1995; Jennifer Turpin and Lois Ann Lorentzen (eds.), *The Gendered New World Order: Militarism, Development, and the Environment* / edited by. New York : Routledge, 1996; Betty A. Reardon, *Sexism and the War System*, Syracuse, N.Y. : Syracuse University Press, 1996; Barbara Sutton, Sandra Morgen, and Julie Novkov (eds.), *Security Disarmed: Critical Perspectives on Gender, Race, and Militarization*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008; Cynthia Cockburn, *Anti-militarism: Political and Gender Dynamics of Peace Movements*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Nicole Ann Dombrowski (ed.), *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, New York: Garland, 1999, p.3.

<sup>59</sup> However, in the absence of war conditions, power of military and militaristic values do not disappear, rather take different forms. Institutional power of military and discursive power of militaristic values keep their power during “peace” times and keeping this power necessitates a social process. In that sense, as Cynthia Enloe defines it, “militarization is the step by step process by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria.” Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, p. 291.

These essentialist presuppositions about gender roles are proven to be wrong by both the works of poststructuralist feminist theorists and historical studies. Women's relation to war throughout history has shown that gender is a fluid social category and men's and women's roles and positions change in different cultural and historical contexts. The increasing participation of women in military ranks and their determining role in war decisions as politicians in the contemporary role also reveal that neither men nor women have proven to be inherently violent or peaceful; instead, humans have the capacity to be both.<sup>60</sup>

Thus women's and men's different positions during wartimes can be understood as effects of state policies rather than as their innate capacities for making peace and war. Regulation of gender identities is a central task of state and its importance increases during wartimes when states are in a need of filling their military ranks. Cynthia Enloe argues governing masculinities and femininities is a conscious act of states and it needs considerable energy and resources to "to shape their citizens' ideas about what constitute an acceptable form of masculinity and an acceptable form of femininity."<sup>61</sup>

#### **1.4. Motherhood and Militarism**

The militarization of mothers has been crucial for any successful male dominated militarist policy. Those policy makers have to have the passive (or active depending on the situation) cooperation of women who are the mothers of these soldiers.

Cynthia Enloe starts her discussion of militarization of motherhood by using the analogy of "womb as a recruiting station".<sup>62</sup> Giving birth to sons is automatically addressed as a contribution to "national security" of the state. Mothers become the mothers of the national army and their sons are taken as natural soldiers. This whole process of

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<sup>60</sup> Jennifer Turpin, "Many Faces: Women Confronting War," in *The Women and War Reader*, Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (eds.), New York: New York University Press, 1998, pp. 3-19.

<sup>61</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, p.236.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

militarization of women's bodies of course appears as a challenge in front of women's reproductive rights and renders women and their bodies as simple tools of militarization. According to Cynthia Enloe describes the profile of a fully militarized mother as such:

She is a woman who will find it reasonable that a government would urge its female citizens, especially those from the politically dominant racial and ethnic group, to have more children for the sake of ensuring the nation's future security. She is a woman who sees the mothering of their sons as different from the mothering of their daughters. She is a woman who imagines that, by being a good mother in the eyes of the state, she is helping to confirm her own status as a citizen of the nation. She is a mother who accepts unquestioningly the phrase "patriotic mother."<sup>63</sup>

Motherhood is a historical category and "as social and as fluid a category as fatherhood."<sup>64</sup> Some of the writers have argued that due to the practice of motherhood, women's mode of thought and emotional predispositions differ almost completely from those of men. Sara Ruddick defines this as "maternal thinking"<sup>65</sup> and this perspective goes further to argue that women constitute the potential for challenging contemporary politics in favor of a more democratic and peaceful one.

As Enloe also underlines the identity of motherhood appears as a significant site where state relates to women, especially in war times. This function of motherhood is also touched upon by Carol Pateman. However, taking one step further, Pateman addresses the tension that the identity of motherhood implies regarding the women's relation to the state. According to Carol Pateman this tension derives from the contradictory functions of motherhood that are simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of women. Pateman argues that on the one hand, motherhood symbolizes "the natural capacities that set women apart from politics and citizenship", and on the other, "it constitutes a channel for incorporating

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>64</sup> Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Maternal Thinking and the Politics of War." In *The Women and War Reader*, edited by L. A. Lorentzen and J. Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 233.

<sup>65</sup> Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking", *Feminist Studies*, 6, no. 2. (Summer, 1980), pp. 342-367.

women into the modern political order through defining women's service and duty to the state".<sup>66</sup>

Malathi de Alwis, on the other hand, defines the role of gender in the nationalization processes as the feminization of the nation-state. Nation-state is identified as a mother, who nurtures its citizens and demands protection in return. This particular positioning of women in relation to the nation state becomes obvious in times of crises. "In times of crises such as war or uprising, such symbiotic relationships are especially highlighted: the heroism required of her male citizens foregrounded against the sacrifices of her female citizens."<sup>67</sup> It is critical to note that mothers in this equation carry not only the responsibility of their families but also the responsibility of the nation.

Malathi de Alwis goes further and argues that wars "socialize women as mothers and men as heroic sons". She continues that "it is the production of such subject positions that orient us towards a chronology of activity that naturalizes the assumption that these are our primary roles as patriotic citizens of the nation state."<sup>68</sup> Cynthia Enloe also stresses that the idealization of feminized sacrifice is an internal part of the mobilization of women during the times of war.<sup>69</sup> Sacrifice is not defined only through motherhood but also through/by parenting. For example, Rela Mazali stresses "the phenomenon of sons-turned-troops" which by definition transforms the parents of sons to the "parents of troops" implying a "support for the social institutions of army, collective and the state".<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Pateman, Carole. "Equality, Difference, Subordination," in *Beyond Equality and Difference*, Gisela Block and Susan James (eds.), London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 17-32.

<sup>67</sup> Malathi de Alwis, "Moral Mothers and Stalwart Sons: Reading Binaries in a Time of War." In *The Women And War Reader*, Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer E. Turpin (eds.), New York University Press, 1998, pp. 255.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Enloe, 172.

<sup>70</sup> Mazali, Rela, "Parenting Troops: The Summons to Acquiescence," *The Women and War Reader*, Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer E. Turpin (eds.), New York University Press, 1998), pp. 272.

### 1.5. Motherhood as a Realm of Women's Activism: The Case of *Kadınlar Dünyası*

As in different parts of the world, in the Ottoman context as well, it was basically the identity of motherhood that rendered women acceptable in the militarized public space. In the journals like *Kadınlar Dünyası*, a feminist journal published by Muslim women or in *Türk Yurdu*, a Turkish nationalist journal or in the literary work published during the war or about the war period, “woman question”, “national question” and wartime activities were discussed in relation to each other, as intertwined issues. Although there were ideological differences among these publications, motherhood was defined as a public activity in the service of nation and country in all most all of them. In the following part of this chapter I am going to analyze the ways motherhood was constituted and promoted in these publications.

Fatma Müge Göçek, in her article “From Empire to Nation: Images of Women and War in Ottoman Political Cartoons, 1908-1923”<sup>71</sup> states that political cartoons of this period depicts the ambiguity between “the idealized images and actual experiences of women and of war”, stressing that actual experiences were usually underestimated compared to the idealized images. She refers to “three contradictory images of women as sexual heroines, as immoral vixens, or as stolid mothers”. Most of the negative images of women in the cartoons of the period refer basically to upper class intellectual women of Istanbul, who were experiencing new practices of public space promoted by the increase of women's movement<sup>72</sup>. The figures of “immoral vixens” represented those women who were too selfish to share the concerns of the nation and who were living for pleasure and wealth. These were usually accompanied by the enemy or by degenerated Ottoman men who were again too fat and too rich to be member of the nation. The whole picture of

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<sup>71</sup> Fatma Müge Göçek, “From Empire to Nation: Images of Women and War in Ottoman Political Cartoons, 1908-1923,” *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace 1870-1930*, Billie Melman (ed.), New York and London: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Göçek states that “[i]n the case of Ottoman transition from empire to nation state between 1919 and 1922, it was specifically through the exclusion of urban cosmopolitan women and foreign Greek elements that the Turks started to redefine their national identity.” Göçek, 60.

degeneration and betrayal were portrayed in the cosmopolitan capital of pleasures and privileges, away from and indifferent to “Anatolian” people. Ottoman Muslim Women’s organizations, especially philanthropic organizations’ efforts to support the war had public and political visibility which was also in parallel with the efforts of these organizations to strengthen women’s public existence. However women’s active participation in war efforts through philanthropic activities was not recognized in Ottoman cartoons.<sup>73</sup>

Representation of women as “stolid mothers” in these cartoons, on the other hand, reflected a positive image about Ottoman women. These “stolid mothers” were represented through peasant mothers and traditionally dressed Ottoman Muslim women. As Göçek argues, “Ottoman women image as “mother” also countered the earlier cultural construct centered on the sultan as the father of the empire –the anonymous mother of all citizens thus replaced the now alienated, aloof, and elite father of all Ottoman subjects”.<sup>74</sup>

The image of Ottoman woman as mother became more critical under war conditions. War means dead sons for mothers and when a woman loses her son during the war, then it becomes difficult to manipulate the pain that she suffers in the name of the nation. It might be argued that, one of the policies of the period, was to manipulate that pain that women suffered and thus to make them a part of the militarization process by manipulating and redirecting the pain of losing or potential loss their children. That manipulation was in a way constituted over the transfer of the love for the son to the love of nation, and also, by the transfer of pain to revenge targeting the enemy nation. This perspective can be traced through the literary works of the period. In a story named *Zeynep Kadın*, by Yakup Kadri, the mother is informed by the *muhtar* and the *imam* that that her son was killed in the front. At the moment that she cries and is about to faint, the *muhtar* interrupts fiercely and tells her to stop crying, keep the news as a secret so that the pregnant bride, wife of the dead son, would not learn and keep her baby healthy. He almost orders

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<sup>73</sup> Göçek notes that “[f]or instance, even though women’s actual participation in society is consistent throughout this period, their perceived participation fluctuates among. This ambivalence, this fluctuation between actual life experience and idealized representations, controls the emancipation of women and accounts for the checkered trajectory of their gains during the transformation of empire to nation. Hence, ultimately, the case of women and war, the new space created through the ambivalent narration surrounding the nation fails to challenge and alter existing gender relations.” Göçek, 53.

<sup>74</sup> Göçek, 56.

the mother not carry her grief to home. When the mother replies that it is impossible to bare the pain, the *imam* interrupts and reminds that it is a sin to cry after a martyr and that in her case the God rewarded her with a baby.<sup>75</sup> Mothers are asked not to mourn after their sons.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> “Öyleyse kendini topla, sesini kes! Mazallah gelinin meseleyi işitecek olursa iki cana birden kıyılmış olur. Düşün bir kere, ölen senin evladındır; fakat onun kocası ve karnında taşıdığı çocuğun babasıdır; kadın kısmı, hele genç iken, hele bir de yüklü ise kedere hiç tahammül edemez. Eve dönerken ne yapıp yap, gözlerinin yaşını sil, Hasan’dan iyilik haberi aldık diye bir yalan uydur, birkaç gün dişini sık; kadın kurtulsun, ondan sonra ne yaparsan yap!” Zeynep Kadın: “Osman Efendi, sözün doğru.. Doğru ama yapması güç! Bilemezsin yüreğim nasıl yanıyor” dedi. Bunun üzerine bir kenarda mütefekkir kalan İmam Efendi söze karışır: “Şehide ağlamak günahdır, dedi. Hem Cenab-ı Hak sana ayrıca büyük bir lütuft etmiş, bir tanesini aldı, onun yerine diğerini gönderiyor.” Yakup Kadri, “Zeynep Kadın,” *İkdam*, no: 6999, 7 Ağustos 1916 (August 7, 1916) in *1. Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, Nesime Ceyhan (ed.), Istanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, pp. 116-117.

<sup>76</sup> *Ağlama, Emi?*

(Şehidin anası ‘Güllü Bacı’ya)  
Bacı yok mu hani Çopur’un Memiş,  
Güdük Hasan, Mehmet, komşunun İbiş,  
Oğlun Duran, filan hep şehit imiş;  
Bu habere sakın ağlama, emi?

Yeşiller giyinip kırklara eren,  
Ölmeden cennette yerini gören,  
Vatanı uğruna canını vereb  
Şehide karalar bağlama, emi?

Duran’mış düşmanı yerinden söken,  
İlk önce tepeye bayrağı diken;  
Kahramanca ölen oğlun var iken  
Yüreğini yakıp dağlama, emi?

Ben de bacı, ben de şehit olursam,  
Duran’ı cennette varır, bulursam,  
Selamını verip müjde alırsam  
Armağan yollarım sana da, emi?

Konuya, komşuya, köylüye benden  
Kucak kucak selam can u gönülden;  
Öper de yavrumun güzel gözünden  
Emanet ederim Tanrı’ya, emi?

Fatih, 6 Teşrinisani 1333  
Şevki Bektör

Even before they become mothers they have the consciousness that they would give birth to soldiers and thus they themselves should get accustomed to the practice of war.<sup>77</sup>

Similarly, in another story, published in *Türk Yurdu*, a woman carrying the dead body of her child comes across with a group of soldiers. In the story, the soldiers are described as incapable of protecting the cities, the women and the children. As the story goes, the woman throws the dead body of her child to the faces of the soldiers as an act of insult for those who failed to save the child. Hence, it is possible to argue that in the nationalist literature of the period, mothers were described as strong and rebellious women, who represented not only patriotic women but also a strong army and a powerful nation. They could resist any pain, even the death of their children with anger and the feeling of revenge. Even under the conditions of despair they were the ones who symbolize the strength of nation, state and the army.<sup>78</sup>

The “ideal” patriotic mother of the war period is the woman who can control and cover her pain with the love of her country. She is determined, proud of the martyrs of her

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*Türk Yurdu*, year:6, no:148, 22 Teşrinisani 1333 (November 22, 1917), in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli (ed.), Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1999, p.270

<sup>77</sup> “Evet babacığım, çok iyi”... *Hele gelinlerinizin böyle silah sesleriyle, barut kokularıyla göçürülmesi çok güzel. Zirâ bu gelinleriniz de yarın asker ocağına gönderecekleri koç yiğitlerimizin anaları olacaklardır; vatan toprağına kin ve tamahlar beslemekte olan düşmanlara göğüs gelecek askerlerimizi bağırlarında büyütecekler. Bunların büyütecekleri yarınki nesil bu bağırılarda birer korkak tilki değil, birer cesur arslan olarak yetişecek, yurdunu bir ananın ırzı gibi kıskanacak, onun üzerine kartal gibi kanat gelecek. Biz şunu hiç bir vakit unutmamalıyız ki bu dünyada silah kullanmayı bilmeyen bilekler zincirler altında çürür. Barut kokularına veda eden milletler vatanlarına ve vatanlarının gül bahçelerine de veda ederler. Yiğit olmayanlar, zayıf bulunanlar için ne vatan, ne hürriyet hiç bir şey yoktur. Bundan dolaydır ki, ey muhterem ihtiyar, gelinlerinize silâh sesleri, gelinlerinize barut kokuları!..” Mehmet Emin, no: 5, p. 75 in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli (ed.), Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1999, p.146.*

<sup>78</sup> “Genç ana, şehirleri, çocukları kurtarmaya, kadınları korumaya muvaffak olmayan askerin mağlup askerin yüzüne, çocuğunun ölüsünü bir hakaret silsilesi olarak atmıştı. Erkeklik hissim, askerlik haysiyetim zelil, sefil oldu. Her tarafında kol kol muhaceret akan soğuk, korku ve ölüm saltanat süren bu ovalarda çocuğunu yüzümüze atan kadın, bedbaht ve asi genç ana ne demişt: Yersiz, yuvasız koyduğun ananın, al öldürdüğün çocuğunu!..” Hasan Dünder, “Donmuş Kundak” *Türk Yurdu*, 17 Haziran 334 (June 17, 1918), no:160, in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli (ed.), Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1999, p.250.

family, she is the servant of the country with her body and her soul.<sup>79</sup> Ideal motherhood is not represented only through “ordinary” women, but also through upperclass women. For example, in *Türk Yurdu*, the visit of *Kadınefendi*, to a hospital where soldiers wounded in the front were treated was represented as the practice of ideal motherhood, when the mother of future sultans becomes the mother of the nation. She gives presents to the soldiers and makes a speech stressing that those soldiers were her children and she would sacrifice herself for their good so that they could heal and go back to the front to fight the enemy. The response by the soldiers is consistent with the speech of *Kadınefendi*, in the sense that they accept her as their mother and they feel her love and compassion in their heart. It is possible to consider this dialogue as a virtual contract between the state and soldiers through the intermediary role of motherhood.<sup>80</sup>

Balkan Wars, which were experienced as social trauma of losing “homeland” and weakening of the state, had set up the base and framework of the ideological formation of

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<sup>79</sup> *Oğlumu Hududa Gönderdikten Sonra\_“...vatanın her hududuna her kanlı cengine ayrı ayrı mücahitler, şehitler gönderen aile kapısından metin adımlarla çıktık... Oh; lakin başka nasıl olabilirdi? Vatan annemizin mutâlebatı müfrezesine kalbini kapayan bir kadın bu ailede henüz yetişmedi. Vatanın uzattığı silahı ahd ve iman ile kavramayan erkekler bundan sonra da yetişmeyecek. Seni hak ve adaletin, ulviyet ve faziletinin hâlıkı olan samedaniyyeti muazzamaya emanet ettim!”* Salime Servet Seyfi, *Yeni Mecmua (Çanakkale Nüsha-i Fevkaladesi)* İst. No: 5, 18 Mart 1331 (March 31, 1915) in *1. Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, Nesime Ceyhan (ed.), İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, p.141.

<sup>80</sup> “*Kadınefendi Hazretlerinin Asker Evlatlarına Muhabbet ve Şefkati*”: *Türk ananesinde hakan analarının, hakan kadınlarının gayet yüksek ve pek büyük bir mevki ve vazifesi vardır (...) kadın efendi hazretlerinin Haydarpaşa Hastahanesi’ne gidip mecruh gazileri ziyaret ederek onlara en ince ana hisleriyle dolu, en tatlı bir Türk kadın diliyle hitaplarda bulunması ve hediyeler dağıtması, Türk an’anesinin devam etmekte olduğunu izhar ve ispat etti: “Nasılsınız gazi evlatlarım, kardeşlerim! Arzunuz nedir? Biz hep size kul kurbanız. Yaralarınızı sarmağı bilsem, bilen hemşirelerim gibi başucunuzda pervane olurum. Sizler bize pek kıymetlisiniz yavrularım, kıymetinizi düşmana da anlattınız. Allah sizden razı olsun! İnşallah yakında yine aşkınızın, imanınızın yüceliklerini düşmana gösterirsiniz.” Bir neferden yanıt: “Kadınefendi hazretleri! Bak ben nişanlı bir tane kardeşimin, şehit Hasan’ımın cesedi üzerinden atlayarak düşmana karşı koşarken bir acı bile duymadım, ağlamamıştım. İşte bu sözleriniz, bakınız gözlerimden yaş akıttı. Bizden emin olunuz. Geçen harpte nâbak yere bize sürülen bu lekeyi işte bu akan kanımızla silmeye çalışıyoruz. Millet duygusu önünde, Hak yolunda canımız kurban olsun, biz buna ahd eyledik.”* *Türk Yurdu*, year:5, no: 84, 21 Mayıs 1331 (June 3, 1915) in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli (ed.), Ankara: Tutubay Yayınları, 1999, p.146.

WWI. Motherhood as a social practice had been loaded with missionary terms both during Balkan Wars and during World War I in the Ottoman Empire. For example in *Kadınlar Dünyası*<sup>81</sup>, in the year of 1913, one of the issues that women were discussing among themselves was motherhood. In the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası* motherhood was largely considered to be an indispensable part of womanhood. However, this was also a contested arena of politics for the women exposing their political arguments in the journal. Women, on the one hand, were writing simultaneously as mothers of the soldiers and mothers of the nation and being a mother of a soldier has the potential to be a mother of “a dead body” that will be named as “martyrs”. On the other hand, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, due to its feminist perspective, defended women having careers and persistently wrote about the jobs available for women and encouraged women for applying to these jobs. This may not refer directly to a dichotomy in the journal between being a mother and being a working woman. On the contrary, in the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, motherhood is redefined as a contested arena of politics and it is within this contested arena of politics that conventional or conflicting dichotomies are resolved.

In the following of the chapter “missionary” roles attributed to motherhood will be analyzed through the examples in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, *Türk Yurdu* and various literary work. Through these texts, I will argue that motherhood has been politicized to serve the war effort of the country in three fields. Firstly, mothers were considered as memory boxes to keep the collective memory of the nation. Secondly, they were called to the public sphere as activists, mostly in philoantropic activities. Thirdly, they were responsible for establishing the new family that would constitute the future of the nation.

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<sup>81</sup> *Kadınlar Dünyası* as a part of the first wave women’s movement in the Ottoman Empire shared parallel demands generally with the other contemporary women’s movements in the world. *Kadınlar Dünyası* is a woman’s journal published in between 1913-1921 in İstanbul. The journal propagandized feminist politics and followed a modernist line. In its long publishing period, there were changes in their stress on Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkish nationalism depending on the period and context that they were published, usually in parallel with the general political climate of the Ottoman intellectual elite. However, they had never lost the line of modernization.

### 1.5.1 Mothers as Memory Box

Firstly, mothers were imagined as the keepers of memory of pain. Collective memory of war wounds were to be kept and transmitted by mothers through the feeling of revenge. Lullabies sung and stories told by mothers were to transmit the history of war, “educating” the new generation towards taking revenge from the enemies of the nation.

“Ottoman woman” as the “mother of the nation” was also promoted in the pages of *Harp Mecmuası*. In the passage below, Ottoman peasant woman was represented as “the Turkish mother” who lost almost all her male relatives in the battles but still in the position of supporting and promoting her son to go and fight against the enemy and take the revenge of his father and brothers. She is the one who insistently reminds young men of going to the fronts for their ancestors who had died in the battlefields. It is through this remembrance that the emotion of revenge has been both produced and kept alive. Besides giving birth to a soldier, she was also living in a village where all men were dead and she (representing all women in the village) undertook all the work men used to do. Even further, they were represented as masculine figures replacing men in the homefront. She was represented as a devoted heroine of the nation:

Hüseyin kissed his mother’s hand. (She) smelled his beloved poor one and said: ‘Hüseyin... Your uncle was dead in Şıpka, your father was dead in Dömeke and it has been just eight months that your brothers died in Çanakkale. Look, you are my last resort! If we are not going to hear *ezan* from *minarets*, if the candles of mosques will blow away then never come back to the village, and rather die. If you ever stop by Şıpka, pray for your uncle! Come on my son, God bless you.’ He greeted his mother and Abdülkadir and left. Abdülkadir was left alone with this woman of great spirit and asked: ‘Mother, so all men of your family were martyred, right?’ ‘Not only my family, son. It has been fifty years since a man was last buried to our village cemetery, but let us all die so that the religion is preserved.’ ‘So isn’t there any man in your village?’ ‘Our village is full of men. Didn’t you like us? We have never fallen behind our work. We are as we used to be, we tied black stones to our hearts, we will survive until the enemy is perished. I wish God will not take my life away before I see that day.’ Abdülkadir was almost frozen in front of this great woman. He could not resist his tears of pride and left after these words with faith and satisfaction: “It is the

mother who both gives birth and raise the nation. Turkish mother was still there and waiting for her train to depart.<sup>82</sup>

In the above quotation, the mother addresses the youngest male generation of her family, as her “last resort.” Such an expression also reflects the general emotional mode of WWI, at least among the bureaucrats, military officers and intellectuals, who were “the losers” of Balkan Wars and giving their last fight of existence. In this passage, it is through the mother that both the Ottoman land and the Ottoman state are talking to the young men asking to die for the land and the state. It is also critical to state that, in most of the written pieces, mothers were directly referred as the homeland. This representation of motherhood as homeland is in parallel with the generally accepted literature on gender and nationalism. According to this literature in the symbolic world of nationalism and militarism, states and armies are depicted as masculine figures while territory is identified with femininity. However, in the piece above and also in other texts it is difficult to point to such strict division. Since, in the case of the Ottoman Empire, which was in turmoil of crisis and a weakening state, such a position of weakness was also represented through mothers whose strength emanated from its determination for fight. Moreover, although religion – represented by the *ezan*- has almost always referred as the sole entity to be saved and sacrificed for, it would not be totally wrong to argue that, *ezan* is an expression drawing the

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<sup>82</sup> “Hüseyin anasının elini öptü. Zavallı ciğerparesini bir daha kokladı. Dedi ki: “Hüseyin... Dayın Şıpka’da baban Dömeke’de ağaların sekiz ay evvel Çanakkale’de yatıyorlar. Bak son yongam sensin! Minareden ezan sesi kesilecekse, caminin kandilleri körlenecekse sütlerim haram olsun öl de köye dönme. Yolun Şıpka’ya uğrarsa dayının ruhuna Fatiha okumayı unutma! Haydi oğul Allah yolunu açık etsin” dedi. Hüseyin bu sözleri kalbinin amak-ı ahd ü vefasına gömdüğünü ima eden bir huzû ile dinlemişti. Anasını ve Abdülkadir’i selamladı, gitti. Abdülkadir büyük ruhlulu kadınla yalnız kalmıştı, sordu: “-Valide demek sizin soyun erkekleri hep şehit oldular öyle mi? –Yalnız bizim soy değil oğul. Elli yıldır köylü mezarlığa delikanlı gömülmedi, din dursun da biz hep ölelim. –Şimdi köyünüzde hiç erkek yok mu? –Köyümüz bütün erkek dolu. Biz beğenmediniz mi, hiçbir işimiz geri kalmadı. Evvelden nasılsak yine öyleyiz, bağrımıza kara taş bağladık, düşman mahvoluncaya kadar dayanacağız. Yaradanım bana o günü göstermeden canımı almasın” dedi. Abdülkadir bu ulu vâlidenin karşısında donmuş kalmıştı. Dayanamadı gözlerinden iki cuybâr-ı iftihar salıverdi ve bir îman ve kanaatle şu sözleri söyleyerek ayrıldı: Milleti doğuran da ana yaşatan da. Türk anası hâlâ oradaydı, trenin hareketini bekliyordu.” *Harp Mecmuası*: “Türk Anası Ne Düşünüyor? Oğlu Asker Hüseyin’i teşyî ederken”, no. 17, in Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Harp Mecmuası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Kültür Yayınları, 2004, pp.267-69.

borders of the sovereign and independent land and the power of the state which are the real estates to be died for.

However, not all the pieces were as “heroic” as the one above. In the piece quoted below, the pain of a mother of a martyr is told in a poetic way. Although the writer refers to the glory of being the mother of a martyr, the stress is on the pain and suffering she has been through since she lost her son. For the writer, it is her son that makes her fulfill her womanhood. After a passage where she tells how her son was almost the only meaning of her life and how she suffered after the death of her son, she suddenly redirects her love for her son to the nation. And then unexpectedly she writes about revenge. But then she again turns into her poetic and painful language where she writes about the possibility of finding the dead body of her son. For our concern, the critical issue stressed in this passage is how pain is turning into revenge and hatred of the enemy could serve for the nation in war conditions.<sup>83</sup> This text is also a good example of war time motherhood emotions and the propaganda, which reflects the contradictory experiences and expressions of being the mother of martyrs or potential martyrs. The previous text was “the idealized Anatolian

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<sup>83</sup> “*Mevcudiyetimi, kadınlığımı bildiren, hayatımın boşluklarını dolduran, bana lâne-i pür saadetimde kitab-ı hamasetten şiirler okuyan, bütün elemelerimi ızdıraplarımı sürurlarımı zevklere tahvil eyleyen sendin yavrum şehit Doğan! Mevcudiyetin bir cihan, bir saltanattır. Gaybubetin lisan-ı hal ile ağlayan, siyahlar giymiş “firak” sütunları taşıyan, mahzun, mağmum bir mezaristandır. Hayatımda bütün arzularım, yüksek emellerim hep sendin oğlum şehit Doğan! Senin hafif, ince tebessümlerin, keskin, nazif nazarların beni yaşatır, varlığın var eylerdi muhterem büyük şehit! Bak şimdi validen sensiz garip kaldı. Ruhum kan ağlıyor, kalbime onulmaz yaralar açtın güzel yavrum! Sen benim medar-ı şanı, yegâne iftihar ettiğim bir şule-i şecaat, bir fanus-ı nurânurdun. Sen şimdi semalara suut ettin, meleklere kavuştun benim sevgili vazifeşinas, vatan aşığı, mert yavrum! Ah!.. Lâkin bî-çare anneni kimsesiz, neşesiz bıraktın, kalpgâhıma oklar sapladın, hicranlar çizdin, hiç silinmez “firak” izler bıraktın! Ah benim şehit Doğan’ım! Artık seni bir daha görmeyeceğim değil mi? Senin yerine vatani göreceğim, vatani seveceğim. İntikamını elbet bir gün düşmandan alacağım. Şimdi sen kim bilir hangi dağda, hangi, kayanın dibinde ezildin, kim bilir hangi hainin kurşunuyla şehit edildin? Ah!.. O dağları bilsem, oraları, o ıssız ovaları tanısam, oraya gider, kemiklerini bulurum, koklarım. Hazin, âteşin gözyaşlarıyla onları selamlar, ıslatırım. Artık sen şimdi bir sakf-ı nurani altında lâhuti bir âlem aradında müebbet uyuyorsun, sinesinden “firak” ateşleri saçan anneni bekliyorsun, değil mi? Ben ise mahzun, perişan kan ağlıyorum, yavrum. Sana kavuşmak için feryat ediyorum. Benim biricik Doğan’ım, Doğan’ım diye haykırıyorum.” “Firak: Oğlum Şehit Doğan’a”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, year: 1, no. 1, 4 Nisan 1329 (April 17, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.20.*

mother” who was depicted as strong enough to suppress her pain in support of the military mission of the state.

In most of the writings on motherhood or by mothers, revenge becomes the action that should be taken. And mothers become the leading figures to create and coordinate the feeling of revenge. More than that, in the passage below, the writer turns *Kadınlar Dünyası* itself into a mother who would give birth and raise the generation that would take revenge from the enemy:

To my country: ...But do not ever be desperate and hopeless! Since, there is a prospective generation who will take revenge from your enemies and who will prove that Ottomanhood did not die! That prospective generation is embellished with rage and indignance, is equipped with malice and revenge, luminous with figures full of hope, is embellished with the fortune full of ambitions. Such a prospective generation will born with the guidance of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and grow up the inspiration of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, run little ones! Future is yours, honor is yours, and homeland is yours!<sup>84</sup>

In fact, these kinds of writings represent a strong “radical” discourse in the journal, which propagandizes hatred of the enemy through agitating the “sons” of the nation. References to the historical events, specifically to the military defeats of the Ottoman Empire are critical in these writings. War of 93 (between the Ottoman and Russian Empires in 1877-78) and recent Balkan Wars in 1912-1913 are precisely stressed constituting a hallmark in Turkish nationalism. In the example below, speaker is an “ideal” patriotic mother whose mission is to instigate young men to work for the country with an aim of taking revenge. It might also be argued that, in such texts, young men of the country are depicted as castrated and emasculated. It is not only the new generation, but also the old generation that were castrated. They were defeated and more than that they developed

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<sup>84</sup> “Fakat sen meyvus ve nevmid olma! Zira düşmanlarından oç alacak, Osmanlılığın ölmediğini isbat edecek bir nesl-i müstakbel var! O nesl-i müstakbel ki gazap ve infial ile müzeyyen, kin ve intikam ile mücehhezdir, o nesl-i müstakbel ki pür-ümit simalarla tabdar, emel-pira nasiyelerle pirayedardır, o nesl-i müstakbel ki Kadınlar Dünyası'nın irşadıyla doğacak, ilhamatıyla büyüyecektir, koşunuz küçük yavrular! Âti de sizin, şeref de sizin, vatan da sizindir!” Beşiktaş Çingiraklıbostan: Pakize Sadr, “Yurduma”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 7, 10 Nisan 1329 (April 23, 1913), in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 66-67.

peace with those oppressive countries. It was the absence of revenge that emasculated these men. Their sons were also supposed to be emasculated. The new generation should have been full of revenge and thus become real men. It was mothers who undertook the responsibility of creating men out of these castrated boys by injecting revenge to their blood.

Be sure that my little child, what goes around comes around. You do not need to remember the distant past, we have slept for 33 years without waking up after our defeat in the year of 93... We woke up with the roaring of the artilleries of the enemy at the gates of Istanbul from our thirty three year long indolent sleep... We called as our old comrades to those who suppressed us and as our natural allies to those who wanted to suppress us... We did not feel a strike of revenge against those who already suppressed or wanted to suppress us..... It is ignorance and insensitivity that brought us to this point..... If you want to live, but to live as a human, then work, work non-stop, live your life in a continuous exertion... Do not ever forget to take your revenge and vengeance! Adorn everything you know and learn with revenge, love your religion and land, flag and nation...<sup>85</sup>

Similar missionary roles for mothers which promotes the feeling of revenge among soldiers or potential soldiers are reproduced in the various literary works of the period. In a short story published in the journal *Sabah*, a mother of a soldier who died in Çanakkale gave a speech to a group of soldiers who were on their way to the front. The points that were stressed in this passage also summarize the ideological perspective in the perception of motherhood in the military function. The mother was proud of his young and vigorous son who went to the front right after the call. He had been wounded and had come back home twice, but went back to the front right after his wound was recovered and died in

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<sup>85</sup> “Emin ol ki yavrurum, bugün ne eker isen yarın onu biçersin. Uzaklara gitme, 93 senesindeki mağlubiyetimizden mütenebbih olmayarak 33 sene uyuduk... İşte bu otuz üç senedir daldığımız hab-ı gafletten İstanbul kapılarında gümbürdeyen düşman toplarıyla uyandık... Bizi ezenlere kadim dostumuz, ezmek isteyenlere tabii müttelikimiz dedik... Kalplerimizde bizi ezenlere ve ezmek isteyenlere karşı bir darbe-i intikam duyulmadı..... Bizi bu hale getiren cehalet, hissizliktir..... Sen yaşamak, fakat insanca yaşamak istersen çalış, hiç durmayarak çalış, ömrünü mütemadi bir sa’y içinde geçir... İntikamı ve öç almayı unutma! Her bildiğini ve her öğrendiğini intikam ile süsle, din ve vatanını, sancak ve milletini sev...” Pakize Sadri, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 41, 14 Mayıs 1329 (May 27, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 415.

Çanakkale.<sup>86</sup> In the story, the mother described his son as young and vigorous which was also the image used to describe almost all of the soldiers fighting in the Ottoman army. Thus Ottoman army was presented as consisting of young and dynamic men who devoted themselves to the nation, so much so that even if they were wounded in the front, they ran back to the front again and again after their wounds were recovered. War field or front was called as “*er meydanı*” which might be translated as “the arena of man (that is “the real man”)”. Here, there is also an implicit reference to those who “escape” from this arena fail to be “the real men”. Being a martyr was celebrated through the wishful consent of the mother, who stressed that her son would also ensure the God’s mercy on her. Her last words called the young men to fight with the enemy. That is, revenge which would be created and lived through remembrance, memory. The mother asked those soldiers to pray for her son when they reached Çanakkale, which was an act for remembering those who died before those who would die in the future and then her second request, or order, was to take the revenge of her son. As the story goes, those soldiers were highly impressed by the words of the mother and they promised to take revenge not only for her son, but also for all religious fellows.

In the examples above, mothers’ missionary role of creating and nurturing the feeling of revenge was described as a natural manifestation of internal pain. That is, mothers were considered to be either first-eye witnesses of historical events to be remembered or considered to be perfect transmitters of historical knowledge that was collected in their memory box containing the stories of the past. Both of these positions and processes were considered as “natural” as missing any external intervention. However there were also specific texts which stressed the importance of the education of women –as

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<sup>86</sup> “*Berhudar olun oğullarım. Benim de sizin gibi genç, dinç bir oğlum vardı. Daha geçen yaz davul çalar çalmaz esbabını giydi, askere gitti. Çanakkale’de düşmanlarla çok cenk etti. İki defa yaralı geldi, yarasını savar savmaz yine koştu. Nihayet er meydanında şehit düştü. Şimdi artık o cennettedir. Yarın huzûr-ı Rabbü’l-âleminde bana da şefkat dileyecektir. Bakın oğullarım, Çanakkale’ye giderseniz Osman’ın ruhuna bir fatiha okumayı unutmayasınız. Hem onun intikamını da alasınız. İhtiyar kadın susmuştu. Bu sözler adeta miknatıslanmış gibi bir hal alan kur’a efradı kemâ-i heyecanla cevap veriyordu: \_Merak etme valide... Hele bir düşmana gidelim, yalnız senin Osman’ın değil, bütün din kardeşlerimizin intikamını alacağız.*” Enis Tahsin, *Şehit Validesi*, Sabah, 19 Eylül 1331 (June 2, 1915) in *1. Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, Nesime Ceyhan (ed.), Istanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, p. 47.

potential mothers- in the field of history. In a passage in *Kadınlar Dünyası* it was stated that women should carefully educate themselves in history, learn the victories won by their ancestors and how they ran the country. It is only through such a qualified education of history that those children whom these women gave birth to would grow up fed with the emotion of malice and thus they would be equipped enough to take revenge from the enemies.<sup>87</sup>

Women's right to education was one of the demands raised in the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. One of the motives behind the demand on education stressed in the pages of the journal was to enhance the capacity of women in raising their children as patriots. Although women's expression of their pain and their demand for revenge is depicted as a natural and instinctual act, the emphasis on the journal on the significance of education of women reveals the performative aspect of these narrations. The most critical duty of patriots was to take revenge from all enemies of the nation and mothers had to be equipped enough to fill the hearts of these children with hatred during their childhood and adolescence, so that they would emotionally be ready to feel the need to take revenge. As stated in a passage in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, future generation was shaped in a way that they internalize the mission of taking revenge of the disastrous past. In this past the sacred values of nation was destroyed and the honor of the nation was insulted. They will defend Turkishness and save the country from that devastated position and will be ready to fight against the future attacks of the enemies (specifically the one in the North, referring to Russia). It is critical to note that, in this passage but also in other similar ones, the position that those young patriots were assigned to was almost always the position of defense, rather than attack. Such a remark did not refer to a political or military "choice" decision or hope in the side of peace politics. Rather it signified how politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals of the period felt locked in the position of defense which would have been lasting for a quite long time.

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<sup>87</sup> *Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti*: "Bugün kadınlarımız tarihi tamamıyla anlayıp ecdadımızın fütihatlarını takip etmekte oldukları usul-i idareyi hikmet-i tarihle anlayıp ıtıla kesbederlerse o analardan doğacak çocuklar şüphesiz düşmanlarına karşı bir kin besleyerek büyümeye başlarlar ve bu evlatların intikamları ise tabii başka olur." Mehpere Osman, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 76, 18 Haziran 1329 (June 1, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 274.

Future generations, after saving the country from the enemies and honoring the name of the nation by taking revenge, would work for the development of their country in the way to civilization. Women and girls, as potential mothers, were the ones who would grow these future generations, complete their souls with the knowledge and feeling of love of the nation and country, so that they would be able to enhance Turkish identity and honor its glorious past.

It is critical and interesting to note that, loving a nation is not only an emotion but also knowledge. Loving one's nation was not considered just as a natural potential, but also as knowledge to be learned and developed. It was specifically at this point that mothers were considered as teachers educating the future generations.<sup>88</sup> Motherhood as natural phenomenon had the potential to plant patriotic love in the hearts of children and more than that, cultural side of patriotic love could and should have been developed first in mothers so that they could pass it on to their children using motherhood as a means of transmission. It was through such a legitimation process that women's right to education was defended in the name of patriotic duty.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> “*Kalplerimizi sızlatan felâkât-ı ahîremizde çiğnenen mukaddesatımızın ve tahkir edilen izzet-i nefsi millimizin intikamını alacak ve Türklerin o ezeli düşmanları olan şimal komşumuzun bir gün gelecek seylâb-ı hücumuna karşı Türklüğü müdafaa edecek ve memleketi şu bulunduğu harap ve perişanîyetten kurtararak âsar-ı marifet ve medeniyetle revnak-bahş edecek olan nesl-i âtiyi âguş-ı terbiyesinde büyütecek, vatan ve milliyet-perverlik fikir ve hissini samim-i ruhlarına yerleştirecek Türklük şeref ve ulviyetini ve şaşaa-i maziyesini ihya ve iade ettirecek olan kızlarımızın talim ve terbiyesi için inas mekteplerimizin de teksiri bir zaruret-i katiyedir.*” Hatice, “Kızlarımızın Lüzum-ı Tahsili,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no: 88, 30 Haziran 1329 –9 Şaban 1331 (July 13, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 403-404.

<sup>89</sup> “*Ey Türk kızları! Siz evlâtlarınıza bu bedbaht yurdun istirdadından bahsedecek misiniz? Onun mukadderat-ı maziyesinden, hufre-i ademe nasıl sürüklendiğinden, Bulgarlara, canavarlara nasıl teslim-i nefsi ettiğinden bahsedecek misiniz? Hayatınız bu talihsiz yurdun teneffüs ettiği iniltilere mütenasiptir. O daima ağladıkça siz emin olunuz ki hiç gülmeyeceksiniz. Türk kalpleriniz daima ağlayacak, daima inleyecektir.*” Aliye Cevat, “Mehtapta,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 69, 11 Haziran 1329 (June 24, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 201.

### 1.5.2. Mothers as Activists

Second mothers themselves were identified as nationalist activists. Thus motherhood was defined as an active, rather than a passive position in the war. Differentiating between active and passive positions of motherhood indispensably leads to a problem about division of labor within private and public spheres. However, the argument here is that, during the periods of crisis, the line between public and private sphere blurs. The roles and practices previously defined in private sphere are now being redefined as apparent public identities and roles in the service of the nation, the army or the state. In the case of mothers, they were asked to present their service not only to their own children but also to all children of “their nation”. Although such service would gain more literal meaning when these mothers worked in philanthropic organizations<sup>90</sup> they would also be serving the nation by telling “the history” of their nation to their children through lullabies and stories.

A similar image of mother of the nation in pain was also represented by Şükufe Nihal:

Oh the young woman! Come to the field of cruelty created by the confusion of humankind with your clean and enlightened heart, your tender and compassionate soul, your noble feelings and innocent virtue. There are millions of people there waiting for the joy of your arrival... They lost their existence in the darkness of their souls and in the darkness of sadness for centuries, they continue living since they did not die...” “After more influential regards, after deeper dissection and examination, they cried out finding the last and real sun of the salvation: “Mother, mother! Mother who would keep our hands and show the road to liberation, where are you? Come and save us...” “Oh young woman, answer those in sorrow asking for help who moan in dark spaces... Look, missing their mother and guide, they entered into the terrible absence of ravine. You, poor, you were also motherless, but now, learn/know your place... You

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<sup>90</sup> “*Balkan Harbi esnasında kafîle kafîle İstanbul’a gelmekte olan biçare muhacirlerin hal-i sefalet istimallerini görerek kalpleri parça parça olan hammiyyetli hanımefendilerin annelik hüsn-i şefkatperveraneleriyle tesis ettikleri “Kadınkar Esirgeme Derneği” de Harb-i Umumi’de hamiyet-i vataniyesini izhâr ve ispat etmiştir.*” Lebib Selim, “Türk Kadınlığının Harb-i Umumideki Faaliyeti,” *Türk Yurdu*, year:5, no: 96, 5 Teşrinisani 1331 (November 18, 1915), p. 270-271.

will save this nation, this devastated nation. Do not get lost in your grandmothers' destroying sleep!.<sup>91</sup>

In the passage above, "activist" motherhood was also constructed through a list of dichotomies and these dichotomies can be subsumed under the general opposition between the old and the new empire: Turkish vs. Ottoman, Anatolian women vs. women of Istanbul, upper class elite women vs. lower class old women, mother of the new family vs. mother of the old family. Almost all of these categories referred to the differentiation between the ideology of empire, that is imperial ideology and nationalism which were competing ideologies at the time being.

There are also poems targeting the female audience calling them to serve the nation. A poem named *Vatanın Kızlarına* (To the Daughters of the Country)<sup>92</sup> published in *Türk*

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<sup>91</sup> "Ey genç kadın! Pak ve münevver kalbin, rakik ve şefik ruhunun, yüksek hislerin, masum faziletinle şu hercümerc-i beşeriyetin saha-i zulmüne gel! Orada, senin saadet-i vürudunu bekleyen milyonlarca halk var... Onlar, asırlardan beri, zulmet-i ruh, zulmet-i efkâr içinde mevcudiyetlerini kaybetmişler, serseri perişan, ölmedikleri için yaşıyorlardı..." "Daha nafiz nazarlar, büyücek bir teşrih tedkikten sonra, son ve hakiki hurşid-i necatı bularak haykırdılar: "Anne, anne! Elimizden tutacak, bize bir rah-ı selamet gösterecek anne, neredesin? Gel bizi kurtar..." "Ey genç kadın, muzlim boşluklarda inleyen şu istimedat-ı hazine cevap ver... Bak zavallılar, annesiz, rehbersiz, bu mahuf girive-i ademe daldılar. Sen, zavallı, sen de annesizdin, lakin şimdi kendi mevkiini öğren... Bu milleti, bu harap milleti, artık sen kurtaracaksın!. Sen, ninelerinin o muhrib uykusuna karışma!.." "Bugünün Genç Kadınına" *Kadınlık*, no.1, 8 Mart 1330 (March 21, 1914), 4-5 in Şükufe Nihal, *Bütün Eserleri, Yazılar 1909-1966, Hitabe/Demeç/Söyleşiler, Kadınlık, İçtimaiyat, Sanat-Edebiyat*, Yaprak Zihnioğlu (ed.), Istanbul: Kitapyayınevi, 2008, p.9.

<sup>92</sup> *Vatanın Kızlarına*  
Hep toplanın, gelin,  
Biçare annenin  
Biçare kızları! Bu yeşil kubbe altına.  
Hep dinleyin, kulak kesilin, annemiz vatan  
Titrek sesiyle haykırıyor; kalbine batan  
Bir haçerin zehirleri akmış hayatına...  
Dört ayda yüz bin oğlunu kurban veren ana  
Ruhunda bir cünun ile ağlar ve onların  
Hala sıcak kanında yatarken koşun, sarın,  
Kalbindeki ceriha ölüm vermesin ona.

*Ey her nevazişinde muhabbet ve merhamet*  
*Meşhun olan kadın eli! Karşında kan sızan*  
*Bir anne kalbi var, ona bir aşk ile uzan;*

*Yurdu*, called young women in the service of their country. In the poem, while the country was defined as mother, these young women were defined as its daughters. Daughters were called to gather under the green sky which symbolizes the flag of Islam or lands protected by Islam. Daughters should first and foremost hear and feel the trembling voice of the mother telling the pain she has been through. The mother was poisoned with a dagger sank in her hearth; she sacrificed thousands of her sons in four months and it is time for the daughters to run and ease the pain of their mother so that the wound in her heart will not let her die. It is critical to note that this poem describes the psychological mood of the Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats, right after the Balkan Wars. The physical and psychological pain of the mother/the country described in the poem referred to the pain that Ottoman people and Ottoman state had experienced during and after the Balkan Wars. The poem, after portraying the pain of the mother, called out to the daughters to become a healing force for their mother. Only if they do that the mother would not lose herself in mourning and their honor and prosperity wouldn't be left unprotected. It is at this point that the poet indicates the potential threats for the daughters, without the protection of their mother, they, as oppressed women, would lose their honor and prosperity in the hands of the enemy. In the end of the poem, the poet addresses those women who were not aware of these threats and got lost in their own world of fancy dreams. Such women were described as women who lost their national identity. They almost lost the nobility they had inherited from their

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*Ver hasta, yaşlı anneye ümmid ü tesliyet...  
Hep toplanın, gelin,  
Biçare annenin  
Biçare kızları! Ona azıcık şifa verin.  
Ah olmasın o matemi-i dünyaya dalmasın;  
Namusunuz, saadetiniz öksüz olmasın;  
Mazlum-ı levsî olmayınız düşman ellerin.  
Ey gözleri dalgın, kulakları dalgın ve bi-şuur  
Hala dudaklarında terennüm uçan kadın!  
Bilmem ki Türk mü, yoksa vatansız mıdır adın?  
Elmaslarınla parlamaz alnında bir gurur  
Ecdadının asaleti ruhunda öldü mü?  
Kardeş cenazeler kefen ister, vatan hayat...  
Üstünde parlayanları artık, çıkar uzat;  
Sil leblerinden artık o çılgın terennümü!...*

February 4, 1328 Celal Sahir

*Türk Yurdu*, year: 2, no: 33, 7 Şubat 1328 (February 20, 1913), p. 149.

ancestors. Their eyes and ears were far away from seeing and hearing the real world around them. These women were certainly upper class rich women depicted as women who were wearing valuable jewelries in a period of war when the country was in a desperate situation. The poets' mission was to awaken and enlighten these women so that they would leave their richness for their country, leave their uninterested mood to serve for their country. Women were invited to mourn for the death and to build life out of ruins (*Kardeş cenazeler kefen ister, vatan hayat...*). They were asked to present their material means in the service of their country and thus meet with the reality of their environment.

Various positions, roles and missions women were attributed to during the war had already been recognized and promoted during and right after the war. In most of the speeches and written pieces, women were appreciated not only for surviving but also being able to raise and educate future generations and also feeding the whole country by cultivating the land in the absence of men. In a text written by Suphi Nuri in 1919 in the journal *İleri*<sup>93</sup> presents a general summary about the war time activities of women and how these activities were “promoted” by the government and by the intellectuals. Suphi Nuri describes the situation of women in comparison to the men fighting in the front against various disasters. This comparison exemplifies a typical description of gender roles and positions during the war. That is, men were the brute force of the war, their “job” and “responsibility” was to fight, die and kill for their country. They were sacrificing their

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<sup>93</sup> “Bu felaketli Harb-i Umumi’de erkeklerimiz cephelelerde bin türlü felaketlere ma’ruz iken, zavallı ve bedbaht kadınlarımız cephe gerisinde her türlü yalnızlığa, sefalete, meşakka rağmen bir taraftan nesl-i atının terbiyesine hasr-u vücud ediyor ve diğer taraftan topraklarımızı ekerek cümlemizi muhakkak bir açlıktan kurtarıyordu. Geçen meş’um harb senelerinde bi-çare ve za’if kadınlarımızın neler çektiklerini bilmeyen, görmeyen var mıdır? İşte bu felaket seneleri tabi’atıyla kadınları hayata, hayat-ı içtima’iyyeye doğrudan doğruya ve bir erkek gibi karıştırdı. Erkeklerin yerine kısmen kadınlar geçti. Evvela Hilal-i Ahmer kadınlara büyük bir saha-i faaliyet açtı. Tarlada işsiz kalan kadın tek başına zira’iyyat-ı te’mîn etti. Şehirlerimizde kadınlar mehma-emken erkeklerin yerlerine geçerek dükkanlarda, fabrikalarda, belediye işlerinde mü’essesat-ı ticariyye ve hatta deva’ir-i hükümette hayat-ı ictima’iyyemizi idare ettiler. Bütün harb senelerinde şayan-ı teşekkür bir surette her türlü mevani’e rağmen kızlarımız mekteplerine devam ettiler ve Rüşdi ve İ’dadi tahsili gören kızlarımızın adedi binleri geçti. ‘Ali tahsil takib edenlerin yekünü de şayan-ı memnuniyet bir derecede ilerledi.” Suphi Nuri, “Kadınlarımıza Hürmet”, *İleri*, no:460, 18 Nisan 1335 (April 18, 1919) cited in Yaprı Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadınlar Birliği*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003, p.86.

bodies, their lives for the sake of their people and country. Thus, men's national/religious duty was clearly defined as such and it was labeled the toughest duty that a person could perform for the country. Women's wartime activity had usually been depicted in comparison to the men/the soldiers' fighting in the front. For instance, Suphi Nuri, started his paragraph with a sentence where he states that men faced/endured almost every kind of disaster while women, miserable and unfortunate, struggled loneliness, poverty, and though conditions. It might be argued that, it was through such a comparison that women's wartime public activities were not only legitimized but also appreciated, despite the fact that women were not dying like men at the fronts. What they had to face and had to stand against at the home front was, although not the same, still as valuable as men's activity at the front. It is also critical to note that, in such gender division of labor, men were always portrayed as strong, courageous individuals, while women were portrayed as pitiable, weak individuals. Unexpectedly enough, women's wartime activities were considered and promoted as heroic since they were doing what was considered to be high above their capacity as women. Women were not only raising and educating the next generation, they were also feeding the rest of the population by cultivating the land by themselves in the absence of male power. Besides meeting the basic needs of the society through meeting the basic needs of their families, they were also almost "forced" to join public life "as if they were men" due to war conditions. As Suphi Nuri continued, positions emptied by men were replaced by women: They worked in *Hilal-i Ahmer* (Ottoman Red Crescent) which constituted a significant field of work for women. While women in rural areas were working in the fields, women in the cities worked in the stores, in the factories, in the municipalities, in the field of trade, even in state affairs. More than that, women have not neglected their own education despite the responsibilities they took in the public sphere, they continued to follow their courses in schools special for women. Suphi Nuri's passage written in 1919, appreciating and honoring the role women played during the war, also gave clues about the role that women expected to play in the coming years.

Policies promoting "national economy" had already been on the agenda before the war in practice. Union and Progress Party developed policies to nationalize, that is to Turkify the economy and increase demand for local production against foreign products.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Zafer Toprak, *Milli İktisat, Milli Burjuvazi*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995.

During this period, there are remarkable number of articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, emphasizing the role and duty of women for the success of nationalizing economy. In a piece written by Ulviye Macit, the issue was brought up not only as a part of women's duties, but rather as an indispensable function of womanhood, as an issue related the essence of womanhood.<sup>95</sup> Ulviye Macit argued that women were the most concerned part of the population in their responses to situations brought happiness or pain for the country. It was the reason that economists should have been raised by them. In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, such essentialist arguments have been made with respect to various issues. In parallel with such a perspective, the text promoted the idea that womanhood was the leading and the guiding spirit of "nationality" and "heroism". Every nation would be born into the arms of womanhood and raised by womanhood. Thus a well-known identification was established between womanhood and motherhood. However, subsequent to this idealized womanhood and motherhood, a strict separation was made between the concerned mother women and

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<sup>95</sup> *"Biz kadınlar, memleketin âlâm ve saadetiyle en ziyade alâkadar bir unsur olduğumuzdan iktisatçılar bizim âğuşumuzdan doğmalıdır. Kadınlık, milliyetin, cengâverliğin mehdidir. Her millet kadınlığın kucagından doğar. Bugün bonmarşelerde, Karlmanlarda avuç avuç altın serpererek memleketin kanını ecnebilere massettiren hanımlarımızın milliyetle kabil-i telif olmayan o harekât-ı hafif meşrebanesi yüzünden milletimiz kemik ile deriden ibaret bir kadit halindedir. Anadolu'daki fakir çiftçi hemşirelerimizin kendilerini her türlü ziyet ve saadetten mahrum ederek verdikleri paraları bu suretle israf ettiğimizden millet istikrazlar içinde boğulmuştur. Feyzdar memleketimiz birçok kuraklık içinde bulunuyor. Buna feyz vermek biz validelerin vazifesidir. Hükümetimiz memur ekerek istikraz biçtikçe daima ye's ve hicran içinde bulunmaya mahkûmdur.*

*...Biz!... Anlı şanlı mazinin Viyanalara dayanan Osmanlıların torunları, hilâlin kızları, cebin-i pak ü safımızı mezellet toprakları içinde bırakmaya tahammül edecek miyiz?..... Bir cereyan-ı âtil ile akan Dicle, Fırat'ın, Tozan'ın kızları, bu hakaretlere katlanacak mıyız? Din ve namusumuza, şeref ve milliyetimize kasededen salîp ordularını toplayarak üzerimize hücum eden, hemşirelerimizi hun-ı bekâretiyle elleri mülemma olan vahşilere karşı hayatımızı müdafaa etmek için bütün servetimizi mass eden, müessesat-ı maliyeye hâip ve hâsir, mahcup ve lerzan müracaat etmekte devam edecek miyiz? İşte yurt hemşirelerimiz de bu cihetleri anlamak istiyoruz. Eğer üzerinde bulunduğumuz sath-ı mailde yukarıya doğru suut edecek isek milliyete sarılmalyız. Milliyet, bunda sehhar, füsunkâr bir kuvvet var. Milliyet, mucizeler ibda eder." Ulviye Macit, "Yurt Hemşirelerime," *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 8, 11 Nisan 1329 (April 24, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.78.*

those women who neglect the national good for their own good. The second group of women were considered to be deprived of the essence of womanhood; explicitly they were not considered to be genuine women, since they behaved to the disadvantage of their people and nation. Women's alienation from their national identity implied their alienation from their womanhood. These women were upper class rich women who made their shopping and spent their money in the shops where foreign products were sold or which were owned by "the foreigners", which included the Ottoman subjects who were not Muslims. This act of shopping was depicted as vampires drinking the blood of the country and it was these "so-called" women who presented the blood to the vampires. These women were considered to be responsible for the poverty and hunger among the Turkish/Muslim population. Interestingly enough, the act of shopping was defined as "*hafif meşreb*" which, (among other meanings, such as coquettish) used to describe women who had illicit sexual relations with men. Thus these upper class rich women who get into economic relations with "foreign" traders were betrayers, evil characters of the national narrative. Against these "evil" women, the ideal model that was promoted and appreciated was the poor, peasant Anatolian women. These poor peasant Anatolian women introduced all the money they had in hand by sacrificing their own wellbeing for their country. The reason behind the debt problem of the state was the money handed to the state by poor peasant women and carelessly spent by the rich upper class women. It was the duty of the mothers to fix the problem. The solution was to raise their children as traders rather than civil servants, so that the budget gap would be solved for the good. In the rest of the text, female readers of the journal were invited to remember their powerful, victorious Ottoman ancestors and fight against the enemy who attacked their religion, honor and national identity, who violated their sisters, who destroyed and exploited the economy. It is critical to note that, while defining "We" as sisters, the writer refers to women who were the grandchildren of the Ottomans, the daughters of crescent, that is daughters of Islam, the daughters of the rivers of Fırat, Dicle, that is the women of the Eastern regions. Such a spectrum of identifications was one of the popular identification of the ideal women promoted as mother women right before the war: Ottoman, Muslim, encompassing various regions of the empire and various class positions of women. This ideal was directly

opposite of the upper class rich women of Istanbul who rejected their Ottoman and Muslim identity.

*Kadınlar Dünyası* was itself a political arena and this political arena was basically, by definition employed in the service of women's rights. However "woman" and womanhood", as conjectural definitions, had implications in relation to national, religious, class... identities. In a passage, where readers of *Kadınlar Dünyası* were invited to become "activists" through the journal, young women were agitated by "reminding" them their bonds to their country and nation:

My daughter... Think my child, that, your benevolent mother is your country, your beloved father is your nation, and your sweet fiancé is your flag! Because, you will find blessing in your country and all virtue among your nation; you will see your veil in the color of your flag, you will see the reflection of your face in the crescent of your flag, and you will see the light of your eyes in the star of your flag. With your active and lively body, with your pure thoughts and mind be the bright sun of womanhood and of *Kadınlar Dünyası* which is the precious part of womanhood.<sup>96</sup>

### 1.5.3. Mothers as the Builders of the "New" Family

As in most of the nationalization processes, formation of the nation coincided with the formation of "nationalized" families. WWI was a period when the Ottoman society was experiencing various nationalist projects going hand in hand with modernization processes. Although Ottoman State would turn into Turkish State and Ottoman society and subject would turn to Turkish society and Turkish citizen in a few years, during the war identities that were addressed oscillated between being Ottoman and being Turkish. Formation of a new and modern family was already in the process and mothers were defined as the

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<sup>96</sup> "Kızım,.... Düşün ki çocuğum, senin en müşfik annen vatanın, en sevgili baban milletin, en sevimli nişanlın da sancağındır! Çünkü bütün nimetleri vatanında, bütün meziyetleri milletinde bulacak, gelinlik duvağını sancağının renginde, cemalinin aksini sancağının hilâlinde, gözünün nurunu sancağının yıldızında göreceksin. Faal ve cevval vücudunla, bakir fikir ve dimağınla kadınlığın ve uzv-ı kıymettarı Kadınlar Dünyası'nın bir şems-i tabdari ol." Beşiktaş-Çingiraklıbostan: Nezahat Sadri, "Kerime-i Muhayyelime", *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 18, 21 Nisan 1329 (May 4, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 179.

builders of this new family. Mothers, together with creation of these new families, were also responsible for raising the new man. Mothers were not only responsible of biological reproduction, that is giving birth and taking caring of young members of new family but also of cultural reproduction, that is taming the new man in such a way that he takes a national and modern “character”.<sup>97</sup>

The new family was also considered to be an economic unit. The process of marrying itself was an economic process. For example, the issue of dowry was an economic concern to be handled by the mothers. In an article written by Aziz Haydar<sup>98</sup>, the topic of dowry was discussed as a critical “problem” which had to be reconsidered within the economic policy promoting prudence. According to the article, since men were the sole breadwinners in most of the families, fathers were always concerned about how much the

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<sup>97</sup> “Çünkü denildi ki kalpleri kin ve intikam ateşiyle yanan bir cemiyet, bir hey’et-i ictimaiyedir ki müteali ve müterakki devletler arasında yaşatabilir. Başka yüksek ilimler, anlayamayacağımız nazariyetlerden ziyade bir terbiye, bir izzet-i nefis, kin ve intikamla yanan bir kalp lâzım. Öyle bir terbiye lâzım ki teceddüitten, terakkiden bizi uzaklaştırmasın. Fakat bunun yanında çocuklarımızda bir heyecan, bir hareket duyulsun. Onların azmi yanında bütün kuvvetler kırılsın. Öküz arabalarının tekerleklerine sarılarak perişan, dağınık hicret etmesinler. Öyle bir terbiye lazım ki kuvvetle istihfaf ettirsin, toprak muhabbeti, aile intikamı uyandırsın. Azimden, meşakkatten korkmasınlar. Ispartalılar gibi zayıf ve cılız çocukları aramızdan atalım. Hepsi kavi, sağlam, pür-heyecan, daima gayelerine yürüsünler. İşte bu kitle bize lâzım. Evet, bu denildi. Fakat bu kitle, bu ordu nasıl yetişecek? Kimler yetiştirecek? Bu soruların cevabı tek bir kelime: Kadın...” Nesrin Salih, “Bizde Aile Hayatı Niçin Yok”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 75, 17 Haziran 1329 (June 30, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.262.

<sup>98</sup> “Bizim müzmin derterimizden biri de çeyiz meselesidir. Bunu her baba düşünürse de validelerin pek müstesnalari bir dereceye kadar nazar-ı dikkate alıyor. Fakat onlar da umumi bir şekil alan cereyana kapılmaktan kendilerini kurtaramıyorlar. Bir valide ne kadar mütefekkir olursa olsun kızını gelin edeceği zaman âdat denilen şeye riayete kendince bir mecburiyet hisseder...(..) Asırlardan beri riayet olunan bu usul günden güne dairesini büyütmüş ve bu zamanlarda artık bir hastalık ailenin refahını mahveden bir maraz halini almıştır..... Eğer kızlarımız başlı başına ev açacak olurlarsa biz yine o eski göreneği bırakmalı, lüzumsuz ve havai şeyleri terk edip evlatlarımıza faydası olacak gibi dayanaklı ve lüzumlu eşya tedarik etmeliyiz. Bu hususu bugünlük validelere terk ediyorum...” Aziz Haydar, “Çeyiz”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp.130-132.

dowry cost would be. Although a small number of mothers also worried about how the dowry would affect the family budget, even they found themselves following the current fashion about the content of dowry. Mothers could not distance themselves from the obligation of applying the rules of “tradition”. As the argument goes, the tradition of dowry had increased its influence day by day and at the moment it was a quite big burden for family budget, threatening families’ prosperity. The advice that was given to the mothers was to buy their daughters everlasting, firm and required properties, rather than unnecessary and luxurious materials. Although fathers were the supplier of money, mothers were given the responsibility to apply the policy of prudence. In the local arena, families, as the smallest economic unit, were left to the hands of mothers.

Another “urgent problem” that was raised in the journal of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, was Turkish men’s tendency towards Christian women. The issue was raised by an author, Fatma Zerrin, from Kadıköy with a quite serious and alarming title: “The Big Danger (*Tehlikenin Büyüğü*)”<sup>99</sup>. According to Fatma Zerrin, emotional relations between Christian women and Turkish men had already been in the agenda for a certain time and at the moment such cases of relationships reached an alarming level. Turkish men were choosing Christian women as their wives. For future mothers of future generations, the only way to compete with those Christian women was to become highly qualified housewives and mothers. Thus, the advice of Fatma Zerrin to young women and potential mothers was to give less importance to official schedule in their school which included history, grammar, and French literature, but rather to focus on educating themselves as housewives and mothers.

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<sup>99</sup> “Bu ana kadar ehemmiyet vermediğimiz küçük hadiseler bugün büyük bir tehlike şeklini aldı. Evet, hissetmiyor musunuz, anlamıyor musunuz? Türk erkeleri Hristiyan kadınlara daha ziyade temayül ediyorlar. Onlarla izdivaç ediyorlar. .... Ey nesl-i atinin valideleri olacak benim küçük, masum hemşireciklerim! Size hitap ediyorum: Mekteplerinizde riyaziye misalleri hallinden, tarih sayfalarından, gramer kaidelerinden, nihayet lektürdeki Fransa’nın azamet ve ihtişamı hikâyelerinden ziyade –oh evet bunları da tahsil ediniz fakat en ziyade – ev kadınlığı, validelik tahsil ediniz ve öğreniniz.” Kadıköy: Fatma Zerrin, “Tehlikenin Büyüğü”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.132-135.

In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, most of the articles were written by Muslim, Turkish women. However there were few exceptions for the non-Muslim women who sent their articles to the journal. One of those non-Muslim women was a Greek woman who was a French and Greek teacher. Her article was on the new family and the role of mother within this family. The article is quite interesting in terms of showing how a national identity can even be claimed by its others. A woman who was excluded by the rising nationalism because she is non-Turkish and non-Muslim was giving advice about the role of family in nationalization process. She didn't hesitate to ask for a nationalization of the family although she was not able to be part of that national family as a matter of course. Loksandra Aslanidi explained her positioning with respect to Turkish nationalism and her concern about the issue. She started with apologizing for daring to write such a text since she was not fluent enough in the Ottoman language. She came across *Kadınlar Dünyası* accidentally and reading the journal aroused her national feelings. As a result, she could not prevent herself writing these sentences. The reason behind such emotional reflex was quite clear for her: "If anyone asks the reason, it is because if you are Turks, we are Ottomans. We are no different from each other. We are not foreigners to each other, we should get in contact with each other. We should exchange our ideas. After all, our country is same and our ambitions should also be the same."<sup>100</sup> Thus it might be argued that, Loksandra Aslanidi, as a Greek subject of the empire, felt the need to support "Turkish nationalism" in the name of Ottomanism. Building such an attempt through the ideological formation of family as a national unit is also a critical point to stress. Getting a closer look at the passage highlights how a supposedly early nationalized *millet* of the empire develop suggestions for the ruler hence the late comer in the nationalization processes regarding private sphere.

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<sup>100</sup> "Hanımefendiler, bendeleri lisan-ı Osmanıyı de pek iyi bilmediğim münasebetiyle cesaretimi affediniz, tesadüfi olarak gazeteniz elime geçmiş ve okumuş olup hemen bende de hissiyat-ı milliye uyanmış ve şu birkaç satırı yazmaktan geri durmamışım. Efendim niçin dersiniz siz Türk iseniz biz de Osmanlıyız. Ayrı gayrı şeyler değiliz. Yabancı değiliz, görüşmeliyiz. Tevhid-i fikr etmeliyiz. Zira vatanımız birdir, a'malimiz de bir olmalıdır." Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, "Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirelerine," *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913), in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 138.

The long article started with how the writer was surprised when she read the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and realized that Turkish women wrote and discussed on the issues like economics, music, family... Appreciating and being proud of such attempts, she decided to write an article about those issues herself with the motivation that it was her duty to contribute to such discussions. She felt with hope and optimism about the future of her poor country which was surrounded with various disasters.<sup>101</sup> Thus, it might be argued that, for Loksandra Aslanidi, it was the “civic duty” of an Ottoman subject, a Greek woman, to join a public debate and advocate women’s rights and thus serve national interest. Similar to most of the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Aslanidi also defended the development of women’s rights by stressing the political and social function of motherhood in raising patriotic future generations serving their country in the name of the national good. Women should be given a family environment that is suitable for raising patriotic children and this kind of a family environment can only be provided if women’s rights are acknowledged by the society. Husbands should acknowledge women’s rights as well and support, love and care for their lives and families.<sup>102</sup> Parenting capacities of women and men are critical for raising children in service of their nation. If mothers and fathers were deprived of these capacities, their children will also be useless and harmful. Aslanidi

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<sup>101</sup> “...*Türk hanımlarında ümitten hariç eser-i terakki, efkâr-ı ictimaiye ve iktisadiye-i milliyenin uyandığını hatırdan bile geçirmezdim. Halbuki müteaddit hanımefendilerin imzaları tahtında yazılan ‘Teenni Şarttır, İsrâfat Haramdır, Musiki, Görücülük’ vesaire makâlat bendelerini bütün bütün mahcup ettiler. Hemen kalemi alıp bu hususta bir iki söz söylemeyi vazife edindim ve bin türlü müsibetlere giriftar olan o zavallı vatanım hakkında yine ümitvar oldum.*” Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, “Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirelerine,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.127.

<sup>102</sup> “*Saniyen kendisi maişet ve istikbalini temin etmeksizin veyahut belki yüzünü bile görmediği, sesini bile işitmediği bir koca ile izdivaç eden bir kadının o semere-i hayatı olan ceninin istikbali de muhkem olabilir mi? Tabiidir ki olamaz. Zira böyle bî-çare valideler kendi istikballerini mahv ve izale eyledikleri gibi bütün evlatlarının hayatlarını da tesmim ederler.*” Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, “Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirelerine,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.127.

compared European population, Istanbul Christian population and Muslim population in terms of the number of such “harmful, useless people who were grown in families where women were deprived of their rights, ignorant and thus parenting was carried improperly. She argued that, Europe had solved this problem; even the Christian population got rid of such useless characters through conscious parenting processes. However, it was a huge problem for Muslim population. Surely, it is not possible to check these arguments, nevertheless, it might be argued that, Aslanidi was writing with a perspective that involve prejudices about the Muslim population and situates herself in a position of power that derives from her belonging to a more “developed and civil” community. So she gave advice through and within a “liberated” position and claimed to liberate the Muslim women. Although this is a bigger topic for further research, it is possible at least to question similarities between the ways she approached Muslim population/women and the ways the middle and upper class intellectual women of Istanbul approached rural peasant women writing about the ignorance of peasant women and the desperate conditions they were living in.<sup>103</sup>

Loksandra Aslanidi also supported the idea that there was a close and strong relationship between patriotism and motherhood and that, mothers had a key role in the formation of patriotic citizens/subjects. Children learned their mother tongues from their mothers. It was through the private time which children spent with their mothers that they learned about their nationality, their religion and their culture. Aslanidi strongly advised that mothers should absolutely be careful about spending their private time with their children in an efficient way, educating them to be qualified as patriotic individuals for their nations. It was only through such an education that boys would grow into soldiers ready to die for their countries and girls would be qualified enough to have a better understanding of the world and be ready to sacrifice themselves for their country. She presented examples from Greek history where strong and decisive young girls and mothers, -heroines- made

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<sup>103</sup> “*Türklerde adam yok değil, var. Türk kadınlarında hissiyat-ı milliye ve medeniye yok değil, var. Fakat bunlar ekalliyeti teşkil ediyorlar.*” Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, “Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirelerine,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkaracı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 136.

sacrifices for their nation and country. Unfortunately, she continued, such heroic, committed, self-sacrificed actions did not exist anymore among both Christian and Muslim populations. As already been mentioned in the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, such patriotic emotions and behaviors were replaced by daily leisure time activities and concerns such as eating good food, wearing nice clothes and following the fashion.<sup>104</sup>

The basic point that Aslanidi raised was -as she stressed clearly- to reveal the fact that women were directly bound to the nation, to the state and to the country through their duties they had to fulfill to their children.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> “Demek ki bir insanın hayatı ve istikbali pederden ziyade valideye mevdudur. Demek ki kadınlar ile hükümet ve vatan meyanesinde büyük bir münasebet vardır. Valide akşama kadar o mini mini yavrusuyla onun vaktini boş geçireceğine onu terbiye ve talim etmelidir. Nitekim çok evlerde görülür, çocuk birkaç sene böyle validesiyle devam ederse altı yedi yaşında annesinden kendi lisan-ı maderini, dinini ve milliyetini öğrenmiş ve takviye etmiş olur ki bilâhare o masum herhangi bir müesseseye tevdi olursa korkulmaz. O kendini aslan gibi müdafaa eder. Eğer erkek çocuk ise yalnız validesinin vermiş olduğu hissiyat-ı milliye ona kifayet eder, iyi bir asker olur. Vatan için feda-yı cana hazır bir kahraman olur. Eğer kız çocuğu ise validesinin aldığı terbiye-i evveliyeye sayesinde dünyayı daha iyi anlar ve elinden gelecek bir fedakârlığı vatanına feda etmekten çekinmez. Buna misal olmak üzere Yunan-ı kadim tarihinde bir harpte gemilerin organları bulunmadığı bir günde genç kızların ve kadınların saçlarını kesip vatan uğrunda güzel gözükmekten vazgeçtiklerini kemal-i taaccüb ve hayretle okuruz. (.....) Erkek çocuklarına mahsuu şu hatırayı yin Yunan-ı kadim tarihinde okuyorum. Tarih-i kadimde Yunanilerin komşu bir hükümete ilân eyledikleri bir harpte mağlup olarak vatanlarına avdet eden evlâtlarına valideleri “Evime basma, alçaksın, harpten mağlup geldin. Git arkadaşlarını bul da düşmana karşı yeni bir fütihat işle gel, o vakit evladımsın” kahramane sözlerini zikretmeksizin geçemeyeceğim. Bizde ne dersiniz deyiniz bunların şimdiki zamanlarımızda bir eseri görülmüyor. Menfaat-i şahsiye bizim her işlerimize karışıyor ve bizi günden güne inkıraza doğru yürütüyor. Bizde gerek Hristiyanlıkta gerek Türklerde güzel yemek, güzel giymek, modacılık refika-i muhteremlerimin geçen günkü nüshalarında yazdıkları vechile her terakkiyi bize bunlar veriyorlar.” Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, “Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirlerine,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.138.

<sup>105</sup> “Bizim nazariyemiz kadınların kendi evlatlarına karşı mecbur oldukları birtakım vezaiifle doğrudan doğruya millete, devlete, vatana, merbut olduklarını isbat idi ve bunu da mümkün mertebe şu kalem-i acizane ile isbata iyi kötü kadir oldum.” Gedikpaşa sakinelerinden ve Rum milleti efradından ve teba-i Osmaniyeden Fransızca ve Rumca muallimesi Loksandra Aslanidi, “Kadınlar Dünyası Muharrirlerine,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 63, 5 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu,

Similar arguments were also made by Muslim writers of the journal. Gender division of labor necessitated that men would spend their time outside earning money for their family. Thus women established the most intimate relation with the children. They would be the ones who had positive impacts on the characters of their children. Accordingly, women's weakness, ignorance, captivity meant the weakness and demolition of the society in general.<sup>106</sup>

Among those articles, which defined motherhood almost as a national service, there were also those ones which discussed about where to find role models for ideal patriotic mothers. In a piece written by Cahide Cevdet<sup>107</sup>, successful and appreciated Ottoman

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Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 138.

<sup>106</sup> “Çocuk ilk gıdayı, ilk mayayı anasından alır ve esaslı terbiye yine ana tarafından verilir. Çünkü baba o ailenin ihtiyacatını teskin için çalışmaya, bütün bir gününü buna hasr etmeye mecburdur. Halbuki çocukla temas eden anadır ve çocuklarında iyi tesirler bırakan yine analardır. İşte bir ailede en evvel tedkik olunacak “kadın”dır. Kadının zaafiyeti, cehaleti, esareti ailenin esareti, zaafiyeti ve binaenaleyh cemiyetin zaafiyet ve inhidamı demektir.” Nesrin Salih, “Türk Kızları”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 66, 8 Haziran 1329 (June 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 167.

<sup>107</sup> “Bir memlekette saadet-i hayat, beka-yı mevcudiyet aramak için kadınlarına bakmak kafidir. Çünkü vatan, millet, saadet, selamet, felaket, mahviyet hepsi kadındır, validedir. Bir heyet-i ictimaiyede en mühim âmil kadındır.

Bütün letafet, hep haslet ana kucağında gizlidir. Bir çocuk vatan muhabbetini, din hissini ana âguşundan alır, terbiye-i insaniyesini orada koklar, milliyet hissini orada duyar, yaşamak için her şeye esas olan aile terbiyesini orada bulur. Bütün lezzet ve mehabetini anasının gerdanından yalar.

Midhat ve Reşit Paşalar, Yavuzlar ve Fatihler hep analarının refik nazarları önünde, münevver fikirleri altında yetişmiş, zinde ve tuvana kolları arasından çıkmıştır. Nerede şimdi bizde o kadın, nerede o mürebbi ve mürebbiye? Olmadığındandır ki vatani cani ve katiller bürüdü. Hükümet biz kadınlardan erkekler kadar hizmet beklemeli ve istemelidir. Bu hususta Avrupa'dan misal göstermekte hatasını yapmayarak vakt-i saadeti müteakip bir İslâm kadınının deve üstünde kumandanlığı ve Rus seferinde Kara Fatma'yı hatırlatmayı kâfi görürüm(...)

Hatta hükümet bizler için bilâhare bir kanun da vaz' edip bir aile ihtiyacından fazla ve sıhhati yerinde olanları, lüzumunda gençlerimizin silâh başına koştukları zaman kalem, hastane ve kışlalarda istihdam edecek ictimaiyatımızda mevki ayırmalıdır. Hulâsa şunu enzar hamiyete arz etmek isterim ki ahkâm-ı Kuraniyeyi tatbikte gecikmeyelim ve müsaadat-ı diniyeden istifade eyleyelim.” Cahide Cevdet, “Bizde Kadın,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 66, 8 Haziran 1329 (June 21, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk

sultans like Yavuz and Fatih and Ottoman grand viziers like Midhat and Reşit were presented as well-known examples. They were raised by progressive, active, strong women. In most of the texts where mothers and motherhood was glorified, the characteristics that were attributed to mothers were usually related to compassion, patience and patriotism. However, in this text, mothers were idealized as strong and progressive activists who would raise strong invader sultans on the one hand and progressive “constitutionalist” grand viziers on the other. Cahide Cevdet complains about the absence of such qualified mothers who opened the path for murderers and killers to become dominant in the country. That was why the government had to call women into service as much as they called men. The writer particularly mentioned that, role models for women should not be searched in Europe, rather in the history of Muslim women. *Kara Fatma*, who was a strong and successful heroine figure during the war with Russia, was given as a specific example of Muslim heroine mothers and heroine Muslim women. Cahide Cevdet suggested that the government would apply a similar procedure of recruiting soldiers among women, so that women should get positions in state offices, in hospitals and in barracks when needed. Following the rules of *Kur'an* was essential for creating and promoting ideal motherhood and womanhood. There are also other texts referring to the mothers of “the golden age” who were the real actors of historical successes by growing up heroes.<sup>108</sup>

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Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 169-170.

<sup>108</sup> “*Hanımevendiler, ecdadımız olan eski Türk anaları! Dikkat buyuruluyor mu, eski Türk anaları diyorum, çünkü biz Türklüğümüzü de unuttuk. Bütün cehd ü gayretimizi, haysiyet-i milliyemizi ihlâl eden harekâta hasr ettik. Ne hissiyat-ı milliyemiz, ne de terbiye-i İslâmiyemiz kaldı. Evet eski Türk anaları dünyayı celâdetleriyle titreten evlâtlarını nasıl büyütürlerdi? Bunları niçin nazar-ı dikkate almıyoruz? İşte bu hareketlerinin neticesi değil mi idi ki Türkler bunca azim muzafferiyetlere nail oldular, namlarını cihangirlik ile teşhir ettiler? Çünkü o analar henüz evlatlarını “ana, baba” demeye başladığı zaman onların küçücük fikirlerini vatan muhabbeti, vatan sevgisi ile doldururlardı..... Fakat maa’teessüf, şimdiki valideler evlâtlarını, üzülme yavrurum, ağlama cicimlerle büyütüyor. Bunu da yapan anasırımızın münevver kısmıdır! Avam takımı ise nasıl evlât yetiştirdiklerini, henüz o zavallılar âğuş-ı maderde iken nasıl büyütülmekte olduğunu herkes bilir.” Azize Şadi, “Terbiye-i İbtidaiye,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no: 19, 22 Nisan 1329 (May 5, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.195.*

Motherhood was also a position and identity promising power for women. In articles discussing about ideal families where patriotic children were going to be raised, some of the writers went further arguing that women should be the head of families. Fatma Zerrin<sup>109</sup> was one of them who stated that the mother should have been the sole dominant figure in the families. Ruling the family would be categorized as a right for women. She would have to be left alone in educating and disciplining her child. The child should know and recognize the mother as the sole head, manager. She criticized the position of fathers, husbands in the Ottoman society who intervened mothers in their decisions and actions with regard to the children. However, in the West, men never would get involved in family issues; he lived as a welcomed, dearest guest of the house; housewives ruled families.

Reconstructing the family was considered to be a revolutionary act. Seniye Ata<sup>110</sup> described the contemporary family as useless for Turks and for women. For her, families

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<sup>109</sup> “Her ailede hakim-i yegâne, valide olmalıdır. Bir evin hanımı o evin hakimi ve o ailenin reisidir. Bu onun hakkı, hakkı sarihidir. Binaenaleyh bir mini mini çocuğun terbiyesine aile efradından hiç kimse karışmamalıdır ve valide hariçten gelen bir müdahaleye mâni olmalıdır. Mini mini, âmir, reis olarak yalnız validesini tanımalıdır. Bizim yere göğe koyamadığımız Türk evlerinin müstebit beyefendilerine muntazır, garp hayat-ı ictimaiyesinde evin efendisi hiçbir şeye karışmaz. Onun her istirahati temin olunmuştur. O, evde âdeta temelli ve muhterem bir misafir gibidir. Evin hakimi, ailenin reisi o evin hanımıdır.” Fatma Zerrin, “Terbiye-i İbtdaiyede Validelerin Mevkii”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no: 70, 12 Haziran 1329 (June 25, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.207.

<sup>110</sup> “O halde biz inkılâbı nereden yapacağız? Bunu bilmeyen hiçbir genç kardeşimi tasavvur edemem. Şüphesiz ki bu, milletlerin esası, temeli olduğu halde bizde ne Türklere ne de kadınlarına hayrı olmayan ‘ailede’, hah işte bugün bir milleti çoğaltan ve buna kuvvet, kudret veren ailesidir. O milletin maziye doğru akan şerefli senelerini istikbalde de yaşatan aileleridir. Kuvvetli ordu, faal donanma vücuda getiren ailedir. Bir milleti zengin, mesut, müreffeh yapan da yine aile ocaklarıdır. Fakir, tembel, çürük bir millet husule getiren de aileleridir. Mazisini unutmuş, şerefini kaybetmiş, ne olduğunu zihninden silmiş bir milletin bu bozukluğuna, bu tedennisine sebep de yine ailesidir, değil mi?”

Şimdi bir milletin mazi ve âtisine, mukadderatına tesir eden bu ailelerin en büyük direği kimdir? Erkek mi! Hiçbir vakit bir erkek izdivaç ettikten sonra mensup olduğu milleti üzerinde ictimai bir tesiri, bir rolü yoktur. O bu devrinde getirip götürücüden başka bir şey değildir.

Kadının mevkii, ehemmiyeti ise bilâkis izdivaçtan sonra başlar. Bundan evvel hiç olduğu halde bade’l-izdivaç milletin mevcudiyeti üzerinde büyük bir rol oynar, vazifesi artar, istikbal-i milleti hazırlar. Kendisinden sonra gelecek batının metin ve çalışkan olması kadının ciddi ve samimi çalışmasına bağlıdır. Bir yerde okumuştum, büyüklerden birisi

were institutions, structures that kept the victorious past of their nations for the future. Family was the source of a strong army and navy force in the military field and the source of wealth in the field of economy. Families might also create poor, lazy, and degenerated nations, and nations without history and honor. Stating the critical structural importance of family for a strong nation, the writer developed arguments with reference to gender division of labor within families. Similar to the article discussed above, men's role and function in the families were considered to be secondary to women's role. In this argument family was described almost as a contested field of power conflicts between men and women. In such texts, women's rights defenders, argue for a power field for women cleaned from the (potential) interventions by men. Seniye Ata even went further and argued that men's social function came to an end by marriage and they become just suppliers for the family. Women on the other hand, began to be influential in the future of the nation after getting married and giving birth. They determined the character of the future generations. Mothers would shape the children's mind, not men; mothers would provide their children with ideas and strength so that they would develop national conscience.

### 1.6. Opposing mainstream motherhood

As presented above, discussions on the missionary role of motherhood during the war period was shaped around ideal, self-sacrificing, nationalist, patriotic mothers. However there were also exceptions, which oppose self-sacrificing motherhood or Turkish nationalist and militarist mothers.

Emine Semiye<sup>111</sup>, in her article<sup>112</sup>, invites the mothers of the new generation to raise their sons not as "pashas" but as traders, artists, operators, or as workers. It is also critical to

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*demiş ki "Kadın isterse şekl-i ictimaiyi deęiřtirebilir." Ne kadar doęru bir söz. Çocuk büyütmek erkek vazifesi deęil, kadının vazifesidir. Onun dimaęını erkek deęil kadın işler. Ona telkin edeceęi fikirler âtinin vicdan-ı millisini husule getirir. Ona vereceęi kuvvet âtinin kudret ve miknetini teşkil eder."* Seniye Ata, "Türk Kadınlarına Aile -1-" *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 70, 12 Haziran 1329 (June 25, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioęlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.209.

<sup>111</sup> Emine Semiye (1864-1944) is a writer, teacher and woman's activist of the Ottoman period. She is sister to Fatma Aliye. She known to be more "liberal" in her writings both as

note that, among the writers of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the writer of this passage Emine Semiye is a different figure who follows a more liberal and Ottomanist path, compared to other nationalist writers. Especially in the issues such as national economy or political rights of non-Muslim population, she takes a more liberal position.

In her text, she puts a clear distinction between being a military officer and other occupations which consists of more life-making activities in the civil arena of economic and cultural fields. Interestingly enough, in this comparison of military versus civil occupations, the desire for military occupations was described as a sign of arrogance; an arrogance that simply eradicates reality to such a point that, in the end it turns out to be ridiculous. According to Semiye, military forces by themselves have no power in the face of the power of Europe. While referring to the power of Europe, what she stresses is not the military power itself, rather technological, economic, social and cultural power. She seems to be allergic to the term army, even if there is a mention to the “army” of ideas. Surely, this reaction should be evaluated not as a form of anti-militaristic reaction, rather as a response to the defenders of military based policies of the period to overcome war time hard conditions that the empire was passing through. She attacks the tradition of not only material but also emotional attachment to the army in general and militaristic ideas in specific. She argues that, this love and trust in the military in fact emanates from the trust in civil officialdom. She expresses all these criticisms with reference to the content of the

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a novelist and as an activist. In her articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, she also took distance to nationalist arguments which targeted non-Muslim women as “enemies” of Muslims and Turks.

<sup>112</sup> “...bizim ninnilerimizdeki arzu yavrularımızın dimağına nakşolunur. Oğlum paşa olacak! temennileri elbet hayat-ı memuriyetin o küçük dimağlarda takarrürünü mucip olur. Hangi kadın var ki oğluna ticaretten, sanattan bahsetsin, oğlum makinist, fabrikada amele olacak desin?..... Bizde gurur, delice, divanece bir gurur var. O kadar ki bizden yüksek, bizden âli hiçbirşey yok! Efsus ki bu gurur bir vakar-ı milli mahiyetini haiz değildir. Felâketlerimizden bahsederken bile araya top tüfek görüntülerini sokarak gülünç olmak, rica ederiz ne ile kabil-i teliftir? Fikir ordularından bahsedilseydi belki dinleyebilirdik. Bilmemek ayıp değil, fakat öğrenmemek, körü körüne bir gurura esir olmak, hakikati tasdikten istinkâf etmek, açık söyleyelim cinayettir!..... Avrupa'ya karşı koymaya nefsimizde bir cüret buluruz. Mümkünatın nasıl şey olduğunu bilmiyoruz ki olamaz, diyelim...” Emine Seher Ali, “Hayat-ı Sanat”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 9, 12 Nisan 1329 (April 25, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 85.

lullabies that babies listen while they were growing up. Lullabies are intimate transmitters of emotions and also knowledge between mothers and their children. Emine Semiye, recognizing the power of lullabies during the growth of children and thus in their character formation, expresses her disapproval of the appreciation of militaristic and statist values through the content of lullabies. In these lullabies, as stated in the text, mothers express their wishes for their sons to be *pashas*.

Most of the literary work, including the poems of the pre-war and war period follows a nationalistic and patriotic path. Women's writings barely differ from this political line. One of the poems published in *Kadınlar Dünyası* with the title "*Garibe* (Strange)" is quite interesting in that sense. With its ironic tone, the poet points to the weirdness of womanhood being defined through suffering and pain. Duty of women, as the poem goes, is to grow up sacrifices for the country, which also means accelerating the pain and sorrow. In this context, sacrifices are the sons growing up to be soldiers and eventually martyrs. And the duty of women is to cry all through their lives for these losses. They are tied with the chains of slavery. This part of the poem is already in parallel with other writings of the period, which also stress that, women as mothers suffer tremendously during wars. However in the second part of the poem, the poet begins to cynically criticize these kind views, which define women as essentially powerless victims imprisoned in their sufferings. She stresses how weird it looks when women are thought to be obedient essentially. And she continues that these kinds of comments or definitions are made-up to oppress womanhood. Those women who struggle to prove the opposite are the ones having trouble. Thus, as the title of the poem tells, defining motherhood and womanhood through suffering and enslavement is ridiculous in itself.<sup>113</sup> A similar criticism was also raised in an article

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<sup>113</sup> *Garibe*

*Anladım ki kadınlığın vazifesi şu imiş: / Yetiştirmek yurt kurbanı, meserreti, kederi, / Ağlayarak, sızlayarak her dakika yüreği. / Bir kısık ses dedi bana pek acı şu sözleri: / - Kadınlığın vazifesi hayatında ağlamak / Esaretin zincirini bellerine bağlamak / Duruşları pek tuhaftır isyan etmez özleri / Kadınlığı çiğnemek-çin akıllı söz bulmuşlar! / Hayırdır. Kadın esir, çünkü nimet külfettedir / Külfet bizde, aksini iddiaya koyulmuşlar, / Aman Allah pek gülünç, anlaşılmaz garibedir!*

*Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 11, 14 Nisan 1329 (April 27, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 106.

written by Nesrin Salih who opposes the representation of women as machines giving birth.<sup>114</sup>

## 1.7. Conclusion

During the war period, identities became more fluid than ever. It was a time when seeds of a new state and new national identity were being sowed. Identities, which were previously gathered under the umbrella of Ottoman identity, were in a state of obscurity at that time since what would be included in and excluded from the new national identity was an unsettled question. In this period of transition, where everything pertaining to national identity was redefined, motherhood also became a contested identity as well. Different subjects made different claims to motherhood and the goals of motherhood changed according to the priorities of those subjects. In the mainstream nationalist perspective the main task of motherhood was raising the new and modern subjects for the new nation, mothers should act as the carriers of the national memory and prepare the children for the national struggle and together with these perspectives motherhood also became a political arena for advocating women's rights in the new society.

Women were called as mothers to join the war effort of the Ottoman State during WWI. As discussed in the case of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the response to this call given by women's right advocates of the period was complicated, in the sense that they made use of motherhood to defend women's right to join public life as independent individuals. Analyzing these contestations over the identity of motherhood enables us to see the limitations of nationalism and gender literature in terms of the relation between war and women. My analysis shows how contextualization and historicization of these concepts are

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<sup>114</sup> "Terbiyenin aile ve mektepten olduğunu söyleyenler, bu iki hayatın da bizde olmadığını bilerek anlamalısınız ki kadın bir heves, bir makina, çocuk doğurmak için yaratılmış bir vasıta değildir..... Bir kere bizde her kadının zevcine hitabı "efendi"dir. Halbuki bu kelime bir esirin mafevkine, kendi âmirine kullandığı hitaptır. Demek ki biz birer esiriz ki bizden hiçbir farkları olmamaları lâzım gelen zevçlerimize efendi kelimesini istimal ediyoruz.... bir süfrajjet kadar dövüşmek.." Nesrin Salih, "Türk Kızları", *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 52, 25 Mayıs 1329 (June 7, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 16-18.

essential to see the gaps in our understandings about the role of women in militarized contexts.

In this chapter ideological debates on family and motherhood right before and during WWI among women's rights activists who aimed at opening space for women in the political, social and economic arena as citizens were focused on. Presenting those debates, opens a path to analyze and contextualize the practices of women as citizens during the war through the petitions they wrote as mothers or as family members in Chapter II.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **PETITIONS WRITTEN BY OTTOMAN WOMEN DURING WORLD WAR I**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Petitions written to the Ottoman State by its subjects or its permanent or temporary residents (who are subjects/citizens of other countries) voice out complaints with respect to acts of injustice by and unlawful rule of local notables, civil servants or military officers; unjust tax rates or other impoverishing financial problems; as well as a wide range of requests such as amnesty from a certain punishment or permission to be able to travel from a certain part of the empire to the other.

Rich number of petitions held in the Ottoman archives suggest that the right to petition was widely used in the Ottoman society. It was not uncommon to submit the exact same petition to the Sultan, the grand vizier and a number of other government bodies. There is enough evidence to argue that the Ottoman State handled these petitions with great importance, which proves petition giving to be a significant medium of interaction between the state and its subjects/citizens. An order by Abdülmecid printed in *Takvim-i Vekayi* in 1846 illustrates this well. In this order the Sultan warned civil servants against delaying their responses to petitions written to them not to cause any inconvenience on the part of the people who submit petitions..

On the other hand, at certain moments the Ottoman state refused receiving certain petitions, especially those that were signed collectively. The state considered those petitions as signs of social unrest and officials tried to prevent such applications. For example in

1860, Christian craftsmen visited Babiali to give their petition complaining about the money that they could not receive from the palace. When the petition was rejected by the Babiali, they chose to proceed to the palace to give the petition directly to the Sultan. The petition was further refused by *Serasker Rıza Paşa*.<sup>115</sup> These cases suggest that the mechanism of petitioning was a medium where the state authority could reflect its paternalistic power over its subjects/citizens by listening to them and pledging to solve their problems; on the other hand, petitions had the potential not only to reveal but also to legally record the social unrest which would diminish the paternalistic power of the state.

Women from different social backgrounds and with different identities also wrote petitions to raise their demands, complaints, and requests. In her book *Sokak Yazıcıları*, Gülden Sarıyıldız presents numerous examples of petitions written in different periods of Ottoman history. Among those examples, there are those written by women. One of those petitions is written in September 2, 1897 by Zübeyde, the daughter of *Mısırlı Küçük Mehmed Paşa* to the Grand Vizier. Zübeyde complains about the fact that her trusteeship position in a foundation (*Taşöz Ceziresi Vakfı*) has not been approved by the Ottoman State yet. She notes that she has previously sent petitions but could not receive any responses. She demands a quick response to prevent any foreign intervention. This petition can be considered as a representative of petitions written by noble women. Although the petition follows the standard format of petition-writing which requires a praise for the state authority either in the beginning or at the end of the petition, it also includes phrases (...*hususunda çok defalar humayun-u mülukaneyi tasdi' ve ta'ciz itmiş isem de her nasılsa hak-pay-i şahanelerine bir münasib zamanda takdim olunamadığından mıdır nedir şimdiye değin bir semere zuhur eylemedi...*) reflecting an “equal” position between herself and the grand vizier she was writing to.<sup>116</sup>

A petition written by a woman from an underprivileged class on the other hand, shows that not only the stories included in petitions but also the very tone of voice used in these texts provide clues about people’s social status. In this very petition that carries no date, we read Emine’s story. Right after her husband’s death, she was abused by local civil

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<sup>115</sup> ZB, nr. 2/28 cited in Gülden Sarıyıldız, *Sokak Yazıcıları: Osmanlılarda Arzuhaller ve Arzuhalciler*, İstanbul: Derlem Yayınları, 2010, p.82.

<sup>116</sup> Y.EE, 87/30 in Sarıyıldız, 130.

servants, who confiscated the money left from her husband and tried to sell her as a slave. Left in destitute, Emine was in immediate need of income and shelter. In her petition, she complained about these men and requested a salary and a place to stay. Emine's tone of voice in this petition is of a woman who is fragile and unfortunate, who was left alone with the death of her husband and needed the support of a benevolent state (...*cariyeniz naçar ve aciz olup perişan olduğumdan canin-i nezaret-i celile-ı Evkaf-ı Hümayun'dan sığınacak mertebe hal-i bendeganeme münasib mahlulden bir sükna ihsanı ve geçinecek miktar maaş tahsisi..*)<sup>117</sup>

In the Ottoman polity, petition writing, as in the Middle East and other parts of the world was part of the state tradition since its foundation. Halil İnalıcık's work on *arzuhal*s and *arz-ı mahzars* sheds light on the process of petition writing in the Ottoman Empire as well as the content of demands and concerns of people who gave petitions as individuals or as collectives<sup>118</sup>. People who were *reaya* or *askeri*; Muslim or non-Muslim had the right to give petitions. According to "*Ahkâm-i Şikâyat*" records, women were also among those individuals who wrote petitions about their own agenda. Petitions generally informed the state of a certain injustice and/or damage resulting in inconvenience on the part of the petition giver. The petition giver often demanded the intervention of the state for the reversal of the situation. Theft by bandits or civil servants, situations where the petitioner could not follow the decision taken by the court, failing to pay debt or acting against law could be among the issues raised in the petitions. Collective petitions on the other hand, raised complaints about a damaged bridge, disputes over land or problems about the tax collection.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> A.AMD, 1261/54 cited in Sarıyıldız, 138.

<sup>118</sup> For *Mazhars* also see Mehmet İpşirli "*Mahzar*" *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27, 2003 p. 398-401.

<sup>119</sup> Halil İnalıcık, "*Şikayet Hakkı: Arz-ı Hâl ve Arz-ı Mahzarlar*" *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, VII-VIII, 1988, p.38. As İnalıcık mentions, these kinds of demands or complaints recorded in *Şikâyat Defterleri* were all recorded as individual damages. Public damages were recorded in *Muhimme Defterleri*.

Petitions were presented and evaluated in *Divan-ı Hümayun*, *ikinci divanı*, *cuma divanı* and *eyalet divanı* in the province and petitioners could write their petitions to the Sultan, to a lower governor or institutions in the provinces. Sultan received petitions in the ceremonies such as *cuma selamlığı*, *bayram namazı*, during visits to shrines, gardens or *köşks*, as well as during hunts. Petitions were not mere documents conveying the demands or complaints of people; they were also means to express social critique and protest. For example, with reference to Selaniki, M. İpşirli, in his article “*Arzuhal*” wrote on a case where a petition was given in the name of *ulema* complaining about Şeyyhülislam Ebu Suud, asking for his dismissal. The person who wrote the petition could not be recognized. The Sultan ordered to find and punish the people who wrote the petition. They were found and punished accordingly.<sup>120</sup>

Yuval Ben-Bassat in his book *Petitioning the Sultan*<sup>121</sup> focuses on *arzuhal*s written by the Ottoman subjects in Palestine between 1865-1908. His study reveals the content and the language of the interaction between the Ottoman state and its subjects through the textual analysis of the petitions. Moreover, he tells local developments in Palestine during the late Ottoman period through the perception of local people and also writes about the response given by the Ottoman state to the complaints and demands of local people. Ben-Bassat argues that centuries-old institution of petitioning also served the process of centralization in the Ottoman Empire given that the sultans were able to monitor and control local authorities through petitions. Petitions were means of re-building the authority of a “just” sultan over the intermediaries about whom people complained in the petitions. When people had greater access to the Ottoman center, especially with the wide use of telegraphs, they also had higher expectations that the sultan would hear and answer their pleas positively.

As described above, petitions had a certain format and language that transformed demands and requests of people into a formal and thus public language to be recorded as a state document. However, still, petitions were personal documents containing personal

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<sup>120</sup> Mehmet İpşirli, “*Arzuhal*”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.3 İstanbul: 1991, p.447; Mehmet İpşirli “*Cuma Selamlığı*”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.8, İstanbul: 1993, p.92.

<sup>121</sup> Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine, 1865-1908*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

stories, personal reasoning processes and personal demands. Anton Minkov, in his book *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*<sup>122</sup>, also makes use of petitions in his historical analysis as sources of personal documents. He focuses on a special group of petitions while studying the process of Islamization and conversion in the Balkans. As also stated by Minkov, people who converted to Islam gave petitions to the sultan requesting an amount of money, which was called *kisve bahası*, as a kind of reward. In his discussion with regard to the scholarship stressing the role of coercion in the Islamization process in the Balkans, Minkov makes use of *kisve baha* petitions as personal documents to stress the role of consent in the Islamization of people in the Balkans.

Lex Heerma van Voss describes the activity of writing petitions as a “common human experience.”<sup>123</sup> Petitions have been part of the relationship between the rulers and subjects in different societies throughout history<sup>124</sup>. Despite the difference in the context or form, petitions mostly do not attempt to question the established authority. But still, in some cases collective petitions could evolve into social interventions, where people used them to influence legislation like in Britain, Germany, Russia and Japan.<sup>125</sup> Petitions, at the individual or social level, also contributed to social conflicts.<sup>126</sup> Cases around the world

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<sup>122</sup> Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004.

<sup>123</sup> Lex Heerma van Voss, “Introduction” in *Petitions in Social History*, Lex Heerma van Voss (ed.), NY: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2001.

<sup>124</sup> For the role of petitioning in the Roman legal system see Gwilym Dodd, “Parliamentary Petitions? The Origins and Provenance of the ‘Ancient Petitions’ (SC 8) in the National Archives” and for the importance of petition writing in the relations between rulers see Barbara Bombi “Petitioning between England and Avignon in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century” in *Medieval Petitions Grace and Grievance*, W. Mark Ormrod, Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (eds.), York Medieval Press, 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Lex Heerma van Voss, 3.

<sup>126</sup> Andreas Würigler, “Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Europe” and Potukuchi Swarnalatha, “Revolt, Testimony, Petition: Artisanal Protests in Colonial Andhra” in *Petitions in Social History*, Lex Heerma van Voss (ed.), NY: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2001.

prove that petitions have become means of participating in politics through a direct relationship between the rulers and people.<sup>127</sup>

In feminist historiography and scholarship on women's history, petitions – especially given the scarcity of the printed material produced by women—occupy a significant place as sources documenting the daily concerns, familial relationships and economic or political problems of women; the way they defined their own responsibilities and the responsibility they attributed to the rulers at a certain time and place. Moreover, petitions voice out demands, requests and concerns of a larger group of women, which include lower classes or women from different ethnic and religious groups who were not among the members of the ruling groups.<sup>128</sup>

One such example where women presented collective petitions to the state institutions with political concerns was discussed in Susan Zaeske's book *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* that focuses on the collective petitions written by abolitionist women to the Congress of United States starting in the 1830s.<sup>129</sup>

World War I, on the other hand, represented a period when people's demands, complaints and requests were reshaped under the conditions of war. Women's petitions present rich data to see how war conditions affected demands, complaints and requests

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<sup>127</sup> Cecilia Nubola, "Supplications between Politics and Justice: The Northern and Central Italian States in Early Modern Age" in *Petitions in Social History*, Lex Heerma van Voss (ed.), NY: The Presss Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2001; Gwilym Dodd, *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2007. (He focuses on the importance of private petition in the government and governance of the late medieval English realm and stresses the role of private petitioning in the exercise of royal jurisprudence.) For the role of petitions in the making of "the political" as the indicators of public opinion and as sources of political propaganda, see David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000.

<sup>128</sup> Marcia Schmidt Blaine, "The Power of Petitions: Women and the New Hampshire Provincial Government, 1695-1770," in *Petitions in Social History*, Lex Heerma van Voss (ed.), NY: The Presss Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2001.

<sup>129</sup> Susan Zaeske's, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

raised by women. Moreover, these petitions also demonstrate how ethnic, religious or class identities of women shape the responses given by the state to these petitions.

Within the scope of my dissertation research, I was able to locate and analyze around one hundred and fifty petitions (together with telegrams) written by women during WWI. The total number of petitions written by women at that time is probably much higher than this number. However, given the variety of issues raised in petitions and the diversity of identities of women who wrote petitions, it is possible to argue that this dissertation presents a somewhat representative picture of the demands, complaints and concerns raised by women from different social, economic, and ethno-religious backgrounds within the Ottoman society during WWI. Along with women's petitions, I was able to study petitions written by men voicing out similar requests. Although limited in number, these petitions enabled me to develop a comparative perspective and a deeper understanding of the ways in which gender functioned as a tool of regulation and governmentality during the war.

The content of petitions submitted to the Ottoman State during the war can be categorized into two: Some of these reasons were specific to war conditions and some of them were age-old issues that were re-shaped under war conditions. Responses of the Ottoman State to these petition varied according to the identities and demands of the petitioners.

This chapter includes the analysis of petitions written by Muslim, Greek, Armenian and Jewish women. It is possible to say that most of these petitions were written by women from lower socio-economic strata. Generally it is the war conditions that impoverished these women who most probably were financially better off before the war. Still, although limited, there were women, among petition givers, who could sustain their "middle class" position. Among the petitions that could be located, the largest number of petitions (together with telegrams) belonged to Muslim women, specifically peasant women (under the title of "soldiers' families") and Armenian women. The number of petitions submitted by non-Muslim women, other than Armenians, was quite limited. As is known, in the Ottoman Empire, due to the *millet* system, religious institutions were mediators between the state and the non-Muslim population. Thus, when non-Muslim women faced a difficulty to complain about, these religious institutions appeared as sites to appeal to. However, in the case of Armenians, given the conditions of genocide, which not only

affected the lives of individual Armenians but also their institutional establishments (including the Patriarchate), Armenian women (and also men) might have “preferred” or “had to” write petitions to the Ottoman state directly.

It is important to note that in petitions, women’s voices were mediated and reframed by the *arzuhalci*-petition writers in order to make them fit in the conventions of petition-writing. Petition writers recorded the individual stories of women into a narrative turning them into legal documents by changing their tone into a professional one. Still, it is possible to “hear” the voices of these women and to learn about their experiences during the years of war. Studying these petitions, I argue, opens up productive discussions about citizenship and subjecthood during the war, and the way women regarded themselves vis a vis the state. Despite the mediation of the *arzuhalci*, they still carry the essence of what women had to say about their situation.

In the following sections I will categorize and examine these petitions according to the issues raised by women, i.e. financial matters, complaints about military officers and civil servants, requests for travel permit, application for religious conversion, demands for amnesty for forced deportation.

## 2.2. Petitions on Financial Issues

An important group of petitions are about the salaries that women were receiving either through their sons, husbands or fathers. The complaints or demands raised in the petitions were mostly about the problems caused by irregular payments or cuts in payments. These petitions on salaries provide us important clues about the everyday experiences of Ottoman women under the conditions of war.

Women from different religious and social backgrounds had already been writing to the state institutions before the war about the salaries that they were supposed to be receiving through their deceased husbands or fathers. In August 1913, a Greek woman named Mari complained in a quite long and detailed petition about the cut in the salary that she was receiving after her husband Yanni Aristotlis’s death. Aristotlis was a former member of the Assembly of Education (*Meclis-i Maarif*).<sup>130</sup> In the petition, no information

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<sup>130</sup> BEO 4208/315580 1331 N 27

is indicated on the ethnic or religious identity of the owner of the petition, rather, Mari wrote directly as a mother who was responsible of the wellbeing of her family after the death of her husband. She provided a detailed account of her responsibilities including information on the size of the family, number of dependent children, the amount of income they received at the moment, and the possible cut in the salary that would negatively affect their wellbeing.

From these petitions written by women, we can draw the conclusion that women not only financed themselves and their children, but also their grandchildren. In a correspondence between the civil registry of Büyükçekmece (*Büyükçekmece Kazası Nüfus Müdürlüğü*) and (*Sicil-i Nüfus İdare-i Umumiyesi Tahrirat Kalemi*) in April 1913<sup>131</sup>, the petition given by Fatma Zehra, who introduced herself as the wife of (deceased/*müteveffa*) Mehmet Ağa was being discussed. As summarized in the document, when Fatma Zehra's son left for the army, she and her grandchildren were left alone in need. Despite such a vulnerable situation, she could not receive the salary she was supposed to be getting as the

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*Makam-ı ali-i sadarat-i uzmaya,  
Mar'uz-ı çaker-i keminelidir ki,*

*Meclis Kebir-i Maarif aza-i kadimesinden müteveffa Yanni Aristotlis efendinin zevce-i metrukesi olup acizeleri ile dört nefer bakire kerimelerime ve x x x olan bir nefer oğluma aid olmak üzere mülkiye tekaüd sandığından cem'an yediyüz kuruşluk mahsus maaşın x x ailemizin tayin ve idaresine adem-i kifayetine ve müteveffa zevcimin emekdar-ı devlet-i aliyeden bulunmasına nazaran bairade-i seniye mezkur dört nefer bakire kerimelerimize mahsus olmak ve izdivaçlarına değin ihsan buyurulmak üzere haziren-i celileden dahi muhtacın tertibi olarak ellişer kuruştan altıyüz yüz kuruş ayrıca maaş tahsisi buyurulmuş ve şu son zamana kadar ita olunmakta idi. Bu kere iki daire-i resmiyeden maaş alanların bir maaşının kat'ı keyfiyeti Bab-ı Ali'de tezkir buyurulacağı beyan edilmiştir. Halbuki müteveffa zevcimin hizmet-i medide ve x x halihazırda miktar x tekaüd maaşının ile bakire kerimelerime x ali x tahsisi buyurulmuş olan mezkur x maaşının x halihazırda x x terk-i x ancak ihtiyacat-ı x edildiğine nazaran mezkur iane maaşının kat' edileceği takdirde temin-i maişatımızın daire-i imkanın haricinde bulunacağı aşikardır. İşbu x insaniyete muhalif olan muamele-i mezkure vaki olur ise bir emektar-ı devlet ailesinin duçar-ı sefalet olacağı malum-u sami-i müdiraneleri buyurulmakta, bu nezd-i sami-i insaniyet perverilerinde makbul buyurulamayacağını bildiğinizden merhamet-i sami-i x sadr-ı azamilerine müracaatla zaten cüz-i bulunan her iki maaşat-ı mezkurenin ipka ve devam-ı ihsanına inayet-i sami-i canib-i sadarat penahilerinden istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir. (Aristotlis Efendi'nin zevce-i metrukesi Mari acizeleri)*

<sup>131</sup> DH.SN..THR.42/25 1331 Ca 16

mother of a soldier. General registry office was asked to investigate the case by the civil registry of Büyükçekmece.

Again, right before the war, a Muslim woman wrote a petition complaining about a cut in the salary she was receiving after the death of her husband, who used to work in *Mızıka-yı Hümayun*. She legitimized her request with reference to her three dependent children.<sup>132</sup> Women wrote not only to receive salary through their fathers or husbands, but also through their mothers. Although ultimately mothers were receiving salary through her husbands, still the cases in which women wrote petitions to receive salary from their mothers were smaller in number compared to the ones related to father and husbands. In a petition written in January 1918, a Muslim woman wrote in her and her sisters's name that their mother died thirteen years ago and until her death she was receiving the salary of her husband as a widowed woman with two daughters. These two sisters requested to continue to receive the salary of their mother, together with the amount that has accumulated in thirteen years since their mothers' death.<sup>133</sup>

In an official letter written by the Ministry of Interior to the government of Yemen dated November 1915<sup>134</sup>, it was stated that a Muslim woman named Fatma wrote a petition in the name of Muhiddin Efendi, who has retired from his position of surgeon in the military (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> regiment of the 8<sup>th</sup> corps). Fatma requested that a certain amount of money should be paid to Naciye Hanım, the daughter of Muhiddin Efendi periodically from his salary, as subsistence money. No information was included on Fatma *Hanım* in the correspondence between the ministry and local government of Yemen. Hence there was not any information why there was a need for a mediator (*müsted'i*) to convey the demand of Muhiddin Efendi and why that mediator ended up being a woman. Still, it is possible to argue that women did not only write for their own requests or demands, but also gave petitions on behalf of men.

Not only daughters or wives, but also sisters of soldiers wrote petitions to receive regular payment. As could be followed in a correspondence between the Ministry of

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<sup>132</sup> BEO 4213/315967 1331 L 15

<sup>133</sup> BEO 4501/337549 1336 R 17

<sup>134</sup> DHİ.UM 84-2/21 1333 Z 26

Interior and the Ministry of Finance, in August 1915, a woman named Emine İnayât gave a petition to the Ministry of Interior demanding a regular salary. Emine İnayât’s brother was Sami *Bey*, who was a lieutenant in the air force and lost his life during the war. Emine İnayât, as the sister of Sami *Bey*, requested to get regular payment under the title of “service to the country” (*hizmet-i vatan*). Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the Ministry of Finance, which in return, replied that Emina İnayât’s position did not fit into the category of “serving the nation;” she could rather receive financial support for the poor (*muhtacin*).  
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In a case, a non-Muslim woman raised an issue about the inheritance she was supposed to receive after the death of her converted brother.<sup>136</sup> In some cases women wrote collective petitions together with male members of their families about the salary that family members had the right to receive after the death of -usually- their fathers.<sup>137</sup>

One of the petitions was written by a woman who was an Austrian subject, Fatma. The original petition could not be located, but a long summary of the petition could be followed in the correspondence between the local government of Bolu and the Ministry of Interior dated October 13, 1917<sup>138</sup>. The petition was given to the local governor of Düzce.

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<sup>135</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK 9/21 1333 N 15

<sup>136</sup> BEO 4216/316129 1331 L 20

<sup>137</sup> BEO 4228/317064 1331 Z 02: A petition written by Şerif Abdullah *Efendi*, Şerife Azize, Rahime and Fatma *Hanımlar*.

<sup>138</sup> DH.İUM.EK. 40/54 1336 M 7

(*Malfufu 1*)

*Huzur-u Sami-i Hazret-i Nezaret Penahiye,*

*Mar ‘uz-ı çaker-i keminelidir,*

*Mahdumu İbrahim’in vazife-i askeriyeyi ifa etmek üzere Avusturya’ya sevk olunduğundan ve kendisiyle onüç yaşındaki kerimesi Culya bilamaaş aç ve bi-laç muhtac-ı muavenet kaldıklarından bahisle sefaretçe maaş tahsisi istirahatına dair Düzce’de Cedidiye mahallesinde sakine Avusturya tebaasından Beline kazalı Hüseyin Eskinci’nin oğlu İbrahim’in validesi Fatma imzasıyla verilüb mazrufen Düzce Kaymakamlığı’na tisiar olunan 8 Teşrin-i evvel 333 tarihli istidaname lef’ en takdim olunmuş olduğuna mezbure ile kerimesinin Avusturya Sefarethanesi tarafından temin-i iaşesi esbabının istihsal buyurulması babında emr-ü ferman hazret-i veli ’ül emrindir.*

*Bolu mutasarrıfı  
13 Teşrin-i evvel 333*

Fatma's son was taken under arms and sent to Austria for military service. When his son left, Fatma and her thirteen-year-old daughter were left in a vulnerable position, fighting against hunger. It was under these conditions that she requested to receive a regular pay from the embassy. The petition was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the title "from Minister Talat Paşa to his Highness Ahmed Nesimi Bey, the Minister of Foreign Affairs" and asked to convey the request to the Austrian Embassy. Using the personal name of Talat Paşa, rather using the Ministry of Interior is rare.

In December 2, 1914, Fahriye gave a petition to the Ministry of Interior complaining about the cut in the salary she received on behalf of his son.<sup>139</sup> As she wrote, her son Dağıstanlı Vahid (Vahid from Dağıstan) was sentenced to life long exile in Sinop. Fahriye was put on a salary through her son, when he was sent to exile and was receiving her payments regularly until then. Fifteen days before she wrote the petition, she received information from the Security Office stating that she could no longer receive money since her son was being released and sent back to the capital due to amnesty. Since then she received neither any written order pertaining to her son's release nor any news of his return. Under these conditions, she requested accurate and reliable information regarding her situation (*bu babda cariyelerine kat'i ve salim bir cevap i'ta buyurulması...*).

The language of this petition, which raise a problem about a bureaucratic, legal issue, is clear and concrete. The problem that the woman raises is directly linked to her motherhood identity. She legally has the right to get paid by the state until her son returns from exile. It is highly possible that, as most of the population, she suffers from hunger and poverty under war conditions. However she does not refer to the poverty or suffering she has been through as it was the case in other petitions. On the contrary, she clearly presents

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<sup>139</sup> DH.EUM.MH. 258/53 1334 M 24

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Samiine,*

*Mar'uz-ı Cariyanemdir,*

*Müebbeden nefi'e mahkum olub Sinop'a gönderilmiş mahdumum Dağıstanlı Vahid efendinin mahalli mezkura azimetinden beri cariyelerine tahsis edilen maaşı şimdiye kadar almakta idiysem de bu kere Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti oğlumun İstanbul'a geleceğinden ve af olunduğundan bahisle maaşı acizanemin onbeşgün mukaddem yeddinden istirdad edildi. Halbuki oğlumun af olduğuna dair bir emirname olmadığı gibi şimdiye kadar da avdetine dair bir emare bulunmadığına bu babda cariyelerine kat'i ve salim bir cevap it'a buyurulması babında icab edenlere evamir buyurulmak babında emr-ü ferman hazret-i menlehül emrindir. (14 Muharrem 1333)*

her story through factual data, which constitute the legitimate legal grounds for her demand. She does not resort to any pompous language while raising her demand. Furthermore she asks for a “clear and solid” reply. In this petition, rather than addressing the state as the “divine authority” generous and benevolent enough to solve her problem, she regards it as a “governing agency” that should correct a mistake. Thus, although she refers herself as “cariye,” she functions within a framework of “modern” citizenship, speaking from the subject position of motherhood.

Among petitions written by women during war were those by mothers whose sons were either in prison or sent to exile. These mothers were trying to receive salary through their sons.<sup>140</sup> In some other cases, the demand was to increase the amount of money that the mother had already been receiving.<sup>141</sup> In a few other cases, men had been found to be guilty and were executed. Their mothers wrote petition to receive salary since after the death of their sons, they had to take care of their grandchildren.<sup>142</sup>

In another petition, written in May 1914 a woman living in Rumelihisarı wrote about her demand to receive the salary of her son. Her son, Mehmed Münir Efendi, who worked as a clerk, was sent to exile in Sinop. After his exile, his nine year old son began to live with her mother. The mother demanded that Mehmed Münir’s salary be paid to herself so that she could make a living both for herself and for the child. I was not able to locate the original petition in the file, but was able to read the summary within which the identity of the woman along with the content of her demand were indicated.<sup>143</sup>

In some cases, single women wrote petitions not using the titles of their fathers, but of their brothers. As could be followed from a correspondence between the governor of Syria and the Ministry of Interior<sup>144</sup>, a woman named Şerife Hanım gave a petition in April 1914 about a dispute on inheritance between her and her sister. In her petition, she

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<sup>140</sup> DH.EUM.MH. 252/13 1332 B 26

<sup>141</sup> DH.EUM.MH. 84/20 1332 C 22

<sup>142</sup> DH.EUM.THR. 12/12 1327 Za 02

<sup>143</sup> DH.EUM.MH. 84/6 1332 C 20

<sup>144</sup> DH.H... 50/25 1332 B 13

introduced herself as the sister of Abdurrahman *Efendi*, Lieutenant in Artillery of Fifth Army.

There are also petitions written by immigrant (*muhacir*) Muslim women about the real estate they left behind in their homelands. As could be located in a file dated November 1915, Meryem, an immigrant woman from Selanik, had some problems with the property she owned in Thessaloniki. Although the original petition was missing in the file, the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarized the issue raised by Meryem and provided clues about the way her request was handled by the state. Meryem gave a petition to the Ministry of Interior stating that she appointed “virtuous” Ahmet Efendi, the local *müftü* of Selanik as her official representative in Selanik to deal with the issues about her property. Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In its response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented detailed information about her property back in Selanik. As written in this letter, Meryem’s house had been “occupied” by *Rum* immigrants. With the efforts of the Ottoman Foreign Affairs, the house was evacuated and *Rum* immigrants were forced to leave the place. At the moment the problem was solved, however, the ministry suggested that, in order to prevent such problems in the future, it would be essential to have a legal representative of Meryem who would be able to intervene legally when necessary.<sup>145</sup> In this case, it is possible to argue that, Meryem’s case was one of the cases in which the state used its means to solve the issue as proposed in the petition.

Another immigrant woman, Sıdıka, who owned a house in Bosnia had difficulties in receiving the rent she needed to collect.<sup>146</sup> As could be followed from the correspondence between the local government of Aydın, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1917, Sıdıka hired Abdi Ağa to send her the rent periodically. Abdi Ağa failed to send the proper amount, sending money that was much below the total amount of rent. Sıdıka asked the Ottoman State to seize the rest of the rent from the proxy and deliver to her. Sıdıka made her application with a petition to the local government of Aydın, which

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<sup>145</sup> DH.H... 70/17 1332 Za 27

<sup>146</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK. 27/78 1335 R 21

sent the petition to the Ministry of Interior. Finally, the Ministry of Interior sent the petition to Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a request to investigate the case.

Sisters of deceased soldiers wrote petitions, in some cases with more than one signature.<sup>147</sup> They vocalized their demand to receive salary or an increase in the amount they had already been receiving. Petitions were also written in the name of sisters and brothers of soldiers to request salaries through their fathers.<sup>148</sup> There were also cases where women complained about their brothers when they attempted to receive the whole inheritance without giving the female members of the family the amount that they were legally allowed to receive.<sup>149</sup>

Although limited in number, “granddaughter”s (*hafide*) wrote petitions about matters pertaining to the salary they received through their grandfathers.<sup>150</sup>

Another topic that was stressed by women in their petitions was the confiscation processes. A woman named Nedime, living in Edirne, wrote a petition complaining about the expropriation process of her grocery store. The correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and local government of Edirne dated January 20, 1915 indicate that Nedime’s petition was against the expropriation of her bakery shop, which was pulled down to due to road construction. Nedime’s complaint was that the value estimated for her shop was lower than the actual price. She asked for a recalculation of the amount and the payment of money as soon as possible.<sup>151</sup>

Again in another correspondence, it was stated that a woman named Azize Behiye gave a petition to complain about the expropriation of a house and a shop owned by her child whom she was the guardian of. As stated by Azize Behiye, the price decided for the

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<sup>147</sup> BEO 4416/331143 1334 B 25

<sup>148</sup> DH.İD.. 195/30 1332 C 25

<sup>149</sup> A woman named Fevziye from Damascus sent a telegram complaining about her brothers who did not give the share that she should have taken from the land inherited from their father: DH.H... 54/12 1332 N 26; another telegram with the same complaint was sent from Akdağmadeni (Yozgat) by a woman named Zeynep DH.H... 63/10 1332 N 09.

<sup>150</sup> BEO 4515/338552 1336 B 26

<sup>151</sup> DH.İ.UM 84-2/27 1334 S 12

house and the shop was lower than the actual price. Moreover, the buildings were demolished while the court case on the estimated amount was still going on. Because the buildings were already unlawfully put down, it was impossible to estimate the actual value.<sup>152</sup>

War in Çanakkale front had also its reflections in the petitions of women. Within the scope of this research, two petitions could be located in the archives raising demands related to the battles. Ministry of War sent two different petitions to the Ministry of Interior with two different files having the same date, September 28, 1915. The original petitions could not be located in the file, however the official letter sent by the Ministry of War to the Ministry of Interior contained a detailed summary of the petitions. The first petition was written by a woman named Emine, the wife of Bursalı Müftüzade Salihoğlu Mehmed who was a pennant-bearer and clerk in the 8<sup>th</sup> squadron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the 56<sup>th</sup> regiment<sup>153</sup>. Mehmed died in the war in Çanakkale in May 15, 1915. With the death of his husband, Emine was left alone. She did not have any income and a place to live. It was under these conditions that she asked the state to arrange her a place to live in Istanbul. Ministry of War mentioned that Emine made her request by stressing the poverty she had been living through after the death of her husband. Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the governor of Istanbul with an order to proceed the case appropriately (*iktizasının ifasına*).

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<sup>152</sup> DH.UMVM 103/34 1334 R 04

<sup>153</sup> DH.İ.UM 89-04/1-13 1333 Za 23

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,  
Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Zevci elli altıncı alayın ikinci taburunun sekizinci bölüğü flamacı ve yazıcılarından Bursalı Müftüzade Salihoğlu Mehmed Sadık'ın 15 Mayıs 331 tarihinde Çanakkale'de vuku bulan harbde şehit düştüğü cihetle kendisi bakes ve hiçbir taraftan bir geliri olmadığı gibi meskensiz dahi bulunduğu beyanıyla İstanbul dahilinde münasib bir mahalde temin-i iskanı merkurumun zevcesi Emine tarafından istirham edilmekte ve fakr-u halini merbut musaddak ilmühaberlerde x bulunmakta x icra-i icabı muktezasına müsaade buyurulması babında emr-ü ferman hazret-i menlehül emrindir.*

*Harbiye Nazırı Namına*

*(...)*

The other petition that was summarized in the official letter of Ministry of War to the Ministry of Interior had the same demand under a similar situation. Hüsniye's husband was in the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 17<sup>th</sup> regiment<sup>154</sup>. He died in Kilid-ül Bahir, which meant that he also died in the wars of Çanakkale. Hüsniye had a nine-year-old son and with the death of her husband they were left alone. The house that they were living in at the moment was not a suitable place for a family to live in. Thus, she asked the state to arrange a place for them. After receiving the petition from the Ministry of War, Ministry of Interior sent it to the governor of Istanbul to handle the case accordingly. It could be argued that, since the demand was quite specific and clearly made by these women, they probably had the impression that the state would solve their accommodation problem. Given the reaction of both the Ministry of War and Ministry of Interior, although the ultimate decision was not clear in the document, it could at least be said that the state searched for possibilities to accommodate these women.

Similarly, a woman whose husband was dead in Benghazi (Mustafa *Efendi, Trablusgarb Fırkası, 24. Alay, İkinci Tabur*) gave a petition in 1915 demanding a house/shelter since she was left alone and homeless with the death of his husband.<sup>155</sup>

Although limited in number, there are also petitions written by women demanding compensations for material damages caused by the war. In a file dated November 14, 1918<sup>156</sup>, *İdare-i Umumiye-i Dahiliye Nezareti* recorded three petitions written by three

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<sup>154</sup> DH.İ.UM 89-04/1-25 1333 Za 27  
*Harbiye Nezareti Müstakil Asayiş Kısmı*  
Numero: 1309  
Adet 695

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*  
*Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*  
*Onyedinci alayın birinci taburu efradından olan zevcinin Kilid-ül Bahr'de şehiden vefat ettiği cihetle kendisinin dokuz yaşına bir oğluyla beraber bakes kaldığı ve halen ikamet ettiği ev hanenin kabil-i sükna bir halde olmadığından kendisine bir mesken gösterilmesi hakkında Hüsniye imzasıyla verilen istidanın bir kopyası lef'en takdim edilmiş(...)*  
*Harbiye Nazırı namına,*  
*15 Eylül 331*

<sup>155</sup> DH.İ.UM 89-04 /1-16 1333 Za 24

<sup>156</sup> DH.İ.UM 21-2/10 1337 S 09

different women from Istanbul. It is not possible to locate the petitions themselves in this file, however, as written in the record summarizing these petitions, the mother of lieutenant commander Hasan *Efendi*, a woman named Hayriye from Sütlice, and another woman named Fatma Hayriye wrote petitions to complain about the fact that their houses were damaged by the attacks of “enemy” aircraft forces.

Similarly, in another file dated January 18, 1918 a record could be located about the petition of three women from Hasköy, from the same neighborhood. Women named Hacer, Makbule and Mihriye requested compensation for the damage caused at their homes by the bombings of “enemy aircraft forces” (“*düşman teyyarelerinden atılan bombalardan haneleri düçar-ı hasar olduğundan cihetle*”).<sup>157</sup>

It was not only women but men who wrote petitions demanding compensation for the damages occurred due to war conditions.<sup>158</sup> The official answer given to these women are missing in the state archives. Thus, it is not possible to comment on the way these compensation demands were responded by the Ottoman authorities.

A woman from a village of Rize wrote a petition to the governor of *Lazistan* about her estates confiscated by the Russians.<sup>159</sup> Hatice’s husband Ahmed was in Erzurum serving in the army. Their house and furniture in Batum were confiscated by the Russians and Hatice requested for a payment equivalent to the price of her home and furniture. It was not possible to locate the reply to this demand in the archive.

There was also another petition sent from *İştib* (in *Üsküb*) by a woman named Samiye in which she raised her complaint about German soldiers.<sup>160</sup> Although the original petition could not be located, as could be followed from the correspondence, Samiye, from the house of Osman *Bey* who worked in the Ministry of War, wrote a petition saying that

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<sup>157</sup> DH.İ.UM 21-1 20 1336 R 05

<sup>158</sup> Yusuf Ağazade from Lazistan wrote a petition demanding compensation for the damage caused by the bombings: DH.İ.UM.EK 36/26 1335 N 6. Again a petition signed by a man named Mehmed was sent from Burhaniye since his flour and olive oil factories were damaged under the bombings by French and English warships: DH.İ.UM.EK 39/26 1335 Z 12.

<sup>159</sup> HR.SYS. 2394 6 1915 10 15

<sup>160</sup> HR.SYS. 2425 63 1916 09 11

she was running an inn in *İştib* and it was occupied and ruined by the German soldiers. She asked the state to compensate her loss and damage.

There was also a telegram sent by two women who stated that their husbands' ships were kept by Italians in an island of Tripoli in the East and they asked the state to intervene and end their grievance.<sup>161</sup>

Women wrote petitions on financial matters long before WWI. However the war obviously created new economic problems. Receiving salary through their male relatives turned out to be more critical with the increase of poverty and hunger during the war. With soldiers dying in the fronts, women demanded not only salary but also extra support to survive on their own or with their children. The processes of expropriation and demands for war compensations also became crucial when private properties of women were confiscated to be utilized for military purposes.

### 2.3. Petitions Complaining about Military Officers, Civil Servants and Local Notables

In their petitions women complained about the illegal and abusive activities of the members of the Ottoman Army right before WWI. A file dated November 1913, a petition written by a woman Eda *Hanım*,<sup>162</sup> contained a petition written on such act carried by a military officer. Eda *Hanım* was from Tekfurdağı and she wrote a petition to the Ministry of the Interior to complain about Major Bedrettin *Bey* who was a veterinary in the third army corps. As told by Eda *Hanım*, Bedrettin *Bey* occupied her house located in the neighborhood of Hasan Çavuş in Tekfurdağı. Informed by the situation, Eda *Hanım* went

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<sup>161</sup> DH.H.. 72/24 1332 R 16

<sup>162</sup> (YB 27) DH.H... 3-1/27 1331 Z 02

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Arz-ı cariyanedir,*

*Nefsi Tekfurdağı'nda Hüseyin Çavuş Mahallesi'nde kain hane-i cariyane üçüncü kolordu-u hümayun baytarlarından binbaşı Bedrettin Bey girip ikamet eylemişve cariyeleri bu defa Tekfurdağı'na giderek kendi hanemde ikamet eylemek üzere binbaşı mümaileyhin hanemden çıkmasını teklif eylediğimde cariyelerini muamele-i unfiye ile tard etmiş olduğundan bu kadar felaketten sonra hanemin bir de bu suretle x elbette mugayir-i maadalet olacağından mumaileyhin hanemden ihracı için mutasarraflığa x dairesinin x x itasını istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*  
*Kasım validesi Eda Cariyeleri (1331)*

and asked Bedrettin Bey to leave the house so that she can live in her own house. Bedrettin Bey's response was violent. He forced her to leave the house. In her petition, Eda *Hanım* asked the ministry to start the legal procedure to expel him out of her house. She "signed" the petition as "the mother of Kasım" (*validesi Eda cariyeleri*). In response, Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the local governor of Tekfurdağı with the order of investigation.

Women wrote petitions not only complaining about military officers but also civil servants. As could be followed from an official letter sent by the Ministry of War to the Ministry of Interior, a group of women (Esmâ and her friends) gave a petition to the Ministry of War in May 1916, complaining about some notables of Antalya region. These women's husbands were in the army, thus they were the families of soldiers.<sup>163</sup> As summarized in the correspondence, local notables, namely estates officer of Elmalı, *Şeyh* Haşım, Sabur who was the local governor of Antalya and another Ahmet who was also an estates officer took the lands of these women and did not permit them to cultivate the land. Not being able to cultivate the land, they were suffering from hunger. They gave a petition with a collective signature and complained about the injustice they had to face due to the brutality of those local notables. Ministry of War sent the file to the Ministry of Interior with the demand of an investigation. Following the official line, Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the local government of Teke, with the demand of local investigation.

There were also petitions signed both by men and women in certain cases. As could be followed from a correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and local government of Istanbul dated June 1915, one man named Mustafa Kadri and two women named Müzeyyin and Saliha gave a petition about a problem related to their shops.<sup>164</sup> In their petition to the Ministry of Interior, they stated that their two shops located in Beykoz (Istanbul) were seized by the army to be used as warehouses. They had made an application to the district governorate (*kaymakamlık*), however they could not receive a certificate that stated the price of those two shops that had been seized. Ministry of Interior sent the petition to the local governor of Istanbul and asked the case to be solved.

Another petition complaining about the bullying activities of local civil servants was written by a woman named Makbule (wife of Rodoslu Mehmed Efendi). She complained

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<sup>163</sup> DH.İ.UM 84-2/49 1334 B 15

<sup>164</sup> DH.İ.UM 89-01/1-55 1333 B 19

about *Gemlik Nüfus Müdürü Kadri Efendi*'s using her land illegally. However after the investigation, it was decided that his activities were within the borders of legitimate use of the land.<sup>165</sup>

There were also telegrams stating the unjust behaviors of military officers. A telegram was sent from Ankara with the signature of Münire to the Ministry of War, who complained that they were forced to leave their house by the officers of fifth army corps (*Beşinci Kolordu*) with the information that their house was going to be turned into a hospital. She asked the Ministry to end their suffer.<sup>166</sup>

There was a telegram sent by the mother of a soldier who was fighting in the Palestian front, stating that civil servants of the local government of Zor were illegally entering and using the fields owned by her son.<sup>167</sup>

Men also wrote about the corruption of local authorities. It is possible to follow the traces of previous wars in the petitions given before WWI. A correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of War, dating from June 1913<sup>168</sup>, focused on a serious problem that the peasant women face when their husbands did not return from the front. A man named Mahir Sadık Mustafa wrote a petition to the Ministry of War stating that in a village of Adapazarı, the *imam* and village council (*ihtiyar heyeti*) organized marriages by preparing illegal identity papers for women who were married to soldiers (soldiers's families) fighting in the fronts. Ministry of War sent this petition to the Ministry of Interior requesting investigation. In the following, Ministry of Interior sent an order to the local government of Izmit (*İzmit Mutasarrıflığı*) to investigate the claim raised by Mahir Sadık Mustafa.

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<sup>165</sup> DH.SN..THR. 80/83 1336 Za 26

<sup>166</sup> DH.H... 11/89 1332 R 25

<sup>167</sup> DH.İ.UM 7-2/1-10 1336 R 23

<sup>168</sup> DH.H... 61-1/55 1331 B 03

*“Adapazarı’na tabi İncilü nahiyesinin divan-ı kariyesi imam ve heyet-i ihtiyariyesinin mugayir-i nizam vermiş oldukları ilmuhaberle efrad-ı askeriyeden bazılarının zevcelerini aher eşhasa akd ve tenkih edilmiş olduğuna ve saireye dair Mustafa imzasıyla Harbiye Nezaret-i Celilesine it’a olunan batezkire tevdi olunan arzuhal lef’en tesyar kılınmış olmağla şayan-ı nazar-ı dikkat olan münderacatına nazaran x tahkikat lazıme icrasıyla tebeyyün edecek hale göre iktizasına ifa ve imbas (.....)”*

Since the original petition could not be located in the file, the analysis of the request and of the case could only be made through the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of War. It is not possible to comment on the tone and the language of the original petition written by a man about a very specific issue related to women's lives. Since no information is provided on the identity of the man who wrote the petition, it is equally hard to speculate on the motivation of the man in writing such a petition. Was he a returning soldier who had found out that his wife was remarried through such an illegal procedure? Was he related to a woman who had married off by the *imam* and the village council? Was he writing in the name of those women who faced the problem? Although information is missing to evaluate the motivation and intention of the petition giver, the petition itself is a critical example of men writing about the problems of women.

As could be followed in another file, there were also women who wrote about the same issue. In a correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of War<sup>169</sup> a similar issue was raised, this time by a woman, in April 1913. As could be followed from the correspondence, a woman named Ayşe gave a petition to the Ministry of War, where she complained about the fact that she was forced to remarry. Ayşe lived in a village of Ayancık (district of Kastamonu). Her husband Ahmedoğlu Hüseyin was a soldier in the army. Long time had passed since she received any news from him. Since her husband was away, the village council attempted to force Ayşe to marry another man. Ayşe wrote a petition to the Ministry of War complaining about the village council. She asked the authorities to save her from this forced marriage. Ministry of War sent the petition to the Ministry of Interior with a request to investigate the case. Then, Ministry of Interior sent the petition the local governor of Kastamonu and ordered investigation. It is unlikely to explicate the initial response of the state against the situation through these correspondences. Both of the official letters summarized the original petition and asked for investigation. What can certainly be argued is that, at least at the level of ministries (both

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<sup>169</sup> DH.H... 43/61 1331 Ca 14

*“Elyevm silah altında bulunan zevci Ahmedoğlu Hüseyin'den bir zamandan beri haber alamadığı vechle kariyesi heyet-i ihtiyariyesi kendisini cebren ahre tezyic etmek istediğinden ve hükümete vuku bulan müracaatı mütemmer olamadığından bahisle lazıme-i madaletin icrasına dair Ayancık kazasının Düzler kariyesinden Ayşe imzasıyla alınan arzuhalin (...)”*

the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Interior) Ayşe's complaint was taken seriously enough to be investigated.

In this case the final and decisive step was going to be taken by the local governor. Unfortunately, the reply of the local governor, hence the result of the investigation could not be located in the archives. It could be argued that—as will be discussed in detail in the chapter on widows— women, whose husbands were in the front for a long time, were considered to be “dangerous” for the “honor” of the village. Even before the death of their husbands was certain, they were declared as “widows,” hence “threat” to the order of the village. It was highly possible that the village council took the decision of forcing these “potentially” widowed women of the village to get married to keep the moral “order” in the village.

The outcome of Ayşe's petition is uncertain, given the fact that any further information is missing in the archives. The circumstances under which she made the decision to write this petition is equally unknown to me. Was she left alone in the village when her husband was drafted to the army? Were there any relatives of Ayşe who could support her in opposing the marriage? Or, on the contrary, did her relatives support the village council in their decision to force Ayşe to get married so that she would not harm the “honor” of the family as a woman without a man? Did she have any children? Answering such questions would help to analyze the subject position of Ayşe both as the victim of the case and as the one who brought the case in front of state institutions as an objection.

There were also cases when women wrote petitions to oppose the idea that they were forced to get married. For example in a telegram written from a village in Nablus (Beirut), a woman wrote to save her newly married husband who was put in jail. She wrote that she was an adult and she was married willingly, thus she asked for the release of her husband.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> DH.H.. 72/22 1332 Ra 22

## **2.4. Petitions Demanding Justice and Mercy Against Forced Deportation**

During the course of WWI, Interior Ministry and General Directorate of Security received petitions from Armenian women who demanded justice and amnesty for their arrested and deported family members. Within the scope of this research, I could locate around seventy petitions in the Ottoman State Archives written by Armenians between 1915 and 1918. Among these petitions, around fifty-five were written by women and around fifteen were written by men. Among the ones written by women, around forty-five were written by mothers and the rest by wives, sisters, friends, or other relatives. In most of these petitions Armenian women requested that their family members be exempted from deportation; that is they struggled to bring their families together by following legal procedures. Almost all of these petitions were written from Istanbul, however there were also petitions or telegrams written by Armenians from different regions of the Empire, such as Aleppo. Some women wrote as representatives of “soldiers’s families” and asked the state to be exempt from deportation, since as a soldier’s family, they had the “legal right” to avoid exemption. Besides these issues, I could also locate some petitions by Armenian women who made applications to convert to Islam.

As we know, Armenian population of Istanbul was not forced to deportation en masse as they were in other cities and villages of the empire. Part of the Armenian population of Istanbul, mostly known to be “intellectuals” were victims of deportation and murder starting with the 24 April arrests. Besides “intellectuals”, professionals, businessmen, artists, musicians, clergy and other leaders of the community, as well as the part of the Armenian population of Istanbul who were not residents of Istanbul, specifically migrant male single workers from other parts of the empire were subjected to forced deportation.<sup>171</sup> Besides other reasons, this special position of Armenian population of Istanbul also explains why it was usually Armenian women of Istanbul who wrote petitions.

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<sup>171</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb.16.9. cited in Dündar, 2008, p. 307.

As I mentioned earlier, most of these petitions written by Armenian women were written from the subject position of a mother. In those petitions, Armenian mothers were either trying to convince the state that their children were not “politically active”, meaning that they were loyal to the Ottoman state or to prove that they were residents of Istanbul and thus deported by mistake. The discourse of “innocence” and the “mistake” of the state were the two major themes I came across in these petitions.

These petitions also provide us with clues about the heterogeneity within the Ottoman Armenian population as well as the various positions they occupied in the society that the state regarded as “favorable” At the same time, they also give us clues about the very urgency of the situation and individual attempts at survival. Being from Istanbul, having lived in Istanbul for long time could be an asset for survival, especially given the fact that the dwellers of the city were supposed to be exempt from the Law of Deportation. Thus, as we come across in the petitions, bloodline, proving that the family had been living in Istanbul for successive generations, was perceived as an important determinant in deporting a certain amount of the Armenian population from Istanbul.<sup>172</sup> It is also possible to follow the deportation of these Armenian people in the memories written by survivors<sup>173</sup> and how what was referred as “mistakes” in the petitions were part of the process.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> The following memory books and biographies available in English and Turkish provide us with some invaluable details about personal experiences of deportation and genocide, which in certain cases reflects the experiences written in the petitions: Teotig, “Monument to April 11” in *Teotig: Biography (by Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian) & Monument to April 11 (Translated by Ara Stepan Melkonian)*, Gomidas Institute and Tekeyan Cultural Foundation, 2010; Aram Andonyan, *Gomidas Vartabed ile Çankırı Yollarında*, translated by Ali Çakıroğlu and Armand Baron, Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2012; Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918*, trans. Peter Balakian and Aris Sevag. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. Fethiye Çetin, *Anneannem*, Istanbul: Metin Yayınları, 2004; Kemal Yalçın, *Seninle Güler Yüreğim*, İstanbul: Birzamanlar Yayıncılık, 2005; Baskın Oran (ed.), “M.K. Adlı Çocuğun Tehcir Anıları: 1915 ve Sonrası,” İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005; Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, “The Experience of Women and Children,” in *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 94-117; Yervant Odian, *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*, London: Gomidas Institute, 2009; Aliza Harb (with Florence Gillmore), *An Armenian Survivor Torn between Two Cultures: Aliza*, Massachusetts: National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 2003.

Armenian women used those petitions to reclaim their legitimacy as citizens and given that most of the petitions were written by mothers, this reclamation was mostly based on their identities as mothers.<sup>175</sup> In their petitions, Armenian women provided

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<sup>173</sup> “We often met groups of Armenians, under the police escort, on Galata Bridge who were going to Haydar Pasha port to be loaded onto a steamship, to go to Izmir and to be driven to more distant places. These people were generally unmarried men from the provinces, old, young, teenagers, artisans and workers, who had suddenly been arrested in their shops or in the street and who, without being questioned, had been thrown into prison and on their way to be massacred (...) Dreadful scenes were to be seen at night in the courtyard below, which I watched from the window. 40-50 Armenians, mostly from the provinces –porters, servants, peddlers or labourers- which were taken out of the prison and lined up in the darkness. Then the roll call began (...) ‘You’ll have to pay 25 kurush each,’ yelled the sergeant in a ferocious voice. Some, without protest, took out their purses and pay the amount demanded. Others protested that they didn’t have any money. And the whip would descend without mercy on their heads, shoulders and faces. Those beaten would, screaming and crying, pay the required amount. But it occasionally happened that the poor people really didn’t have any money. In that case, the whipping would continue until the sergeant was satisfied that the individual concerned really couldn’t pay. The sergeant would then turn to the others and shout, ‘You’ll have to pay for this man.’ And if there was protest, more beating. The 25 kurush was the train fare from Constantinople to Izmid.” Yervant Odian, *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*, London: Gomidas Institute, 2009, pp.37-47.

<sup>174</sup>“I wasn’t deported from Constantinople, but I became a refugee from Banderma.’ And he told us the story. Apparently he was a surveyor who had been appointed to supervise the construction of the jetties at Banderma and had transferred there to take up his post. There he was caught and deported with the people of that town. ‘My home, wife and children are in Constantinople,’ the man explained. ‘I was going in a few days, when they suddenly arrested me while I was at work and made me set off.’...” Yervant Odian, *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*, London: Gomidas Institute, 2009, pp.72-73.

<sup>175</sup> The history of Armenian Genocide has been a growing field of research. Scholars have presented details of this history based on analysis of documents, memoirs, oral history accounts, songs, novels, as well as Ottoman state archives as their primary sources. Within this literature, the experience of women during the genocide has also been documented in scholarly and popular works. But there is still a lacuna in the literature regarding the experiences of Armenian women in the home front in Istanbul. For the experience of Armenian women during genocide see: Matthias Bjornlund, “‘A Fate Worse than Dying’: Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide,” in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe’s Twentieth Century*, (ed.) Dagmar Herzog New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, Melissa Bilal, *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı’dan Türkiye’ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar: 1862-1933*, Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2006; İbrahim Ethem Atnur, *Türkiye’de Ermeni Kadınları ve Çocukları Meselesi*, Istanbul: Babil

information on the profession of their children, their fame in their neighborhoods, then the details of their arrest and the place of exile, inquiring about their destiny and asking the authorities to grant permission for their return.

In the Ottoman Archives, in the files that these petitions were located, there are also correspondences between the Security Office and Interior Ministry either to ask for an investigation for the case that the Armenian mothers raise or to give the result of the investigation that they had carried. Thus, it is possible to follow, on the one hand personal experiences of Armenian people both as direct victims of deportation and as relatives of these deportees, on the other hand the process of legal legitimization process carried by the state for the forced deportation.

As could be traced in these petitions, despite the desperate political and social conditions of the events of 1915 in the lands of the Ottoman Empire, Armenian population of Istanbul still had the hope that rule of law might have still be in process at least for the residents of Istanbul. At least, some of them could manage to utilize the legal process of petition writing to demand justice through administrative state organs.

In most of the petitions, Armenian mothers reminded the official about “the duty” or “promise” of the state against the mothers that the state should safeguard and protect their children. Thus, in the discursive level, their statement pointed to a paradox highlighting the situation that the state is undermining its duty of protecting her child. As will be discussed in detail in the part on the petitions written by Armenian mothers, mothers recognize the state not only as an oppressive authority but also as an authority that is responsible for the good of their children. It might be argued that, discursively in the public space, mothers asked the state to take over their own role and duty of guarding their children in the private sphere.

Being an Armenian woman/mother thus was being in an impossible zone in terms of citizenship. On the one hand, they needed to pretend that they believed in the state so

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Yayıncılık, 2005; Victoria Rowe, *A History of Armenian Women's Writing, 1880-1922*, London: Cambridge Scholars, 2003; Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, “A Climate for Abduction, a Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and after the Armenian Genocide,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2013, 55(3): 522–553; Mae M. Derdarian (based on the memoir by Virginia Meghrouni), *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide*, Los Angeles: Atmus Press Publications, 1996.

that they could make claims for citizenship rights, on the other hand, they had to cope with their loss without recognizing the real reason behind it.

Ottoman state, on the other hand, followed the legal process by registering these petitions and ordering an investigation. As will be discussed in detail below, in some of the files, the correspondence between the Security Office and the Ministry included the reply of the state to the mothers who had presented their petitions. The stories included in these petitions prove that the Ottoman State recognized these Armenian women as mothers and tried to give “legal” answers to their requests. Other concerns could have been at play, such as the political pressure by European countries, but still, it is quite significant to observe the attempt of the state to give legally appropriate replies to these petitions.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will analyze the petitions and the responses given by the state.

Maryam wrote a petition asking for her son Mesrob Hanaryan who had been deported to Konya to be sent back to Dersaadet.<sup>176</sup> The petition was written to *Emniyet-i*

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<sup>176</sup> *Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyet-i Aliyesine*

*Mar'uz-ı cariye-i keminelidir,*

*Mahdumum Mesrob Hanaryan bendeniz Dersaadet'te Gedikpaşa'da Gedikpaşa Caddesi'nde seksen dokuz numarada attariye dükkanında kemal-i namus ve haysiyet ve istikametle attarlık etmekte ve bu suretle maişetlerimizi temin etmekte idi. Ortada bir isbat-ı kanuniye olmadığı halde, hilaf-ı hakikat-i ihbarat-ı kazibe üzerine masum ve bigünah olan mahdumum merkurum Mezrob Dersaadet'ten tebid edilmiş, bu husustan dolayı cariyeleri de bikes ve bivaye kalarak temin-i maişetten mahrum ve sefaletin en müthiş ve en havelnak dereke-i tahammül vaziyete ilka ve isbat fakr-u mezellet-i cariyelerini xxx bideva bırakmıştır ki bu hal-i pürmelalimiz mücerred-i merhamet ve atıfet aliye-i müdüriyet penahilerine tevafuk etmeyeceği cümlece malumdur ve eniştem Garabet oğlu Krikor ise süluk-u celili askeriyenin Gelibolu'da Ilgar Dere'de beşinci xxxe mensub birinci Lüleburgaz amele taburu kaleminde yazıcılıkla vazife-i askeriyesini ifa etmekte olup merkurum Krikor'un dört neferden mürekkeb olan sagir ve sagire çocuklarıyla bir de zevcesi dahi nezdinde bulunduğu ve bu yüzden sefaletleri dahi cariyelerinin sefalet-i şedidesine inzimam ederek son derece de meyyus ve mağdur perişan bir halde imrar-ı vakit etmekteyim ve bununla beraber makam-ı Aliyelerine üç kıta arıza takdim eyledim ise de cevap lütuf buyurulmamış uluv-u merhametlerinize iltica ve dehalet ediyorum. Salif-ül arz Konya'da bulunan mahdumum Mezrob bendelerinin Dersaadet'e iadesi hususuna müsaade buyurulmasını kemal-i suziş ve gûzarla istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir. (1331 Kanun-i Evvel, Gedikpaşa'da Bostan-ı Ali mahallesinde) (1334 S 14) (DH.EUM.2.Şb 15/50)*

*Umumiye Müdüriyet-i Aliye'* from Gedikpaşa, Bostanlı neighborhood and carried the date December 22, 1915. In the first sentences of the petition, the mother, Maryam, introduced her son, providing information about his profession and his place of work (with the exact address). She then praised his honesty and sincerity. Mesrob worked in Gedikpaşa in his herbalist shop. As his mother stated, Mesrob was banished from Istanbul due to a false information, without any legal proof. His banishment left his wife alone, helpless and poor, since Mesrob was the breadwinner of the family and now the family was deprived of his salary. She also stressed that, she was sure that the sorrow the family was passing through will be recognized by the state.

As can be followed in the petition, the mother's brother in law Krikor was already in the Ottoman Army, in the labor battalion, thus she was also taking care of Krikor's wife and children. Both Krikor's family and Mesrob's family were in great poverty and the mother seems to be taking charge of the family. She mentioned that she has written to the state about this situation before, unfortunately she did not receive any reply. At the end of the petition she beseeched for his son Mesrob, who was at the moment in Konya, to be allowed to come back to Dersaadet.

Artin's mother wrote a petition<sup>177</sup> to Interior Ministry asking for her son to be released from exile to Konya from Dersaadet. Artin has been working in tobacco business in Arnavutköy and was sent to Bursa four months before the date of the petition. His

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<sup>177</sup> (DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/9) (24 S 1334)

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celile-i Cenib-ı Alisine*

*Mar'uz-ı bendeleridir ki,*

*Boğaziçi'nde Arnavutköyü'nde tütüncülük ile meşgul evladım Artin veled Agop Bedikoğlu tarihinden dört ay mukaddem hiç bir kabahati dahi olmayarak ve hiçbir siyasi fırkaya mensub olmadığı halde Dersaadet'ten Konya Ereğlisine tebid olunmuş ve böylece sin-i xxx vasıl olmuş pederiyle cariyeniz ihtiyar ve malul validesi yüzüüstü kalmış olduğumuzdan hiçbir taraftan muavenet-i maddiye ve maneviye görmeyerek ve xxx ikmalimizi tedarikten mahrum kalarak sefil ve fakir bir halde giriftar olmuş bulunduğumuzdan ve bahusus evladım Artin'in avarız-ı bedeniye ile malul bulunduğu nazar-ı uluvv-ü cenab ve merhametinize arz eyler ve lütuf ve inayet-i nezaret penahilerine xxx ve gözyaşları dökerek evladım Artin veled Agop tebid olduğu mahalden ailesi nezdine avdeti ve böylece bikes ve fakir bir ailenin ve ihtiyar ve malul peder ve validenin sa'adet-i halinin iadesine himmet buyurulması istida ve bu hususta evamir-i mukteziyenin bir an evvel lüzum gelenlere itası her ne kadar istirham eylemişsem de olbab da ve herhalde emr ü ferman hazreti menlehül emrindir.*

*Arnavutköyünde Ayazma'da Artin Veled (...)*

mother insisted on his innocence and that he was not a member of any political parties. Artin's family, namely his mother and father were terribly impoverished when they were deprived of the income that Artin was bringing to the household. Interior Ministry led the petition to General Directorate of Security of Istanbul and asked for an investigation.<sup>178</sup> As a response, Directorate of Security wrote that Artin was banished from Istanbul under the category of "single and from the province", since he was not married and was from Divriği.<sup>179</sup>

Another letter was written from Konya.<sup>180</sup> The mother of Andon and Boğos Hamaloğlu wrote a petition from Konya to the Interior Ministry. She had been informed that her two sons Andon and sixteen year old Boğos were in Rakka, Halep. She stressed the poverty and the suffering that she and her daughters Mari and Rona were enduring.

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<sup>178</sup> (DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/9)

*İstanbul Polis Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'ne  
3 Kanunievvel 1331*

*Arnavutköyü'nde tütüncülük eden oğlu Artin veled Agop Bedikoğlu'nun Konya'ya tebid olunduğuna dair bazı ifadeyi havi Arnavutköyü'nde Ayazma Caddesi'nde mukim xxx imzasıyla ve bir xx arzihal lefen saub-ı valalarına şiar kılınmış olmağla merkumun sebebi tebidinin xx ve melfufunun iade ve esası zımında xxx.*

<sup>179</sup> (DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/9)

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine  
Devletlü efendim hazretleri*

*Emniyet-i umumiye imzasıyla şeref varid olan beş kanuni sani 1331 tarihli ve 706 numaralı tezkire-i nezaret penahilerinin cevabında Arnavutköy'de tütüncü Artin veled-i Agop aslen Divriğili ve mücerret olduğundan dolayı bekar taşralı meyanında sevk edildiği maruzdur. Ol babada emri ferman hazreti minlüleminidir.*

*19 Kanunievvel 1331*

*Polis müdürü umumisi xxxx*

<sup>180</sup> (1334Ca04) (DH.EUM.2.Şb. 18/48)

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canibi Alisi'ne  
Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Oğlum Hamaloğlu Andon ile diğer oğlum onaltı yaşında Boğos'un Halep'te Rakka'da bulduklarını bu kere istihbar eyledim. Kerimelerim Mari ve Roza ile burada her manasıyla zaruret-i fevkalade içinde bulunduğumuzdan ve maişetimizi temin edecek bir vasıtamız olmadığından maruz kaldığımız şu ahval-i zaruret (...) tahsilimiz için mümaileyhüm Andon ile Boğos'un Konyaya gelmelerine lütfen ve merhameten müsaade-i celile-i cenabı nezaretpenahilerinin xxxx buyurulmasını kemal-i suzişle istirham eylerim. Ol-babada emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Konya'dan gelmiş: 25 Şubat 1331 With the signatures of Roza ve Mari.*

She demanded permission for her sons's returning back to Konya. It is not possible to trace from the petition the information about where they lived. Did they live in Konya and did the mother ask the state to send their sons to their home in Konya? Did the mother live in Istanbul and asked the state to bring their sons to Konya, so that even if they were exiled they would be closer to home and be safe?

Another petition was written to the Interior Ministry by a woman, the mother of Setrak Taşçıyan who had been living in Beyoğlu, together with her son. Setrak had been deported to Konya, again with reference to the category of "single and from the province".<sup>181</sup> Setrak's mother stated that their family was originally from Istanbul and they were known to be an honest family in the neighborhood. His son lived together with his mother and with all other members of the family in Dersaadet, thus he would not be considered as single. She asked permission for the return of his son Setrak to Dersaadet. As a response to this petition Directorate of Security wrote to Interior Office that<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> (25 Za 1335) (DH.EUM.2.Şb 41/64)

*Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Mahdumum Setrak Taşçıyan ile birlikte Beyoğlu'nda Kuzguncuyan apartmanında ikamet etmekte iken mahdumum Setrak bendeleri mahalli polis karakolunda bilcelb bekar olması sebebiyle Konya'ya nef'i edilmiş ve elyevm mahali mezkurda ikamet etmekte bulunmuştur. Halbuki merkur bendeleri an'asl İstanbullu olan ailece namuskarane imrar-ı vakit ile temin-i maişat etmekte bulunduğumuz herkesçe malum olduğu gibi mahalixxx zabitanca dahi ma'lum ve muayyen iken esbab-ı marufeden dolayı madur olmuş ve cariyelerinin dahi bu sebep ve salihde sakil ve perişan olmaktığımızı sebebiyet verilmiştir. Bütün efrad-ı ailesi burada bulunan ve validesiyle xxx ise de mümaileyhin bekar adl edilemeyeceği cihedle hükümet-i seniyenin refet ve şefkati adalet pervelerine iltica eder ve bütün ailemizi şu perişanlıktantahlisimiz emrinde Dersaadet'e avdetine müsaade buyurulması. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

<sup>182</sup> Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,

*Mar'uz-ı çakeri keminelidir ki,*

*Emniyet-i umumiye müdüriyeti ifadesiyle seref-ü varid olan 1413 numero ve 20 Ağustos 333 tarihli tezkere-i fehimaneleri cevabında Konya'ya esbab-ı tebediyle hüvviyeti hakkındaki maalum zabitanın inbası emr-i işaar buyrulan Setrak Taşçıyan'ın mecmuu xxx olan mahallerde sirkat ve yankesicilik gibi af'ale cüret ederek emn ve inzibati memleketi halel eylediği anlaşılmasına ve sirkat dolandırıcılık maddelerinden maznuniyet-i sabıkası bulunmasına mebni ittihaz olunan karar-ı askeri üzerine ve Zare Setrak Taşçıyan namıyla 22 Kanunievvel 332 tarihinde Konya vilayetine tebid suretiyle İstanbul muntika-i (...) haricine ihraç edildiği bilittifak anlaşılmış olduğu maruzdur. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

Setrak Taşçıyan was banished from Istanbul since he was active in theft and pick pocketing and he had criminal record as a swindler. Although he was banished, as the letter argues, the reason was not his Armenian identity but his criminal record.

The language of the petition written by Dikran Karayan's mother<sup>183</sup>, on the other hand, is quite different from the ones discussed above. First of all, as it becomes clear in the introduction sentence of the petition, Dikran Karayan is a member of the Catholic community. Given that Catholic Armenians were exempted from deportation<sup>184</sup>, his mother felt the need to stress that their family was a Catholic family to escape her son from deportation. Secondly, petitions discussed so far were written by mothers of the middle class families. The modest language of the petition and the demand for mercy can be interpreted as indicators of class position of these families. This last one however, employed a quite self-confident language and demanded justice rather than mercy.

Dikran's mother stressed the Ottomanness of her son. She felt both the need and the comfort of questioning the banishment of his son. She persistently stressed that she raised her son as a true Ottoman and knew him accordingly. While telling the process of banishment, she wrote that her son had been taken together with some "malevolent" people. Assuming that those "malevolent" people are Armenian activists who had been banished, the differentiation that she made between those banished Armenians and her

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2 Eylül 333

<sup>183</sup> (25 Za 1336) (DH.EUM.2.Şb 59/25)

*Dahiliye nezaret-i celilesine*

*Maaruz-u cariyenizdir,*

*Dar-ı dünyada aile ve validem cariyenizle beraber yegane iltinadgahımız olan mahdumum Beyoğlu'nun Hüseyinağa mahallesi sakinlerinden Katolik cemaati sadıkasından muteveffa Mihran oğlu Dikran Karayan bendeleri iki üç hafta mukaddem belki berat-i sehv olarak bazı bedhahlarla beraber Dersaadet haricine çıkarılmış idi. Zann-ı cariyaneme nazaran oğlumu hakiki bir Osmanlı olarak büyütmiş ve şimdiye kadar kendisini bu suretle tanıyor idim. Suret-i ihracının berat-ı sehv olmak ihtimaline müsteniden hakkında lazım gelen tahkikat-ı xxx icrasını niyaz ile beraber ihaneti tebeyyün ettiği takdirde hain-i vatanlara tertib edecek en ağır ceza ile tecziyesini talep eder ve masumiyeti halinde de adaletperverliğinize iltica ederek yegane evladımın iadesini kemal-i tahassür rica ve istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

<sup>184</sup> Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008, p.298.

son was a way for pointing to the difference between loyal, Ottoman Armenians and traitor Armenians.

Thus she believed that Dikran's banishment was due to mistake, she asked for an investigation. Describing the process as a mistake might have two meanings. On the one hand she stressed and said that if Dikran was found to be guilty he should be punished with the maximum penalty that traitors of the country were sentenced to. However, if he was innocent, then he, the one and only son of her, should be set free.

This petition describes another family story during the genocide, which shows how the factor of "luck" determined people's lives during a giant catastrophe. This petition differentiates from the previous ones, since this time it is a woman who had been deported. Hoçagi, wrote a petition for her daughter who had been deported to Konya.<sup>185</sup> As written in the petition by, her daughter had been deported from Bursa to Konya. Her daughter was visiting thermal spring baths in Bursa for the treatment of her illness. Unfortunately she was banished to Konya, together with the local Armenian community of Bursa. Hoçagi mentioned that her family had been in Dersaadet for thirty years and they were working as honest people, always loyal to the state. Accordingly her daughter's deportation to Konya was a mistake and she asked for permission her coming back to Dersaadet. Interior Ministry asked General Directorate of Security of Istanbul to conduct an investigation about Hoçagi's petition to find out whether her daughter was a member of Dersaadet community and when she did come to Bursa and for what reason.<sup>186</sup> In reply

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<sup>185</sup> 26 M 1334 (DH.EUM.2.Şb 15/3)

*Dahiliye Nezareti xxxx*

*Arz-ı cariyanemdir,*

*Kerimem (...) cariyeniz rahatsız bulunmasından naşı 330 senesi şehri Eylül'ünde beray-ı istihmam Bursa kaplıcalarına giderek ve ahiren orada olan Ermenilerin aher mahale nakilleri esnasında mezbureyi dahi Konya'ya sehv olarak göndermişler ve elyevm Konya'da bulunuyor. Muhaberimiz "Konya posthanesi (...) post" cariyeleri ise otuz seneden beri ailece Dersaadet'te ikamet ve mahdumum Mahmutpaşa caddesinde saatçi Şefik mağazasının mutasarrıfı olduğu gibi hükümet-i seniyemize her an ve zaman sadık bir bendeleri bulunmakla müftehir xxx için mezburenin yanlışlık neticesi mahal-i mezkurda izamu mahzunluğumuzu muceb ve binaberin nezdimize ikamet etmesinde hiç bir güne (...) (6) bulunmadığına ve ber vechi yanlışlık neticesi bulunmuş olduğuna mebni lutfen ve merhameten bu babda muktezi muamelenin ifa ve mezburenin nezdimize gelmesine müsaade-i itası esababının (...) zımında lazım gelenin emr buyurulmasını istida ve istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir. (1331)*

to Interior Office's order, Directorate of Security certified Hoçagi's information about the visit of her daughter to Bursa that she had been in Bursa for visiting spring water baths. In the petition it was mentioned that Hoçagi's family was originally from Harput and they have been living in Dersaadet for thirty years.<sup>187</sup> Unfortunately there is no more information about the rest of the story, if she could be able to come back to Istanbul or not. There is still possibility that she could have been kept in Konya with reference to the ban on people who were not "originally" from Istanbul to continue their life in Istanbul.

As mentioned above, those Armenians involved in political and intellectual activities were included in the groups to be deported from Istanbul. The arrests of Armenian intellectuals occupy an important place in Armenian genocide historiography. However, we do not know much about the technical personnel working for intellectual institutions, such as newspapers, printing houses etc. In her petition, the mother of Artin Mesrobyan asked for the release of her son and requested permission for his return to Istanbul.<sup>188</sup> Artin Mesrobyan, as written in the petition, is a technician specialized in printing machines and worked for various printing houses for nine years. On the day of arrest, although he was not supposed to be there, Artin was called to the printing house. Thus he was there accidentally when legal proceeding against the owner of the printing

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<sup>186</sup> DH.EUM.ECB 15/3 1334 M 26

<sup>187</sup> DH.EUM.ECB 15/3 1334 M 26

<sup>188</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 8/89 1333 Ş 25 1

*Mar'uz-ı cariyeleridir,*

*Mahdumum bendeleri 309 tevellüdlü müteveffa (...) oğlu Artin Mesrobyan matbaa makinistliği ile iştigal olup dokuz seneden beri bulunduğu matbaalar Şemsi ve Tanin ve Tasvir-i Efkar, Servet-i Fünun ceride matbaalarında müstahdem iken geçende Azadamard nam ceride matbaasının makinisti Aram (...) mahdumum kölelerini çağırub olgünde her ne esbaba mebni ise hükümet-i seniyece mezkur matbaasının sahibi imtiyazı vesaireleri haklarında takibat-ı kanuniye icrası sırasında acaba bir malumatı ve haberi xxx olmayan merkum Artin kullarını dahi ma'en bigünah olarak Ankara vilayeti Ayaş kazası merkezine menfi edilmiş mahdumum kulları ise Azadamart matbaasının kabahat işlemiş olmadığını xxx balada isimleri gösterilen matbaaların tedkik buyuruldukta hakikatın tezahür edeceği bedihi olmağla lütfen ve inayeten iktizası yapılması hususunda makam-ı undesine umur-ı dahiliyeye buyurulmuş sehven vuku bulan şu badihi maduriyetten reha ve tahlis buyurulması efhamiyelerinden arz ve niyaz eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*(Üsküdar'da selamsız mahallesinde müsteciren sakine Artin validesi)*

house took place. Though he was innocent, he was deported to Ayaş. In the petition, his mother argued that the printing house had no illegal activities and asked the state to enclose the truth and to prove the innocence of her son and the printing house.

The petition written by the mother of Armenak Arakelyan is also significant in the sense that it gives at least some clues about the laborers working in these institutions, other than the writers or editors.<sup>189</sup> Arakelyan Armenak was working as a delivery man for Azadamard and he was arrested and deported to Ayaş, supposedly with the other people working at the journal. Armenak's mother wrote in the petition that the only crime his son could have committed might be that he had been working for Azadamard. She also stressed that his son is the only breadwinner of the house thus his absence would result in a disaster for the family. The mother wrote that, if his son had been arrested due to a crime he had committed, than they –the family- would think that their son was suffering as a result of his guilt and thus their misery and sorrow would not be that deep. However, knowing that the only guilt of her son was doing his job and with the certainty of this knowledge, she asked for the permission for the return of his son.

In this petition, there is not enough information about the case that led to the arrest of the victim.<sup>190</sup> In the petition of the mother, it is written that, her son had been arrested

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<sup>189</sup> 3354 DH.EUM.2.Şube 8/74 1333 Ş 22

*Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyet-i Canib-i Alisine,  
Utufetli Efendim Hazretleri,*

*Cariyelerinin mahdumu Arakelyan Armenak bundan evvel derdestle Ayaş'a sevk edilmiş olduğundan ailesinin yegane temin ve zahiri olduğu için cümlemiz kara sefaletle düçar olmuşuz. Mahdumum bir cürm ika'-i neticesinde tevkif edilmiş olsa idi "kabahatini çekiyor" diyerek sefalet ve kederimiz belki bu derece ağır gelmeyecekti. Oğlumun yegane kabahati tedarik-i maişet zımmında (Azadamard) gazetesinde postacılık etmekte bulunduğu olmak gerektir. İşte bu sebeptendir ki makam-ı adalet perveranelerine ilticaya cesaretle ailemizin yegane muini olan merkumun iadesi hususunda merhamet-i alilerinin inayet ve ihsan buyurulmasını istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.  
Beyoğlu Kalyoncukulluk Caddesi'nde*

<sup>190</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şube 7/43 1333 B 15

*Emniyet-i Umumiye Nezaret-i Cenab-ı Aliyesine,*

*Devletlü efendim hazretleri, mahdumum Melikist Asaduryan bendeleri bundan dört-beş hafta mukaddem bizce meçhul esbaba binaen tevkif edilmiş ve birkaç gün burada alıkonulduktan sonra Kastamonu vilayetinin Kengiri kazasına gönderilmiştir. Yegane medar-ı maişetim kendisinin semere-i say-i idiği cihetle dört haftadan beri acize cariyeleri perişan halde kaldım. Kendi hanesinden başka bir düşüncesi olmayan mesail-i siyasiyeye*

about four-five weeks ago with a reason unknown to his family. After being detained a few days in Istanbul, he was sent to Çankırı. His mother stressed that he was the sole breadwinner in the family, thus his arrest and deportation caused great difficulties for his family. He was described as a man devoted to his family. His innocence would be revealed after an objective investigation.

Different from the previous petitions, this petition was written for a fisherman who had been deported from Istanbul.<sup>191</sup> As put in the petition, Yervant was a resident of Kumkapı and had been deported to Çankırı forty days before the date of the petition. His mother wrote that, he had never committed any crime in his life time, not even minor ones. She described Yarevan as an illiterate person who was even unable to read and write in his own language, Armenian. Since most of the people who had been deported to Çankırı were Armenian intellectuals, it is highly probable that the mother needed to put forward that his son did not qualify to be an intellectual who might have caused trouble

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*iştiraki(...) bulunmayan (...) ve mahdumumun bir eser-i zuhul olacağı kaviyen memul olmakla hakkında tahkikat-ı lazımenin icrasıyla daha ziyade perişanlığımıza mahal verilmemesini her vakit ve surette idareleri olan adalet ve hakikat (...) istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

<sup>191</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şube 7/381333 B 13

*Mahdumum Dersaadet'te Kumkapı'da Kalifat mahallesinde mukim balıkçı esnafından Yerevan nam şahsın bundan kırk gün akdem umumca Kengrı cihetine sevk ve izam kılınmış idi. Merkum köleleri ise ahval-i malumeden dolayı cüzzi derecede bile olsun vukuatı olmadığı ve zaten cahil ve kendi lisanını dahi okur-yazar takımından bulunmadığı ve efal-i cinayet ve cünha derecelerinde bir cürüm ile mahkum edilmiş eşhastan olmadığı derkâr olduğu halde mahal-i mezkura esbab-ı sevkinin henüz kesbi ittila edemeyerek dört nüfus ailesiyle fakir (...) bir hale giriftar olmuş ve bu ana değin biraderi Haçig köleleri tarafından idare-i maişetimiz temin edilegelmekte iken merkum Pazartesi günü hizmet-i askeriyeyi ifa etmek üzere sevk edilmiş olmaktan naşi hal-i perişanemiz acınacak mertebeye gelmiştir. Biçare mahdumum bedalat takdirinin ilk taksidini tediye etmiş ikinci taksidinin zamanı da takarrub etmiş tediye edilen kısım her (...) zaman kalması yüzünden hanumanımız sönmüş olacağı bahirdir ve merkumun (...) (...) biri ve idare-i beytiyesiyle meşgul ve katiyen sui-hal takımıyla ulfet (...) etmez (...) (...) (...)zimmet eder bulunduğunu tevatiiren isbata muktedir bulunduğumu lütfen ve (...) niyaz ahval-i perişanemize merhamet buyurularak muktezayı tahkikat itası ve taayün olacak ahvale nazaran mahalli münasibine itaası (...) tarafı ali-yi asafanelerinin şayan buyurulmasını arz ve (...). Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Kumkapı Kalafat mahalinde  
1331*

for the state. She stressed that her son was not one of those who committed ordinary crimes, and that he had no criminal records.. The mother mentioned that they still did not get any information about the reason of his deportation to Çankırı. Their family consisted of four people and Yarevan's deportation impoverished them. The mother also complained that, Yarevan's brother, whose income served for the family, had been recruited to serve in the army. Absence of the second breadwinner of the family escalated the suffering and the poverty of the family. It is through this story that the mother asked for the release and return of Yarevan to Istanbul.

Ağavani Fenerciyan wrote a petition for his son Kadlis Fenerciyan who had been deported to Ayaş.<sup>192</sup> She stressed in the petition that her son had not been in any illegal activity that would cause his deportation. As the petition goes, personal history of Kadlis Fenerciyan proved that all his actions and activities were in the service for the welfare and prosperity of the Ottoman state. Thus, his mother wrote, even imagining that his son could make any mistake or commit any crime that would lead to his arrest destroyed her heart as a mother. His son had never involved in any kind of political activity against the state. She was certain about the innocence of her son and thus the mercy and justice of the state so that she could present this petition requesting permission for the return of his son to his home. With a slight difference from the petitions above, in this petition the mother

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<sup>192</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 7/30 1333 B 11

*Eminet-i Umumiye Müdüriyet-i Cenab-ı Alisine,  
Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Mahdumum Karlis Fenerciyan bendelerinin bundan bir mah mukaddem hanesinden derdest olunarak Ankara vilayeti dahilinde Ayaş'a nakl olunduğu halde kendisinin cezay-ı mezkura müstehak olacak bir fiili görülemedi. Mümaileyhin ömr-ü faaliyet mazisi kendi vatan-ı aslisi olan memalik-i Osmaniye'nin refah ve saadetine masruf olarak takdir-i umumiyeye mazhar olmuş bulunduğu halde idareten nefi ve tevkifini icab ettirecek bir cürm ve hatanın kendisinden sudurunu hayal ve tasavvuru bile kalb-i maderanemi dağdar eder. Saffet ve hamiyetine fikr ve mesleğinin doğruluğuna emin olduğum mumaileyhin adalet-i meşrutiyetin netayeci mesruresinden olarak halen pak-ı vatana avdetinden beri siyasiyatten katiyyen kefi yed edilerek umur-ı zatiye ve ticarisiyle meşgul olması dahi masumiyetini mübeyyin bir delil-i celidir. Oğlum mumaileyhin masumiyetine ve zat-ı samilerinin merhamet ve adaletine emin olduğumdan işbu istidayı cariyanemin takdimine cesaret eyledim. Lütfen ve merhameten tahkikat-ı muktezasının sürat-ı ikmalıyla (9) mahdum bendelerinin ahali-i sebilini ve aguş-u madiraneme iadesini gözyaşlarıyla rica ve istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir..*

*Beyoğlu'nda Küçükparmak kapıda sinek çıkmaz sokağında xxx apartmanı xxx mukim xxx Ağavni Fenerciyan.*

–through the mediation of the petition writer- used a language that stressed the emotional tie between a mother and a child.

In the petitions analyzed in this chapter, the framework within which the request was made to the state was that of innocence and the proof of innocence was the loyalty of the women as proper mothers who raised proper children for the empire. In another petition, the mother of Vağniyak Bardizbanyan requested mercy for his son who had been deported to Çankırı.<sup>193</sup> Bardizbanyan was working as a clerk in the cashier's office of *Şirket-i Hayriye* and had been sent to Çankırı. His mother stressed that his son had never been involved in politics and was not a member of any political parties. She asked her son to be released from deportation.

In a petition written in February 1916<sup>194</sup>, an Armenian woman stated that her husband was a soldier in the labor battalion located in Niğde. Her husband Haçık had health problems, thus the woman paid “the substitute money” in order to free him from military service. It was under these circumstances that she requested the state to send his husband back to Dersaadet.<sup>195</sup>

There were also cases where Armenian men wrote petitions to raise demands not about their families but about themselves. In a petition written in 1916, an Armenian man Artin who converted to Islam and took the name of Mehmed Ziya asked for permission to be able to go to his farm in Kütahya.<sup>196</sup>

Armenian men residing in Istanbul also wrote for their sisters in other cities of the Empire. In a petition dated 1916, an Armenian man working as an officer in the office of

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<sup>193</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 7/24 1333 B 09

*Devletli efendim hazretleri,*

*Mukaddem biltevkif Kengiri'ya izam kılınan mahdumum Şirket-i Hayriye vezne katibi Vağanyak Bardizbanyan efendi şimdiye kadar hiçbir fırkaya intisabı xxx ve alelhusus katiyyen siyasetle iştigal etmediği ve acizelerince sebab-i tevkifi müşabehet-i isim veya eser-i sehv olmaktan gayri bir şeye hamlediyorken xxx xxx tahkikat-ı xxx icrasıyla sıhhat-i maruzatım tebeyyün eylediği takdirde tahliye-i sebili lütfen ve merhameten mücade-i utufileri menlehül emrindir.*

<sup>194</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 18/1 1334 R 11

<sup>195</sup> There were also other similar petitions given by men who requested for permission to travel as converted subjects. DH.EUM.2.Şb. 18/56

<sup>196</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 18/23 1334 R 24

*Seyr-ü Sefer* of Railroad Company (*Demiryolu Kumpanyası*) stated that his sister and nephew were living alone in Ankara and their house was burnt down in an accident. He asked for a permission to take them to Dersaadet so that he could take care of them.<sup>197</sup>

Deported Armenian men also wrote petitions for themselves. For example, in a petition dated 1917, an Armenian man who was sent to Çankırı asked to be released from deportation since he was ill.<sup>198</sup>

As could be followed from the correspondence there were cases where the state accepted demands for travel and gave permission.<sup>199</sup>

As stated above, most of the petitions of Armenian women were written by mothers or wives who were trying to save their sons or husbands. In only one file, there was a petition written by a woman, with the title of a “female relative” of another woman. Mari wrote a petition for her relative Sofi Gülleryan in February 1916, who had been living in Ankara at that moment.<sup>200</sup> Originally from Istanbul, from the Armenian Catholic community, Sofi had married and moved to Ankara with her husband. Similar to other petitions, without making any reference to the general process of the deportation of Armenians, she wrote that Sofi’s husband was deported from Ankara to another place (“*zevcinin aher mahale nakl edilmiş bulunması*”). After her husband’s deportation, Sofi was left alone and was in a vulnerable position without any financial support. Her husband could not support her from where he was sent. It is under these conditions that Mari asked the state to give permission for Sofi to be able to come back to Istanbul, where she could have protection of her family members. In order to prove that Sofi was originally from Istanbul, she attached to her petition a (certificate of baptism (*vaftiz belgesi*)) in

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<sup>197</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 28/17 1334 Za 23

<sup>198</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/16 1335 Za 04

<sup>199</sup> Families of two Armenian men working in the Taksim Hospital were allowed to come to Dersaadet: DH.EUM.2.Şb. 54/49 1336 N 01. An Armenian woman who was left alone with the death of her sister was allowed to come back from Filibe to Dersaadet: DH.EUM.2.Şb. 63/13 1336 Z 26. Again the family of an Armenian man was allowed to come back to Dersaadet: DH.EUM.SSM. 58/46 1336 Ş 05.

<sup>200</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 18/3 1334 R 12

Armenian.<sup>201</sup> The certificate was taken from the Church of Surp Hovhan Vosgeperan located in Pera in Istanbul. A translation of the certificate into Ottoman Turkish is included in the file. Although any other document supporting the petition and certificate is missing, it is possible to argue that this petition is quite unique compared to others analyzed in this chapter. Firstly, the fact that Armenian women mostly wrote for their male relatives as their mothers and wives, and in this case a woman, without using any titles connected to a man (mother, wife or daughter) petitions for a woman is significant. Secondly, this file is the only one where a baptismal certificate is attached to the petition to officially prove individual's community. Since the state's reply to this petition could not be located, it is not possible to develop an argument whether the certificate had a positive effect in the process or not.

In a petition dated August 1915, the mother of Zare Şahinyan stated her demand for the release of her son.<sup>202</sup> After praising to the high qualities of the officer she addresses, she

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<sup>201</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 18/3 1334 R 12

Certificate of Birth and Baptism

With this official document we hereby declare and approve that the birth and baptismal record at Surp Hovhan Vosgeperan Church is as follows:

Infant: Sofi İlimoncyan

Father: Hovsep

Mother: Srpuhi Biberyan

Born on December 29, 1890 from lawful marriage and baptised and blessed on February 3, 1891 in the witnessing of godfather İlimoncyan Harutyun.

We declare the accuracy of this information with our clerical stamp and approve this document with our signature.

Holy Synod of Surp Hovhan Vosgeperan Church

Pera, G. Bolis/Istanbul

1916 January 18

Archpriest of Surp Hovhan Vosgeperan Church

(The original document is in Armenian. The file at the Ottoman archive also contains a summary of the certificate in Ottoman. Translation from Armenian to English by Melissa Bilal)

<sup>202</sup> DH.EUM.VRK 15/50 1333 L 08

Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,

*Mar'uz-ı bende-i çaker keminelidir,*

introduces herself as a loyal slave of the state (*cariye*/ female slave), the mother of Zare Şahinyan. Zare was working as a civil servant in *Şark Demiryolu Kumpanyası* (Orient Railroad Company). A few days ago, he was arrested on his way to home from work. Then he was sent to İzmit and imprisoned there. As the sole breadwinner of the family, Zare had to secure the living of her mother and three sisters. In his absence, the family was left in need. His mother stated that Zare never acted against law, moreover, had noble and decent feelings about the state. He was always loyal to the state and had never changed his path. She was sure that his son's innocence can be proved. She asked the state, which was known for its fairness and decency, to reveal the truth as soon as possible and send his beloved son back home.

Petitions written by Armenian women also reveal cases where women tried to save their husbands by informing the state that they are not Armenian. In a petition written in September 1915, Frangula residing in Galata, wrote to save her husband from deportation by trying to prove that her husband was not Armenian but OrthodoxGreek.<sup>203</sup> Arzumanoğlu

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*Cenab-ı hak ve feyyaz mutlak zat-ı fehmet simatı devletlerini her nev'i ekter-i xden masun buyursun, amin. Cariyelerinin mahdumu olup Şark Demiryolu Kumpanyası memurinden Zade Şahinyan bendeleri bundan çend gün akdem mahal-i memuriyetinden hanesine avdet eylemekte iken x derdest edilerek İzmit sancağına tebid ve orada mevkuf bulunmuştur. Alil-ül vücud validesiyle üç nefer hemşiresinden ibaret olan ve mahdumundan başka biçbir hami ve maaşı bulunmayan ailem efradı bu yüzden ne derece x ve elem ve keder olduklarını ve medar-ı maişetten mahrum kalarak hal-i perişaniye girifter olacakları malum olduğu gibi mevkuf –u merkumun mugayir-ı kanun ve nizam hiç hareket-i xde bulunmamış hükümet-i seniye hakkında kemal-i iftihar ile haiz olduğu sadakat ve istikametten asla inhiraf etmemiş ve bigünah olduğu led'el tahkik tezahür ve tebeyyün edeceğine eminyet-i kamilem bulunduğundan uluv-u hak ve adalet-i merhametpenahilerine ilticaen ve bu babda tahkikat-ı lazımenin serian icra buyurulması ve mahdumu çakeranemin de bir an evvel tahliye-i sebili hususuna evamir-i lazımenin lütfen ve terhimen ita ve istar buyurulmasını istirham niyaz eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

<sup>203</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/7 1334 S 24

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Valasına,  
Mar'uz-ı Cariyeleridir,*

*Merbuten takdim kılınan alam-ı ilm-ü haber ve hüviyetname varakasından keyfiyet müsteban buyurulacağı vechle, zevcim Arzumanoğlu Marangoz Koçu bundan sekiz mah mukaddem Dersaadet'te Ayasofya civarındaki telgraf ve telefon fabrikasında icra-i hizmet etmekte iken her nasılsa bekar zannıyla ve Ermeni milletinden addıyla Çankırı'ya ve oradan da Ankara'ya sevk olunarak yirmi iki gün tevkifhanede kaldıktan sonra diğer sabıkalı bir takım eşhaslar ile birlikte Yozgat'a izam kılındığı mesmu'-u cariyenem olması*

Marangoz Koçu had been a worker at the telegraph and telephone factory located in Hagia Sophia in Dersaadet for seven years. He was arrested and sent to deportation since he was believed to be “single” and a member of Armenian community. He was first sent to Çankırı and then to Ankara where he stayed in jail for twenty-two days. Next, he was taken to Yozgat, together with some previously convicted people. At the moment, it was decided that further investigation was needed to clarify his case. The aim of Fransolia in writing a petition was neither to request mercy nor to argue that their family, together with her husband, was a native of Istanbul. Her sole aim was to prove that her husband was not a single Armenian individual, rather a married Greek Orthodox man. Accordingly it was a huge mistake to arrest and deport her husband. Similar to other petitions, she also stressed that as the sole breadwinner of the family, he was the only person to take care of her, and thus she would be left in misery until he came back home.

In order to prove her statement, she attached a document signed by some of her neighbors providing information about her husband: Arzumanoğlu Marangoz Koçu moved to their neighborhood three years ago after getting married with Fransolie. He was Greek Orthodox. Throughout the time they lived together, the neighbors did not witness any inappropriate behavior of him. On the contrary, as they wrote, he was known for his good manner and honorable personality. The letter written by the neighbors is a quite distinctive document which shows how women were able to organize their neighborhood to help them. However, especially in this case, it is critical to question why the woman did not receive a certificate of baptism from the Greek Orthodox church, which could present a more reliable document for the state rather than a “reference letter” from neighbors.<sup>204</sup> Still, this

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*üzerine hakkında tahkikat lazıme-i icra buyurularak adalet-i seniye nin ifa buyurulmasına dair bundan takdim-i huzur x kılınan istida ve istirhamname alel husus ahiz edilen numero evrakını kazaen zai eylediğimden batekrar takdim-i istirhamnameye mecburiyet hasıl olmuştur. İmdi zevcimmerkum Koçu'nun salef'ül arz Rum milleti cemaatine mensub ve Ortodoks milletinden bulunması ve yedi seneyi mütecaviz x mezkur telgraf ve telefon fabrikasında hizmet-i sebkat etmiş takımından idiği ve cariyelerine nezaret edecek zevcimden maada kimsenin bulunmadığı cihetle lütfen ve fakr-ü halime merhameten zevcim merkum Koçu'nun Dersaadet'e hanesine iade-i avdet zimmında lazım gelenlere emr ve hususuyla x perişaniyetten vikaye buyurulmaklığım babında ve herhalde emr-ü ferman hazret-i minlehül emrindir.*

*9 Kanun-i evvel 1331 (Galata'da mukim....)*

<sup>204</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/7 1334 S 24

*“Badi-i takdim-i hüviyetname ve ilmuhaber oldur ki.*

document brought “witnesses” into the case of an arrested and deported individual who supported the arguments of a woman and thus added to “the story” told by a woman.

Both the petition and the attached document (*hüviyetname*) were presented to the Ministry of Interior by the Security Office together with an official letter, which summarized the reasons why Arzumanoğlu Marangoz Koçu was arrested and deported from Istanbul.<sup>205</sup> In the letter, Security Office wrote that the person who was arrested and deported was known as Artin Hoçati and he was considered to be a “suspect” (*şüpheli*) person who was part of the “malice” (*fesad*) and “evil” (*şer*) groups. Hence, the reason of his arrestment was not about his Armenianness, rather about his engagement with “evil” and “suspicious” activities. No information is provided on the ground of this accusation. The documents in the file about this case were limited to the documents discussed above. Thus, the response of the Ministry of the Interior is unknown, too. In the document that summarized the case to the Ministry, it was strictly mentioned that he was known as Artin, which was an Armenian name. Thus he was taken as Armenian at least by the officials who arrested him.

Whether the information of his Greek identity positively changed the outcome of the deportation decision remains unanswered. However, it is possible to argue that, since it was stated that he was arrested for being part of the *şer* and *fesad* centers, being an Orthodox Greek would not save him either.

Not only wives or mothers, in some cases sisters also wrote to save their brothers. In February 1916, an Armenian woman who resided in Tarlabası, Istanbul wrote a petition for her brother who was deported from Istanbul to Tarsus.<sup>206</sup> Çarıkyan, an Armenian Catholic,

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*Bundan takriben üç sene mukaddem Yorgi Karaoğlan kerimesi Frangula ile akd-i izdivaç ederek mahallemizde Lambacı Hacı Karakaş'ın mutasarrıf olduğu üç numaralı hanede sakin Rum millet Ortodoks cemaatine mensub Arzumanoğlu marangoz Koçu'nun mahallemizde ikamet eylediği üç sene müddet zarfında bir günasuihali görülmediği gibi kendisi hüsn-ü hal ashabından ve ehl-i namus güruhundan ve esnaf takımından idiğini tasdiken işbu hüviyetname evrak-ı x takdim kılınmak üzere ita kılındığı” (İmza sahipleri mahalle sakinlerinden olup kendi imzaları olduğunu işbu...)*

<sup>205</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 16/7 1334 S 24

<sup>206</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 18/6 1334 R 14

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,  
Mar'uz-ı benganemdir,*

was earning his life working at a shop in Beyazıt as a gold and silver wire drawer (*simkeş*). As the petition goes, although he did not commit any crime, he was first deported to Ankara and then to Tarsus, Adana. Her sister asked the state to bring him back from Tarsus to his home. She praised the mercy and forgiveness as the basic characteristics of the Ottoman State in its relation to its citizens. In a way, she requested her brother's innocence to be recognized by the state and asked the state to bring justice to her brother's case.

This petition differs from most of the other petitions written by women for men, especially in the way in which the request of the petitioner is formulated. In most of the petitions written by women, as discussed above, the request or demand was legitimized by the vulnerable, deprived, desperate situation of women who were writing the petition together with other family members, mostly their children or in some cases their sisters. The basic argument of all petitions was the innocence of men who were arrested and deported. Although the innocence of the "victim" was one of the reasons that constituted the demand of women, more critical and highly stressed one was that, by deporting those men, the Ottoman state, which was supposed to be just, was not only punishing an innocent man but also a family which was mostly consisted of women and children who were depended on the arrested and deported man for their survival. In this petition, on the other hand, the woman who wrote the petition was the sister of the man and she was not depended on him financially. The fact that the last name she signs this petition with is different from that of her brother's confirms that she is a married woman. Since it is her not his wife who wrote the petition, it seems that he is a single man and his closest relative is his sister.

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*Biraderim bendeniz Viçen Çarıkçıyan Katolik milletinden olup, şimdiye kadar meşgul olduğu Beyazıt'da simkeşhanede simkeşlik zanaatıyla meşgul olmakta iken hiçbir kabahati olmadığı halde Ankara'ya ve müteakiben Adana vilayeti Tarsus'a nef'i edilmiş, halbuki böyle bigünah bendegan kulları hakkında esher cihet rayegan buyurulacağı tabii olan uluvu ve şefkat ve merhamet-i fehimaneleri bütün millet hakkında her gün ibzal buyurulmakta olageldiğinden bu atıfet-ı fehimanelerinden cariyelerinin de istifade ederek biraderim kullarının menfasından avdetine ve İstanbul'a muvasalatına müsaade-i saye-i fehimanelerinin erzan buyurulması veistirhama cüret eylerim. Olbabda ve her x emr-ü ferman hazreti menlehül emrindir. (Katolik, Yağhane Sokağı'nda 11 numero hanede ikamet...cariyeleri)*

In April 1916 an Armenian woman from Ortaköy, Istanbul wrote a petition for her husband, Haçaturyan<sup>207</sup> He was taken from his house located in Ortaköy, arrested and sent to Çankırı. It was stressed in the petition that he was born in Dersaadet, thus his wife tried to show that it would be a mistake if the reason behind his arrest was that he was not a native of Istanbul. She continued that his husband did not have any criminal record and he was among the loyal subjects (*teba-i sadıka*) of the Ottoman state. Having mentioned the innocence of his husband, she stressed that the state was known and recognized as a just state and thus she pointed out the contradiction of the arrest of his husband and sending him to a place away from his wife and children by an authority known by its just decisions. In the end, she asked for an investigation of his husband's case so that he could return to his home and family. Similar to most other petitions written by Armenian women, this petition also asked for an investigation or trial, which would reveal that those men who were arrested and deported were loyal and innocent Ottoman citizens.

In another petition written in March 1916, an Armenian woman requested the release of her husband who had been arrested and sent to Konya.<sup>208</sup> As told in the petition,

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<sup>207</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 18/43 1334 C 3

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Mar'uz-ı cariyeleridir,*

*Zevcim Ortaköy'de mukim Haçaturyan Haçik bendeleri bundan on bir mah mukaddem Günlükçü sokağında hanesinden alınarak Kengri'ya tebid edilmiş ise de mumaileyh Dersaadet'te tevellüd etmiş ve bu güne değin hiçbir mahkumiyet-i sabıkası olmadığı ve kendisi teba-i sadıkadandan bulunduğu halde evlad-ü iyalinden baid bir mahale sevk ve izam kılınması ma'lum-u müsellemler olan madalet-i celilelerince hiçbir vechle tecviz buyurulamayacağı bedidar bulunduğundan lütfen merhameten tahkikat-ı lazıme icrasıyla mumaileyhin Dersaadet'te bulunan ailesi nezdine celbi hususunda emr-i nezarete-i celilelerinin şayan buyurulmasını istida ve istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-iül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Ortaköy Günlükçü Sokağı'ndan Virgin Haçaturyan*

*1331*

<sup>208</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 18/54 1334 R 25

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Seniyesine,*

*Mar'uz-ı cariyeleridir.*

*Zevcim Ortaköy'de mukim Mübayacıyan Apik bendeleri bundan yedi buçuk mah mukaddem memuriyet-i mahalliyece derdest edilerek Konya'ya tebid edilmiş ise de mumaileyh Dersaadet'te tevellüd etmiş ve müddet-i medideden beri hükümet-i seniye müzahir neşriyat-ı hükm cüyane ve makalat-ı müfidesiyle ma'ruf Ermenice Püzantion gazetesi erkan-ı tahririyesinden olup, bugüne kadar hiçbir mahkumiyet-i sabıkası mevcud*

Apik Mübayacıyan was living in Ortaköy and about seven and half months before the date of the petition he had been arrested and sent to Konya. Similar to other petitions, her wife stressed that he was born in Dersaadet. She made a statement underlining the innocence of her husband. Apik was in the editorial board of Püzantion, an Armenian daily newspaper. The journal was described as a transparent publication, open to state control and it was known for its intellectual capacity with the articles it published. Apik did not have any criminal record and being among the loyal subjects, he was encompassed with the spirit of Ottoman identity. However, despite the fact that he was a native of Istanbul, innocent and loyal, he was still sent to a place away from his wife and children. Having said that her husband was innocent and it was not just to send him to Konya, she referred to the state as a just and fair authority and said that the state would not allow such an unfair and unjust situation. Hence, she asked for an investigation which would also legally reveal the innocence of her husband and afterwards she requested for the return of her husband to his home to Dersaadet. It is highly possible that these two petitions were written by the same petitioner. Both the handwritings and the organization of the petitions have similar paths. As in the previous one, there was no reference to the financial difficulty that the family was living through with the deportation of her husband. On the contrary there was a strict argument that there was no legal reason for his deportation. He was a native of Istanbul, working in a legal job and a loyal Ottoman citizen.

In some cases women wrote not for male members of their families but for themselves.<sup>209</sup> In a quite short petition written in September 1916, a woman wrote that her

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*olmadığı ve an'asl Osmanlı ruhuyla perverde tebaa-i sadıkadan bulunduğu halde evlad-ü iyalinden baid bir mahale sevk ve izamı malum-u müsellemler nam olan maadalet-i celilelerince hiçbir vechle tecviz buyurulamayacağı bedidar bulunduğundan lütfen ve merhameten al'el usul tahkikat ve tedkikat-ı amika-i adilenin adliyenin icrasıyla tebeyyün edecek masumiyetine binaen mumaileyhin Dersaadet'e celbi hakkında lazım gelenlere evamir celile-i nezaretpenahilerinin (...) buyurulması suretiyle maduriyet-i cariyeneme hatime verilmesini kemal-i suzişle niyaz ve istirham eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*17 Şubat 1331*

<sup>209</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 28/16 1334 Za 22

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,  
Cariyeleri haffaf esnafından Rupen oğlu Aram vazife-i askeriyesini ifaya celb ve davet olunmuş, mintikasına sevk edilmiş olduğundan cariyeleri şayan-ı merhamet bir halde*

husband Rupen oğlu Aram, a shoe-maker was taken under arms and thus she was left alone in a piteous situation with his two children, a daughter and a son. It was under such conditions that she asked for permission to go and live with her mother in Tekfurdağı. Compared to most of the petitions, this petition is short, to the point and simple. Since she did not request mercy or justice for an arrested or deported husband as in most of the petitions, she raised her “legitimate” demand as a wife of a soldier in a quite plain manner.

An Armenian woman wrote a petition in 1917 describing a case of deportation with the excuse that she was a prostitute. Maria, daughter of Andon, was from the neighborhood of Sıradibi of Tarabya in Boğaziçi. She lived in Beyoğlu at the moment, on the same street where the Armenian Church was located.<sup>210</sup> By the order of the government, she was sent to Konya. In her petition she does not mention anything about the reason behind her deportation but rather writes that government found it necessary to deport her.: “*Hükümet tarafından görülen lüzum üzerine buraya gönderildim.*” She lived in Bursa for seven months. In the mean time, she suffered from an illness and had to spend all her time in bed. Her illness progressed and affected her kidneys. The result of her medical examination proved that her illness could be cured in hot springs. Maria writes that she was not engaged in any crime yet she was deported to Konya for a reason unknown to her. Asking for the

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*kalmış olduğumdan biri kız biri erkek sagir evladımla Tekfurdağı sakinesinden olan validem nezdine gideceğimden (...) müsade-i devletlerinin şayan buyurulmasını istida ve istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir. (1332)*

<sup>210</sup> Dahiliye Nezareti Huzur-u Alisine,

*Cariyeleri an'asl Dersaadet ahalisinden ve Devlet-i Aliye-i ebed müddet-i Osmaniye'den olup Boğaziçi'nde Tarabya'da Sıradibi mahallesi ahalisinden olup muaheren Beyoğlu'nda Ermeni Kilisesi sokağında dokuz numaralı hanede sakineyim. Hükümet tarafından görülen lüzum üzerine buraya gönderildim. Yedi mahtır burada bulunuyorum. Bu müddet zarfında şimdiye kadar hastalık ile vakit geçirip kendime malik olamayarak esir-i firaş bulunuyorum. Hastalığım humma-i (...) tahvil edip böbrek hastalığına düçar ve münkalip olmuştur. Ettiba tarafından muayenelerim neticesinde herhalde ılica ve kaplıcalarda tedavi edilip şifa bulacağım barapor bildirilmiştir. Hakk-ı cariyaniemde burada bulunduğum bu kadar müddet zarfında ne türlü imrar-ı hayat ettiğim istilam üzere buradan bildirilecektir. Buraya nahak yere gönderildiğim x olacağından ve nahak yere nakl edilmeliğim tebeyyün edeceğinden ve bu ise takib edilen adalet ile asla ve kat'en tevaful edemeyeceğinden mağduriyet-i cariyaniem-i (...) verilmek üzere lütfen ve merhameten Bursa ve yahut sair mahallerde bulunan ılica ve kaplıcalara berayı tedavi izam edilmeliğim maruz ve badel istida hükümetçe (...) lüzum görülen mahale emr-ü mucibince gönderilmeliğimi niyaz ve istirham eylerim.*

*19 Teşrin-i sani 333.*

correction of this unjust deportation, she asked for permission to travel and receive treatment in Bursa or any other place that has hot spring facilities that would cure her illness.

After conducting an investigation about Maria, Directorate of Security reported that she had been deported from Istanbul, due to the reason that she had committed the crime of prostitution.<sup>211</sup> She was accused of running her house as a place where Muslim women had sexual intercourse with foreigners. Thus she was found guilty of insulting Islam, together with the guilt of engaging in prostitution. This is the reason behind her deportation to Konya by the military government.

In her petition, rather than specifying “the crime” she was accused of, Maria puts the emphasis on her innocence and the judicial mistake that worsened her already bad health condition. The document does not include information as to whether Maria was deported within a group of other prostitute women or not. It is not possible to trace whether her deportation was connected to the massive deportation of Armenians, either. As mentioned above, although Armenian population of Istanbul was not deported en masse, there were individual or collective arrests. Whether Maria’s arrest was directly related to these or not, it coincides with the policies Armenian population had to face during the war.

Although most of the petitions written by Armenian women were about the process of deportation, there were also limited ones focusing on other issues. In a petition dated September 1917, a woman named Öjen Arastakis wrote a petition to the Ministry of

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<sup>211</sup> DH. EUM. 3.Şb. 24 18 1336 S 03

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,  
Mar’uz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir,*

*Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyet-i Umumi Şube ifadesiyle şeref varid olan 11 Teşrin-i Sani 333 tarih ve 2803 numaralı emiraname-i fehimaneleri cevabıdır. Esbab-ı tebediyle hakkında karar-ı askeri alınıp alınmadığının inbası emr ve işar buyrulan Andon kerimesi Maria 17 Haziran 1333 tarihi ve 1820 numaralı tezkire-i acizi ile de arz olunduğu vechle hanesine İslam kadınlarını kabul ve şapka iksa ettirerek ecanibe icra-i fuhuş eylemelerine delalet ve vasita etmek suretiyle hissiyatı İslamiye’yi rencide ve mucib ahval ve harekette bulunmasına mebni hükümet-i askeriye kararıyla Konya’ya gönderilmiş olmakla arz olunur. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü’l emrindir.*

*Polis Müdüri Umumiyesi  
15 Teşrin-i sani 333*

Interior about a procedural process in the sale of a real estate.<sup>212</sup> Öjen's sixty years old aunt in need, who was originally from Istanbul, was living in Filibe (Plovdiv). She owned a house in Istanbul, which was on sale. For the process of sale, she had to come to Istanbul. Öjen asked for permission to go to Filibe either to take her aunt back to Istanbul with herself, or, unless her health condition was good enough for a trip, to get a letter of attorney to process the sale. The file contained only the petition, there was not any document reflecting the response of the state.

This petition is a good example of how women from privileged classes in the city addressed the state with a voice that reclaimed the position of "equal citizen." A close analysis of the correspondences between the petition writers and the Interior Ministry and the responses by the ministry to these petitions, at least the petitions I analyzed for my work, suggest that, in some cases the state followed the legal procedure and responded some of these petitions, by investigating the case, i.e. whether the mentioned child was a criminal or not. However, except for a few cases, for example, where a young woman was deported from Bursa, where she was visiting from Istanbul for health problems, none of these children were found or declared to be "innocent". The responses given by the state appeared to "legitimize" the whole process in the domain of law, which is itself a very important discussion that is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, it is difficult to analyze the responses given by the Ottoman state to the petitions. Practically most of the files that I could locate in the state archive do not contain the official response by the state institutions. Thus, what we could observe is that, these petitions were taken and registered by the state to be investigated. As written in some of the petitions, Armenian women had to write more than once before they could receive responses. In the files that contain the results of investigations, the state mostly decided negatively, refusing the demands raised in original petitions.

Among the petitions preserved in the Ottoman state archives dating to WWI years, written by women to the state from the position of being mothers, those written by Armenian mothers are especially important in understanding the differentiated practices of the state in handling the war conditions. Although these Armenian mothers who wrote petitions were mostly from Istanbul, they came from various social strata. As mothers, they

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<sup>212</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/76 1335 Za 28

expressed their despair and sorrow of being apart from their children and not receiving any news from them. As I noted earlier, the major narrative line that is common in almost all petitions is the innocence of the child, and his loyalty to the country (state) and to the ideal of Ottomanism. It is through this narrative that they were able to request the reversal of the order of deportation that they believed to be a mistake.

Thus, the legal framework that made these petitions possible deserves special attention. Armenian mothers regarded themselves as subjects or citizens of a state, the Ottoman state, and addressed the authorities to correct a mistake, that is the deportation of their children. Despite the desperate political and social conditions starting in 1915 for the Armenians in the lands of the Ottoman Empire, at least some people among the Armenian population of Istanbul still considered it meaningful and legitimate to apply to state organs and could manage to utilize the legal process of petition writing in order to ask for “justice”. Thus, in a period of ‘emergency,’ i.e. under the conditions of genocide that suspended the citizenship status, Armenian women sought means to remind the state that they were the equal citizens of the empire and were subject to law. These petitions present a powerful case of how gendered the relationship between the state and the citizens and how Armenian mothers were represented.

In some files, although it is not possible to locate the petitions themselves, it is possible to locate the official answers given to the petitioners. In those official documents together with the replies given to the petitioners, demand or request of the petitioner is also summarized with reference to the points relevant to the official answers. In a file dated November 1917, governor of Edirne sent a document to the Ministry of Interior in which the governor informed the ministry about the result of an investigation that was conducted with the order of the ministry.<sup>213</sup> As could be followed in the document, an Armenian

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<sup>213</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/40 1335 Z 16

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,*

*Mar‘uz-ı çakeri kemineleridir,*

*Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti ifadesiyle şeref varid olan 15 Eylül 333 tarihli ve 688 numarolu emirname-i ali-i nezaretpenahileri arza-i cevabiyesidir. Gedikpaşa’da Divan-ı ali mahallesinin ihsaniye sokağında sakine olup Tekfurdağı’nda hasta bulunan kerimesi Nazik nezdine gitmek istediği işâr buyurulan Eva bint-i Agop’un Tekfurdağı’nda Nazik isminde kızı olmadığı ve gerçi uzak akrabalarından bu isimde biri var ise de buraya hasta ve muhtac-ı muavenet bulunmadığı ve şu hale göre Tekfurdağı’na gelmek için serd ettiği mazeretin bir bahaneden ibaret bulunmasına mebni avdeti muvaffik olamayacağı*

woman named Eva bint-i Agop, who was living in Gedikpaşa in Istanbul, gave a petition to request permission to go to Tekfurdağı where her daughter lived. As she wrote in her petition, her daughter's surname was Nazaryan and she was ill and in need of care. Thus she asked to get permission to go and take care of her sick daughter in Tekfurdağı. However, as the document written by the governor of Edirne pointed out, the investigation proved that Eva bint-i Agop did not have any daughter in Tekfurdağı. Although she had a distant relative named Nazaryan in the city, she was not sick or in need of help. The governor stressed that "sickness of the daughter" was a pretext covering Eva's intention to go to Tekfurdağı. Thus, as stated in the document, she would not be allowed to go to Tekfurdağı.

As documents as such show, state conducted investigations to check the information given in the petitions before making decisions about the demands raised in the petitions. Given this, it is interesting to observe that people gave false information in their petitions putting their request at risk. Here there are few possibilities. First, state might have manipulated the results of investigations in the cases that giving positive replies to requests would contradict with the general state policies. Or, they might have conducted unqualified investigation due to war conditions which, resulted in inefficiency in the state apparatus in general without any specific intention. Second, the state might have conducted qualified investigations and the results might have been correct which proved that the petitioners were lying. In that case, it might have been possible that people who were writing petitions were just trying to rely on the possibility that chance would help them or in such turmoil the state might fail to make a deep investigation to check the information that they had presented.

In a petition written in September 1917, an Armenian woman living in Istanbul asked for permission for her sister's coming back from Sivas to Istanbul.<sup>214</sup> Cevheroğlu's

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*bilmuhabere mahalli mutasarrıflığından bildirilmiştir. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Edirne Valisi  
16 Zilhicce 335*

<sup>214</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 41/37 1335 Za 14

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,  
Mar'uz-ı cariyeleridir,  
Cariyeleri aslen Giresunlu olup sinin-i vafireden beri İstanbul'da tevattun ederim.  
Seferberlikten iki ay evvel on onbir yaşlarında bulunan bir tek hemşireciğim bir ay tebdil-i*

daughter Şamram was originally from Giresun, however she had been living in Istanbul. Two months before the mobilization, her eleven year old sister was sent to Sivas, near her aunt for a month for a change necessary for medical reasons. She has been in Sivas since then. However, as she wrote, at the moment, it had become difficult for her to finance both herself and her sister in Sivas simultaneously. Thus, she requested for an investigation to prove the innocence of her sister and asked permission for her sister to come back to Istanbul after she was declared to be innocent.

As in most of the petitions written by women for women, no detailed information is included on woman's marital status or occupation. This petition is simple, short and to the point in communicating the request. It did not include any expressions emphasizing the emotional or financial difficulties the petitioner was subject to. There weren't any phrases to define the benevolence of the state authority with excessive praise, either. Hence, it is quite legitimate to ask whether this was an attitude of some *arzuhalcis*, or this was the format used by all *arzuhalcis* when they were writing in the name of single woman or when they were writing on behalf of women for other women.

A petition dated September 1917 also represented a familiar story about Armenians, who were deported from the cities they were living in, despite the fact that they were natives of Istanbul.<sup>215</sup> Araksi, the woman writing the petition, was working as a teacher in

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*hava Giresun'a teyzesinin nezdine gönderilmiş olup elyevm dahi Sivas'ta teyzesinin yanında bulunmaktadır. Cariyeleri ise gerek Sivas'taki hemşiremin gerekse ayrudan olarak kendi idaremi temin edemeyeceğimden lütfen lazım olan tahkikatın icrasıyla hemşiremin İstanbul'a avdeti için iktiza eden vesikanın ita olunması hususunda emr buyurulmasını niyaz ve istirahat ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*10 Eylül 333*

*İstanbul'da Bahçekapusunda (...)*

<sup>215</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/62 1335 Za 24

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Mar'uz-ı cariyanem oldur ki,*

*Cariyeleriyle peder ve bütün aile-i kemteranem an'asl Dersaadet ahalisinden olup, bundan çend sene mukaddem kulları muallimelik üzere Adapazarı'na (...) etmiş ve ihtiyar pederim Papaz (...) Torosyan daileriyile esir firaş validem ve Mariçe, (...) ve Hayganuş nam iki hemşirem cariyenizi takiben mahal-i mezkura gelmiş ve daha henüz altı mah müddet etmemişken hükümet-i seniyece görülen lüzume mebni mahalli Ermeni sakinesinin diyar-ı ahare nakli takarrur eylemekle aile-i cariyanem dahi Adapazarlı adıyla saire müsüllü sevk olunarak elyevm Kütahya şehrinde kimsesiz pek acıklı bir halde mevcudiyetlerini sürdürmekteyler. İstanbul Ermenileri'nin tebid-i mezkureye bir*

Adapazarı for some years. She and her family were natives of Istanbul. However, her father, who was a priest, her mother and her two sisters also came to Adapazarı after Araks about six months ago. When the state took the decision of deporting the local Armenian population, her family was also deported since they were also considered to be the natives of Adapazarı. At the moment they were in the city of Kütahya, alone and in misery. More than that, they had health problems, they were dependent on Araksi financially; thus it was not also possible/feasible for them to get involved in political activities. With reference to these reasons, Araksi requested her family as natives of Istanbul to be exempted from deportation. She asked the state to let her old parents live in peace rest of their lives. There was not any specific information in the petition on her sisters. It was not clear whether they were also deported or not. The position of Araksi herself was not clear either. It is not possible to follow the reason she was not deported with her family. As a teacher, she might have been protected by her school, but still, since there was not any specific information about which school she was working in, it is not possible to argue about what made it possible for her to be exempted from deportation.

Some of the petitions written by Armenian women stressed the innocence of their husbands with general terms, such as being known as a honest person or not being active politically. However, some of the petitions were much focused on the legal or procedural mistakes followed by the state in the arrest of their family members. A petition written for Manuk Krikoryan by her wife exemplified a position in between.<sup>216</sup> Manuk Krikoryan was

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*güna alakası olmaması ve ailemiz ise aslen Asitataneli bulunmak itibarıyla hal-i nef'ide kılması caiz olamayacağı derkâr bulunmakla beraber, maişetleri (...) (...) müsaid cariyane muhtaç olan ve sin ve sıhhat ve mevcudiyeti perişaneleri esasen bir güna faaliyet-i siyasiyeye gayri müsaid olduğunu (...) (...) (...) mezburenin hayatlarının son demlerini (...) (...) ve ali-i vacib (...) afiyet (...) ve şan ve şevket-i mülk ve devlete (...) ve müsaade-i aliye-i ekremilerinin (...) buyurulması babında emr-ü ferman hazret-i menlehülemdir.*

*Mahmud Paşa'da 20 numarolu Pilamizade Ali Faik ve Şürekası ticarethanesinde müstahdem veznedar Araksi Torosyan.*

*11 Eylül 1333*

<sup>216</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/75 1335 Za 28

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Mar'uz-ı cariyeleridir,*

*İki sene mukaddem zevcem Manuk Kiryakoryan kulları taşralı ve bekar zannıyla bekarlar meyanında derdest ve bila tahkikat (...) Konya'ya sevk edilmişti. Halbuki zevcem*

arrested and deported to Konya, since he was considered a single man from the provinces. As written by her wife, Manuk was an honest individual known by his sincere qualities. He had never been involved in a criminal act, not even in an ordinary crime. His family was left alone in a miserable situation with Manuk's arrest and deportation. His wife requested permission for her husband's return to Istanbul. She believed he did not commit any crime, but punished because he was thought to be a single man from the provinces. With his return she and the rest of her family would be saved from despair.

As could be followed in the petition, Manuk's wife made it clear that her husband was arrested and deported as a single man from the provinces. She did not made any point about the origin of her husband, rather mentioned that he had been working in Istanbul. However she did not stress the point that since they were married it could have been a mistake to deport him under the title of "single man". There might have been various reasons for that, but if people had already known that people from the provinces were deported even if they were married, then she might have preferred to stress the suffering of the family and the innocence and honesty of her husband, rather than stressing that he was not single.

Ministry of the Interior sent the petition to the Security General Directorate for an investigation on the case. In its response<sup>217</sup> Security General Directorate informed the

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*kırk seneden beri İstanbul'da namus ve istikamet dairesinde çalışmış ve hiçbir suretle bir kere olsun bir karakolun bile (...) adi bir cürmi ile olsun gitmemiştir. Bu kere zevcem kullarına arız olunan hastalık ve (...) (...) eden cariyelerinin her güne vasıta-i maişetten mahrum ve altı nefer efrad-ı ailemizle düçar olduğumuz sefalet ve perişan bir halde bırakmıştır Hiçbir cürüm ve kabahati olmadığı halde yalnız taşraya bekar zannıyla Konya'ya gönderilmiş olan zevcemin İstanbul'a avdetine müsaade buyurulmak suretiyle düçar olduğumuz sefaletten kurtumaklığımız için arz ve istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Ortaköy'de Gümlükçü Sokağı'nda 119 numarolu hanede (...)*

*11 Eylül 1333*

<sup>217</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/75 1335 Za 28

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi,*

*Mar'uz-ı çakeri kemineleridir,*

*Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti 2. Şube ifadesiyle şeref varid olunan 9 Eylül 33 tarihli ve 1501 numarolu tezkire-i nezaretpenahileri cevabıdır. Manuk Kiryakoryan aslen Vanlı olup, otuzbeş kırk sene mukaddem Dersaadet'e gelerek tehhül etmiş, yirmi sene Kumkapı'da onbeş sene Üsküdar'da İcadiye'de ikamet etmiş, iki seneden beri de Ortaköy'de Gümlükçü Sokağı'nda kayınvalidesi, üç kerimesi, bir oğluyla familyası ikamet*

Ministry that, Manuk Krikoryan was from Van. He had been living in Dersaadet for about thirty-five, forty years. After moving to Dersaadet, he continued his education, lived in Kumkapı for twenty years and then moved to İcadiye, Üsküdar, where he lived for fifteen years. Then he moved to Ortaköy and had been living there for two years together with his mother in law and two daughters and a son. He was deported to Konya in August 331 (1915) as a single man from the provinces, since he was from Van. Again, in the report of the Security General Directorate, there was not a mention about “the wife”. Was the woman, who gave a petition lying? Or was it “the mistake” of the state that a married man was deported under the category of “single and from the provinces”? As we know from other files which included the reports of Security General Directorate, there were cases when the reports stated that the person writing the petition was lying about her/his identity, that s/he did not have any familial relationship with the person they were giving petition about. In this case, however, there weren’t any specific notes on “the wife” who gave the petition.

As discussed so far, petitions demanding mercy and justice for male relatives were mostly written by Armenian women. Although quite limited in number, there were also petitions written by Greek women following similar patterns. In a petition dated January 1918, a Greek woman named Anastasya demanded mercy and justice for her husband who was arrested to be deported.<sup>218</sup> Anastasya’s petition was quite a long one, but still did not

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*etmekte olup üçyüz otuzbir senesi Ağustos’unda Vanlı olmasından dolayı taşralı bekarlar meyanında Konya’ya sevk edildiği ve hakkında başkaca malumat olmadığını arz ve arzuhal lef’ en takdim (...) samileri kılınır. Ol babda hazret-i veli’ül emrindir.*

*Polis Müdüri Umumisi  
15 Eylül 1333*

<sup>218</sup> DH.EUM.5.Şb. 52/8 1336 Ra 20

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,  
Devletlü efendim hazretleri,  
Zevcim kulları (...) köyünde (...) sokağında 151 numaralı hanede mukim Yunanlı bakkal ahalisinden Mihail veled-i Dimitri otuzbeş seneden beri memalik-i Osmaniye’de ikamet etmekte olup, kendisinin şimdiye kadar sui ahvali görülmediği gibi erbab--ı namus ve ehl-i ırz ve müstakim ve hareket-i memduhe ashabından olduğunumübeyyin vesika ve ilmühaber ibrazına dahi iş bu mürureden kanun-i saninin yirmi altıncı Çarşamba günü saat üç raddelerinden merhum derdest edilmiş ve zabıtaca memalik-i Osmaniye haricine tard ve tebid edileceğini istihbar ettim. Binaenalyh merhum şimdiye kadar hiçbir cinayet ve (...) ile mahkum olmadığı gibi zaten kendisi namus dairesinde yaşamaktadır. Cariyeleri dört nefer*

present any information about the reason behind the arrest of her husband. The organization of the petition, the phrases used and the legitimization of her demand was almost identical to the ones written by Armenian mothers. Anastasya's husband Mihail Dimitri was a Greek grocer who had been living in the same neighborhood for thirty-five years. He was known to be an honorable person, an honest and sincere member of the community. But still, he was arrested and announced to be deported from the lands of Ottoman Empire. Anastasya stressed that her husband did not have any criminal record. With his husband's arrest, Anastasya was left alone with her four kids. Thus, she asked the Ministry to release her husband.

In another petition written by a Greek woman in December 1914, the request was about a theft case.<sup>219</sup> Since the documents in the file are damaged, it is not possible to make a close reading of the petition written. However, as could be followed from the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the local government of Istanbul, a man named Dimitri was arrested since he was accused of joining a robbery that took place in Taşhan in Istanbul. His wife wrote a petition stating that her husband was innocent and demanded the state to release him.

As could be followed through a correspondence between the lieutenant governor of Eskişehir and the Ministry of Interior dated September 1917, an Armenian woman from Eskişehir wrote a petition to ask for a permission to go to Konya. Vartuhi was a native of Eskişehir and her family was a soldiers' family. That was why she was not deported (*yeri terke sevk edilmediği*) until then. Presenting these information, lieutenant governor of Eskişehir forwarded the petition to the Ministry.<sup>220</sup>

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*çocuklarım ile ortada kaldım. Lütfen şu hal-i (...) merhameten zevcim kulları Mihail hakkında ittihaz olunan kararın refi zimmında işbu istidai cariyane min lazım gelenlere emr-ü havale buyurulmasını nezaret-i celile-i ihsaniyelerinden niyazve istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*(...)köyünde Safalı sokağında Kasımpaşa Caddesi'nde 135 numarolu hanede sakine Mihail zevcesi Anastasya.*

1334

<sup>219</sup> DH.EUM.KLU 15/17 1333 M 17

<sup>220</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/43 1335 Za 16.

While petitioning had been a common practice of citizens to express their demands and complaints to the state, it gained new meanings in the case of Armenian women whose citizenship was under threat. These petitions written by Armenian women, presented the stories of women who remain on the margins of the imagined womanhood and motherhood in the Ottoman Empire that I discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Although Armenian women or other “non-Muslim” women were rarely subjects or objects of the discourse of motherhood in the literary works and journals as discussed in Chapter I, Armenian mothers’ experience during the genocide particularly makes them the others of the narrative constructed in those. Therefore, delving into the details of the stories presented in these petitions is extremely important to highlight how citizenship could both be gendered and ethnicized<sup>221</sup>. Armenian mothers stressed that they are legitimate subjects, not enemies, and are surprised that their sons are taken away. In return, the state responded by referring to legal procedures, trying to legitimize deportations through legal processes. Thus, petitioning in itself is an act of claiming a legitimate voice and this voice is further legitimized through the identity of motherhood. Thus, it is also possible to follow how deportations themselves were textually legitimized by analyzing the state’s responses to these petitions.

Although most of the petitions for saving Armenian people who were arrested and deported were written by Armenian women, there were also petitions written by Armenian

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<sup>221</sup> Odyan’s portrayal of Armenian mothers whose sons were arrested for deportation also challenges the conventional gender roles and gives clues about the complicated terrain of gender identities. Mothers calming their crying sons down and promising to take care of their families and works until they come back appeared as proofs of female strength during devastating times of crisis: “They escorted us to the Haydar Pasha, where the train was ready and waiting. Nerses Chakerian’s mother had come to see her son. I admired that woman’s strength of character. While her son cried hopelessly, she, calmly and almost smiling, tried to give him encouragement. ‘Don’t think or worry about anything, only look after your health,’ she advised. ‘I’ll look after the pharmacy and your wife and children... I’ll do everything I can bring you back soon.’ And she recalled her appeals. If necessary I’ll even go to Sheikh-ul-Islam,’ she cried. His mother’s words and brave stance had good effect on Chakerian, who calmed down and stopped crying..... Mrs. Chakerian encouraged her son for the last time. ‘Nerses don’t worry, you’ll be back soon, be brave, goodbye...’” Yervan Odyan, *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*, London: Gomidas Institute, 2009, pp.53-54

men for similar purposes. In February 1916, an Armenian man from Catholic community who was deported from Ankara wrote a petition for himself.<sup>222</sup> As written in the petition, Pol Acemyan was a man living in Ankara as a member of loyal community (*millet-i sadıka*) of Armenian Catholics. The term *millet-i sadıka* was not used in other petitions which were written by Catholic Armenians. It is critical that he preferred to use official and legal terminology of the *millet* system of the empire to highlight his personal loyalty to the state through his religious identity, which was “traditionally” defined and legitimized as “loyal”. He continued that, he was deported from Ankara to Islahiye in the process of “general immigration” (*umumi muhaceret*). It was also quite rare that people gave a specific name to the process of deportation in their petitions. They usually described the event as individual cases, such as “my son (or my husband) was deported” or through generalizations such as “he/she was deported together with the Armenian community in the neighborhood”. Thus it is significant to give a specific name to describe the deportation of Armenians. He continued his petition by counting the reasons he should be exempt from deportation. He wrote that he had an illness that needed to be cured. In addition to that, he stressed his loyalty to the state. He claimed innocence by saying that until then he had never engaged in politics and never become a member of a political party. In the end, he requested to be sent to Dersaadet (not back to Ankara) since he had relatives and friends there. He explained how miserable his situation was and asked for mercy from the state.

Another petition is dated September 1917 and written by a Catholic Armenian man from Istanbul to the Ministry of Interior.<sup>223</sup> Onnik was a trader living in Istanbul. Her

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<sup>222</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb 18/ 1334 R 13

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi x'ine,*

*Mar'uz-ı çakerleridir,*

*Kulları (...) Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye'nin Katolik millet-i sadıkasından olup, umum muhacereti esnasında Ankara'dan Islahiye'ye sevk olunmuş ise de ab ve hava-i mahaliye ile adem-i imtizaç dolayısıyla münharif'ül mizac olarak muhtac-ı tedavi bir halde bulunmuş olduğumdan ve esasen şimdiye kadar katiyen siyaset ile iştigal etmeyerek ve hiçbir fırkaya damukayyed bulunmadığımdan şu hal-i perişaniyeme merhameten lütfen (...) x bulunmayan ve akraba ve taalukatımın elyevm bulunduğu ve Dersaadet'e azimetim hususuna müsade-i celile-i cenab-ı nezaretpenahilerinin şayan buyurulmasını kemal-i suz ve arz ve (...) cüret eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

1331

<sup>223</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/60 1335 Za 24

married daughter Matilda was living in Bilecik with her husband and children. Her husband Nişan Efendi, who was working as a cashier at the Ottoman Bank in Bilecik was taken under arms. When he left, Matilda and their children were left alone, on their own. Additionally, at the moment Matilda was also sick. Under these conditions, Onnik requested permission for his daughter and grandchildren to come to Istanbul where they were born. In accordance with the pattern in other petitions, Onnik also specifically mentioned that his daughter and grandchildren were natives of Istanbul. Compared to other petitions, this petition was simple and plain, presenting necessary information about him and about people related to his demand, focusing on a specific request with specific reasons justifying his request. Although the petition included certain phrases and sentences that were part of the format of the petition writing, there were not any exaggerated sentences praising the state authority or stressing the difficulties his daughter and grandchildren were living through.

## 2.5. Petitions for religious conversion and to become Ottoman subjects

For various reasons, women from various backgrounds applied the state for the acceptance of their conversion to Islam or to become Ottoman subjects during the war. However some of these applications that will be focused on below were turned down when these women were found out or blamed to be involved in prostitution.

In 1916, an Armenian woman, Maryam, living in Istanbul made an application in order to convert to Islam.<sup>224</sup> Maryam was an Armenian woman from the village of Uzunlu

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*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Damad-ı bendeleri Bilecik Osmanlı Bankası veznedarı Nişan Efendinin taht-ı silaha alınmasından dolayı kerimem Matilda ve iki çocuğunun Bilecik'te yalnız ve kimsesiz kaldıklarını ve kendisinin hasta bulunduğunu arz ederek kerimem ile torunlarımın mahalli-i tevellüdüleri olan İstanbul'a nezd-i acizaneme gelmelerine müsaade ve inayet-i (...) (...) istirham ve olbabda merhamet ve ihsan-ı alilerine dehalet eylerim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*İstanbul'da Körükçü (...) Katolik Tüccar Onnik*

332

<sup>224</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 26/2 1334 L 12 For a detailed discussion of the conversion of the Ottoman Armenian population to Islam during Hamidian period, see Selim Deringil, “The

in Boğazlıyan/Yozgat. Together with her father Krikor, a gardener, she moved to Istanbul. At the moment she submitted her application, they were living in Kumkapı, in Dersaadet. As could be traced in the correspondence between the Ministry of the Interior and Directorate of Security, an investigation was conducted about Maryam to find out if there was a “*mütalaa-i mahsusa*” about her to present an obstacle in the process of becoming a Muslim woman. The investigation revealed that Maryam earned her living through prostitution. Although the official letter stating that Maryam could not be allowed to convert to Islam was missing in the archives, above mentioned correspondence between the Ministry and the Directorate of Security implies that an Armenian prostitute woman would be rejected to become a Muslim woman.

A woman named Liza, a Russian subject, running a brothel in Galata, applied for Ottoman citizenship. According to the report of the Directorate of Security, dated 1915<sup>225</sup>, Liza had been living in Istanbul for ten years and had never left the city. She had been earning her living by running a brothel in Karaoğlan street in Galata. She neither had a husband nor a child. She did not own any real estate in Istanbul. She also did not have a record in the registration office. Her application was rejected with the statement that the applicant did not fit into the requirements of Ottoman subjecthood due to her way of life: “*Mezburenin ahval-i umumiyesine nazaran tabiiyyet-i Osmaniyeye kayd ve kabule şayan görülemediği...*”.

Another Russian subject who made an application to become an Ottoman subject was a man. In its report to the Ministry of the Interior in 1915<sup>226</sup>, Directorate of Security wrote that he had come from Russia ten years ago and had been living in Istanbul since then. He lived in Galata, he did not have a wife or any children. He did not have any real estate in Istanbul. He was a street peddler, however he was in fact maintaining his life with

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Armenian Question is Finally Closed”: Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895-1897.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2009, pp. 344-371. Also see Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. For a detailed account on the religious conversion during WWI and afterwards, see Fethiye Çetin, Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Torunlar*, Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013.

<sup>225</sup> DH.İD. 61-1 44 1333 S 23.

<sup>226</sup> DH.İD.. 61-1 46 1333 S 25.

the financial support of a “friend” (here friend refers to “sexual partner”) of his who was working as a prostitute in a brothel. It was his sexual partnership with a prostitute that led to the refusal of his application.

An American woman named Eliza made an application to become an Ottoman subject in 1916. As could be followed from the correspondence between the local government of Adana, Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of War, Eliza was an American woman originally from New York. She was living in the Taşçıkan neighborhood of Adana and working as a prostitute in a brothel. Local government of Adana, forwarding the application of Eliza to the Ministry of Interior, informed that she was missing official papers proving her American citizenship. However, since she was a native English speaker, the local government did not see any problems in accepting her application. The Ministry of War, on the other hand, sent a report to the Ministry of Interior stating that Eliza’s application should be rejected. In its report, the Ministry of War reported they ran an investigation and could not trace the identity of Eliza. There was no document to prove that she was an American citizen. More than that, even if she was an American, since she was living an “immoral” life in a brothel, she would not be accepted as an Ottoman subject. Ministry of War suggested the Ministry of the Interior to consider Eliza as “a person of unknown identity” (*hüvviyeti meçhul eşhas*).<sup>227</sup> Documents as such also show the conflict between local and central institutions of the state. As could be traced in various documents, applications made by prostitute women, even by men who have relationship with prostitutes, were rejected on the ground that they were not morally qualified enough to be Ottoman citizens. However, in the case of Eliza, reaction and approach of the local government of Adana demonstrate that there was not a consensus on the idea that prostitutes who made applications to become Ottoman subjects should be rejected. In the case of Eliza, despite the fact that her nationality could not be documented, local government still thought that she could become an Ottoman subject.

Women also gave petitions for becoming Ottoman subjects. In a correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 5, 1916 an

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<sup>227</sup> DH.SN.THR 69/68 1334 N 26.

application of a woman to become Ottoman subject was evaluated.<sup>228</sup> The original petition could not be located; however, as could be followed from the correspondence, a woman named Abdullahoğlu Mualla wrote a petition with the request of becoming an Ottoman subject. There was not any information about where she was from originally. Nevertheless she wrote that she had a relative in Hüdavendigâr and proposed the necessary documents to prove her argument. Still, despite the documents, there was not any concrete information whether she had relatives in Hüdavendigâr. Moreover, the applicant, Mualla, was proved to be sixteen years old, which also meant that if she has parents/custodians, then they should also be subjected to investigation. Thus, Ministry of Foreign affairs suggested for further research before accepting Mualla's application for becoming Ottoman subject. Mualla's case was also critical in the sense that, she was not only a woman applying for Ottoman citizenship, but also a child who wrote a petition for such serious demand as a child.

## 2.6. Petitions about Prisoners of War

Not only during the war but also right after the war, women, especially mothers, wrote petitions to the state to get in touch with their sons, to get news from them, to send them money or most importantly, to ask the state to bring their sons back home.

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<sup>228</sup> (YB98) DH.SN..THR. 67/98 1334 Ca 24

*Babialı Hariciye Nezareti Tabiyet Müdüriyeti*

*Adet:46000-3079*

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Devletlü Efendim Hazretleri,*

*16 Eylül 1331 tarihli 1002 rakamlı tezkere-i aliye-i nezaretpenahileri cevabıdır. Tabiiyet-i Osmaniye'ye kayd ve kabülünü istida eden Abdullahoğlu Mualla'nın İnegöl kasabasında akrabası olduğu Hüdavendigâr vilayet-i aliyesinden mürsil evrak-ı tahkikiyede gösterildiği halde, akrabası kimlerden ibaret bulunduğu ve bunların mütehhil olup olmadıklarına dair bir güne kayd ve işarete tesadüf edilemediğinden ve Köstence Başşehbenderliği'nden (...) istilam eylevm onaltı yaşında olduğu anlaşılan merkumenin velisi bulunup bulunmadığının bilinmesi muktezi olduğundan hususat-ı mezkure hakkında tahkikat-ı lazıme icrasıyla neticesinin bildirilmesi lüzumunun Hüdavendigâr vilayet-i aliyesine işarıyla neticesinin (...) zımında evrak-ı mürsele lef'en iade kılınmış olmağla ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*331Şubat 21*

*Hariciye Vekili*

In a petition dated December 16, 1919<sup>229</sup>, a woman from Muratpaşa neighborhood of Aksaray, a district of Istanbul wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*) about his son who had been a war prisoner in the war prisoners' camp in Basra. In the opening sentences of the petition, the mother described how current conditions negatively affected her wellbeing in general. She was left in a deprived and weak position with the absence of her son. Her son Şemseddin Efendi was the breadwinner of her house and in order to recover financially, she asked the state, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to bring her son back home. The petition is quite short, focusing on the demand. Similar to the general tone in most of the petitions, the mother focused on the financial burden that she had been facing without the salary of her son, without making any reference to the emotional suffering that she probably had been through as a mother knowing that her son was kept in a prisoners of war camp. As in other petitions, rather than the “emotional relationship”, the mother preferred to emphasize the “financial relationship” between herself and her son, the son having the power and responsibility to look after her;

After long correspondences between Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, British High Commission of Constantinople and British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was discovered that the person was a prisoner of war. Şemseddin Efendi had escaped from the Indian General Hospital.<sup>230</sup> This information reached the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs almost a year later than the petition written by the mother of Şemseddin Efendi.

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<sup>229</sup> HR.SYS. 2211/25 1919 12 25

*Hariciye Nezaret-i Celilesi Canib-i Alisine,*

*Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Ahval-i hazıra dolayısıyla fevkalade müzayaka ve zaruret içinde bulunmakta olduğumdan, temin-i maişatım için Basra üsera karargahında 41512 numero ile mukayyed bulunan mahdumum mülazım-ı evvel Şemseddin Efendi'nin biran evvel Dersaadet'e avdet ettirilmesi esbabının istikmali hususuna müsaade-i seniyye-i cenabı nezaretpenahilerinin (...) ve şayan buyurulmasını kemal-i teessür ile istirham ederim. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Kadınlar Hamamı, Aksaray (...)*

*16 Kanunievvel 335*

<sup>230</sup> British High Commission, Constantinople, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1920.

Sir,

With reference to the Note of the Sublime Porte (N. 23420/345) of 12<sup>th</sup> August, relative of the repatriation of Lieutenant Chemseddin Effendi, a Prisoner-of-War interned at Basra, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that enquires show that the Prisoner-

Some of the petitions women wrote about the prisoners of war were about re-organizing life conditions of family members in the absence of male / breadwinner of the house. In a file dated 17 January 1916<sup>231</sup>, there are correspondences between the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Interior about a petition written by a woman whose son had become a war prisoner in the war in the Caucasus. Although the original petition could not be located in the file, as the correspondence between the ministries showed, the wife and the two children of veterinary lieutenant Münib Efendi had been living in Bayburt. However, Münib Efendi's wife passed away and her two children were left alone in the city and at the moment a man named as "Çavuş" took them to his home. It was under these conditions that Münip Efendi's mother wrote a petition to the Ministry of War asking for permission to bring back their grandchildren to Dersaadet where she had already been living and thus to take them under her protection. Ministry of War sent the petition to the Ministry of Interior to evaluate the request accordingly. In its reply, Ministry of Interior declared that, they were legally allowed to move to Istanbul and the ministry took the responsibility of making the arrangements necessary for their travel from Bayburt to Istanbul.

There are also cases where not only salary but also houses were arranged for the mothers of prisoners of war.<sup>232</sup>

Although there were petitions written especially by mothers about sending money to their sons who were war prisoners<sup>233</sup> during the war, petitions about war prisoners

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of-War in question escaped from the 8<sup>th</sup> Indian General Hospital on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 1920.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your Excellency's obedient Servant  
Horace Rumbolt  
HIGH COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency,  
The Minister of Foreign Affairs  
(HR.SYS. 2211/25 1919 12 25)

<sup>231</sup> (2094) DH.İ.UM 79/53 1334 Ra 11

<sup>232</sup> DH.İ.UM 19-16/1-127 1339 C 24

intensified by the end of the war. For example a loaded file dated 1918<sup>234</sup> included documents about sending money to the war prisoners in Malta, Russia, Alexandria and France. Mothers and wives did not only send money but they also demanded information about the wellbeing of their sons or husbands. Thus the state informed them whether their sons or husbands were still war prisoners or escaped and whether they were alive or not and if they were dead they also informed them the reason of their death.

There were also cases when soldiers who were assumed to be dead were found out to be war prisoners. Mothers, finding out that their sons were alive tried to send them money together with personal letters.<sup>235</sup> In some cases, soldiers asked the state to inform their mothers that they were safe in camps as war prisoners.<sup>236</sup> As could be followed from the correspondence between British Foreign Affairs, Consulate of Athens and Ottoman Foreign Affairs in 1915, war prisoners used every possible means to communicate with their families and let them know that they were alive. The message of the war prisoner in this file tried to send his mother the note that read “Mother, I am alive” (*Anne hayattayım.*)<sup>237</sup>

Not only Ottoman subjects, but also women from various other countries wrote petitions to the Ottoman State during the war, in order to receive information about their soldier sons. For example in 1916, a French woman sent a letter requesting information about her son who fought and disappeared in Çanakkale. She was informed by the authorities that no record was located documenting him as a prisoner of war.<sup>238</sup> In another telegram, a French woman, mother, requested the Ottoman State to send her son to a

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<sup>233</sup> HR.SYS. 2195/17 1915 12 07. Hayriye *Hanım* demanded to send money to his son who was imprisoned in the island of Malta.

<sup>234</sup> HR.SYS. 2191/4 1918 07 08

<sup>235</sup> HR.SYS 2195/32 1916 01 07

<sup>236</sup> HR.SYS. 2198/43 1916 09 08

<sup>237</sup> HR.SYS 2250/15 1915 07 08

<sup>238</sup> HR.SYS. 2220/25 1916 01 05

neutral state. Her son was a lieutenant in the French submarine *Mariotte* and had been kept as a war prisoner in Afyonkarahisar.<sup>239</sup>

In a file dated 1915, a petition written by a mother whose son was a war prisoner in could be located. As could be followed from the letter, the woman named Refia's son Doctor Lieutenant Ahmed was kept as a war prisoner in Indochina. In order to communicate with her son, she sent a telegram to the Ministry of War and also tried to send a letter to her son through the Ministry of Posting and Telegram. However both the telegram and the letter was sent back to her address. It was under these conditions that she gave a petition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked the Ministry to help her in sending her letter to her son.<sup>240</sup> Foreign Affairs contacted the Foreign Affairs of USA to send the letter to the war prisoner in Indochina. The petition of the mother is quite plain and simple, just conveying the demand, compared to most of the petitions examined in this research. Petitions with similar demands and correspondence in the files indicate that during WWI, Ottoman Foreign Affairs got in touch with foreign states, especially with the USA, in order to establish communication between the war prisoners and their families.<sup>241</sup>

There were also cases when war prisoners were kept together with their mothers. As could be followed from a correspondence dated 1918, *Mülazım-ı Evvel* Tahsin Efendi was kept as war prisoner in Seyyidülbeşer in Egypt and his mother was also with him. As a war

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<sup>239</sup> HR.SYS. 2228/59 1918 01 18

<sup>240</sup> HR.SYS. 2250/20 1915 07 22

*Hariciye Nezaret-i Celilesine,*

*Devletlü efendim hazretleri,*

*Hindiçini'de (...) kasabasında esir-i harb olarak bulunmakta olan mahdumum Doktor Yüzbaşı Ahmed Sadık Efendi'ye son yazmış olduğum mektub mahdumum effendi-i mümaileyhe göndermek için Hariciye Nezareti'ne tevdi etmekliğim Telgraf ve Posta Nezareti vekalet-i celilesine ifade ve meskur mektub taraf-ı acizaneme iade kılınmış olduğundan lütfen mahaline gönderilmek üzere meskur mektub manzur-u ali-i nezaretpenahilerine takdim kılınmış olmakla ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Ayasofya civarında Kirişçi Sokağı'nda (...) Mehmed Efendi hanesinde.  
1331*

<sup>241</sup> HR.SYS 2250/31 1915 08 26; HR.SYS 2251/13 1917 05 17

prisoner, he wrote a petition to the British government saying that his mother was with him in Egypt and needed a regular salary in order to survive. He asked whether his mother could receive a salary through him as wives did.<sup>242</sup> British government accepted his request and ordered for a regular salary to his mother.<sup>243</sup>

With reference to the number of petitions written by mothers in the archives, it is legitimate to argue that it was mostly women, specifically mothers who wrote petitions demanding mercy, justice, information or just opportunity to support/help their children, mostly sons, who were in the army, deported or kept as war prisoners. However, although limited in number, there were also petitions written by men with similar motivations and demands.

In a petition dated April 1914 (29 March 1330), a Muslim man Topaloğlu Hacı İsmail raised his demand on getting information about whether his son was alive or not.<sup>244</sup> Compared to most of the petitions examined within the scope of this research, this petition

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<sup>242</sup> HR.SYS 2251/89 1918 12 18.

<sup>243</sup> HR.SYS. 2251/91 1919 03 18

<sup>244</sup> DH.H... 63/5 1332 Ş 04

*Huzur-ı Ali-i Mutasarrıf-ı Ekremiye,  
Mar'uz-ı acizanemdir,*

*Kırşehir'in Çiğın kariyesinden olurum. Oğlum Seyid geçen sene askere sevk olunmuştu. Sahih gayrisahih rivayete göre Yunan'ın that-ı esaretine düşmüş ve bilmem Selanik'in nere hastanesinde esir-i firaş olarak bilahare alem-i ebediyete (...) ecel olduğu beyanıyla zevce-i menkuha gayri (...) kariyemizden Kırpıkoğlu Ulvi'nin kerimesi Habibe'yi ühret'üllecel el nikah bura mahkeme-i şeriyesine bilmüraca iki de şahit ikame ve istima ettirilerek netice-i keyfiyet hüccet-i şeriyeye rapt edilmişti. Mah-ı hal-i ruminin yirmiyedinci bu giden perşembe günü Yozgat'ın Hisarcık mahallesinden Hüseyin onbaşı namında bir şahıs kariyemize vürud etmekle ve doğruca Selanik'ten gelmekte idüğünü beyan ve ifade eylemekle oğlumdan acaba malumat var mı diye suale mecbur kalarak aldığım cevabda oğlumun hala hayatta bulunduğunu ve Selanik'te gümrükteki Vasil çavuştan dahi biltahkik anlaşılacağı vechiyle (...)hanede beşinci bölükte sekizinci takımda Çiğın kariyesinden Hacı Osman oğlu Seyit diye tahkik edildiği vakit hakikat meydana çıkar cevabında bulunduğundan def'i-ül vaka oğlum elyevm hayatta ise anlamak farz kabilinden olduğundan Harbiye Nezaret-i Celilesine keyfiyetin arz ve işarıyla istihsal olunacak netice neden ibaret bulunacağını himemi (...) aliye-i mutasarrıf-ıtekremilerinde arz ve istirhamol babda emr-ü ferman hazret-i menlehü'l emrindir.*

*1335 Mart 29*

*Kırşehir'in Çiğın kariyesinden Topaloğlu Hacı Osman*

written by a Muslim father who was trying to receive information about his son is quite long and detailed. Topaloğlu Hacı İsmail lived in a village in Kırşehir. It has been a year since his son Seyid was taken under arms. After a while they received information saying that his son was captured by Greeks and passed away in a hospital in Selanik. This information was also made official when Seyid's wife Habibe went to the local court and declared the death of his husband with two witnesses. However, after a while, a corporal named Hasan visited their village and brought news about his son from Selanik. According to the new information, Seyid was alive and sergeant Vasil working at customs bureau could confirm that Seyid was registered with a different name, as Hacıoğlu Sabit in the records. The father requested the state to investigate for his son through this new information and inform him if he was really alive or not.

The story in the petition was probably one among the many cases where soldiers's families could not receive any reliable information about their relatives fighting in the front. As in this case, family members found out by "chance" that their sons, brothers or husbands were alive, with the information brought by a stranger .

## **2.6. Other issues raised in petitions**

In some cases, women raised their complaints not only about processes or cases within the jurisdiction limits of the Ottoman State but also about their problems caused by foreign states. As could be followed in a correspondence dated February 1914 between General Directorate of Security, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of War, a woman wrote a petition raising a complaint about the Greek government.<sup>245</sup> A woman living in Kandilli, Istanbul gave a petition to the governor of Üsküdar about her husband Giritli Hasan Rıfat Bey. Hasan Rıfat went to Chania about eight months ago to deal with the issues about his real estate. His wife was informed that the Greek government arrested him while he was in Chania. In her petition, she asked the state to be a mediary between herself and the Greek state to release her husband.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> DH.H... 71/13 1332 Ra 15

There were also petitions written by Muslim men who faced difficulties in getting in touch with their sons in the army. In a correspondence between the Ministry of War and Ministry of Interior in March 10, 1914 a complaint of a father was taken into consideration.<sup>247</sup> A man named Hasan from Kalecik (Ankara) gave a petition to the local governor complaining about a problem he faced in sending money to his son in the army. As summarized in the correspondence written by the Ministry of War to the Ministry of Interior, Hasan sent a certain amount of money to his son Hüseyin. As argued by the father, although the soldier responsible for battalions' financial activities received the money, he did not hand it over to Hüseyin. Hasan, the father, asked the state to investigate the case and solve the problem. In accordance with the general procedure, local government sent the petition to the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Interior sent it to the Ministry of War. In its reply, Ministry of War "reminded" the Ministry of Interior that it was not possible to investigate the case without having necessary information such as the battalion and the regiment of the soldier and the name of the person who took the money. It is also significant to note that the Ministry of War "warned" or "notified" the Ministry of Interior that such cases should directly be sent to local military commanders rather than to the ministry. As could also be seen in a few other correspondences, the language used and the evaluation of the cases in the petitions also presented clues or evidence about the hierarchical relationship between ministries.

There were also cases where men wrote to complain that their wives were getting married with other men despite they were still married. As could be followed from a correspondence between the Ministry of War, Ministry of Interior and local government of Bolu<sup>248</sup>, a man named Mehmed wrote a petition saying that his wife was about to get married with another man despite the fact they were still married and he asked the state to protect his legal rights as husband and to prevent his wife's marriage with another man. It was not clear in the correspondence whether the woman was forced to or willing to marry another man. Any solid information about Mehmed was missing. Since the Ministry of War

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<sup>246</sup> There are also similar petitions complaining about the arrests in foreign countries written before the war. For example in a petition written in 1328 (1910), a woman wrote to complain about the arrest of her two sons in Athens. DH.H... 51/3 1328 L 11.

<sup>247</sup> (YB108) DH.İD. 176/45 1332 R 16

<sup>248</sup> DH.İ.U.M.EK 46/41 1336 Ca 3

was a part in the correspondence, it is possible to conclude that Mehmed was a soldier in the army..

Within the limits of this research a petition written by a child/a teenager could be located. A thirteen/fourteen year old Armenian boy named Vahiç wrote a petition in September 1917 to the commander of the Third Army (*Üçüncü Ordu Kumandanı* Mahmud Habib).<sup>249</sup> As he wrote, he was thirteen-fourteen years old and was originally from Bitlis. He had lost his family in the beginning of the war when mobilization started. At the moment, he was living at Doctor Karekin's house, who was working for the German Consul in Sivas. Some of his relatives were in Dersaadet, thus he asked for permission to move to Dersaadet, so that he would not only be under their protection, but also be able to continue his education in one of the schools in Dersaadet.

As could be followed in the previous petitions, people mostly wrote their petitions directly to the Ministry of the Interior, however in limited cases, especially people living in cities other than Istanbul, preferred to write petitions to the Ministry of War or to higher rank military officers in their regions, as was the case in the petition written by this teenager boy. It is highly probable that, especially during the war, army was recognized as the sole state authority at the local level. More than that, people must have thought that if they could persuade the army officers for their requests, this could have a positive effect in the decision making process of the Ministry of Interior. When Ministry of War received petitions, military officers forwarded petitions to the Ministry of the Interior or to the local governors. It was usually possible to follow the tendency of military officers about how they evaluate the request of the informant. In this case, military authorities forwarded the petition to the governor of Sivas and the governor sent the petition to the Ministry of the

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<sup>249</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/59 1335 Za 24

*Üçüncü Ordu-yu Hümayun Kumandanı Mahmud Habib Paşa Hazretlerinin x  
Seniyesine,*

*Mar'uz-ı çakerleridir,*

*Henüz on üç on dört yaşında bulunduğum gibi an'asl Bitlisliyim. Bidayet-i seferberide aile halkını gaib ettim. Şimdi ise Alman konsolosun hanesinde bulunan Doktor Karekin/Karenyan'ın evinde bulunuyorum. Akrabalarımın bazıları Dersaadet'te olduklarından hem onların muavenetlerine sığınmak ve hem de ikmal-i tahsil etmek üzere Dersaadet'teki mekteplerden birisine gitmek için icab edenlere emr-ü x x ve himmet-i x beklerim efendim.*

*10 Eylül 333*

Interior, which did not include any negative statement about the boy's request. The document of Sivas's governor also gave clue about the perspective of the military officers, which also did not oppose the petitioner's request. On the contrary, the governor of Sivas endorsed the boy's petition and asked for permission to send him to Istanbul.<sup>250</sup>

Permission for travel was one of the topics that were included among the demands raised in women's petitions. Although the original petition could not be located, as could be followed from the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a woman named Zeyneb Benci wrote a petition to move to Tabriz.<sup>251</sup> Zeyneb's son was living in Tabriz, Iran for fifteen years. Since she was left alone in destitute (*bikes ve bivaye*), she asked permission to go to Tabriz to unite with her son. Given that the document was damaged, the reasons why Zeyneb's son was in Tabriz and why she was left alone are unknown. Zeyneb Benci also used the phrases such as alone and destitute (*bikes ve bivaye*) and to legitimize her demand to go to Iran and settle there.

## 2.8. Conclusion

The common issue raised by most of these women coming from different ethnic and social backgrounds is destitute. Even when other concerns were emphasized in their petitions poverty caused by war conditions constitute the background of their narratives. In their petitions, women voiced out their financial problems, demanded regular payment of their salaries after the death of their fathers or husbands; mentioned the problems they faced in receiving inheritance from deceased family members; asked for war compensations;

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<sup>250</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 41/59 1335 Za 24

*Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesine,  
Mar'uz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir,*

*Seferberlik arasında ailesini gaib ederek elyevm Sivas'ta doktor Garabet nezdinde ikamet etmekte olduğundan cihetle x muavenetleri olmak ve delaletleriyle bir mektebe giderek tahsil-i ilim eylemek üzere Dersaadet'te bulunan akrabasının nezdine gitmesine müsaade itası on üç yaşında Bitlisli Vahriç imzasıyla Üçüncü Ordu Kumandanlığı'na verilip vilayete tevdi' buyurulan arzuhalde istida olunmakla muktezasının emr-ü işarına müsaade buyurulması babında emr-ü ferman hazret xdir.*

*11 Eylül 333*

*Sivas Vali Vekili*

<sup>251</sup> DH.H. 27/49 1332 R 24

requested state action on problems pertaining to real estate issues. Women from rural areas sent telegrams about their problems as peasant women, mostly in the name of soldiers' families. Women whose relatives were war prisoners wrote petitions to receive news from their beloved ones. Women also wrote petitions to complain about the cruelty and corruption) of soldiers, local civil servants and notables. There were also petitions as applications for religious conversion. Of course, the priorities of Armenian women were considerably different from the above ones. The issues Armenian women were dealing with at that time were related to forced deportations. The petitions were one of the means Armenian women used to "save" their relatives from deportation.

Women of different identities utilized their familial ties while "signing" these petitions. They wrote petitions as mothers, daughters and sisters (*valide, kerime, hemşire*) of their male relatives. In some cases they used the term "family" (*familya*) in order to define themselves; such as "the family of lieutenant, Naciye" (*mülazm-ı evvel familyası, Naciye*). With these positions they made requests, demands and complaints for themselves, for their children, for their husbands, for their families. Among these positions, mother was the most used "title" by the Ottoman women; thus it could be argued that motherhood was chosen as the most legitimate and acceptable line for women to convey their demands and complaints. I argue that focusing on the narratives presented in these petitions, enables us to see how womanhood, and specifically motherhood, appears as a vehicle to legitimize the demand of women and to reclaim the protection of the state. For women who wrote the petitions, motherhood was the proof of being proper citizens and their being proper citizens was the proof that their demands were legitimate.

## CHAPTER 3:

### MOTHERS AS THE REPRESENTATIVES OF SOLDIERS' FAMILIES

#### 3.1. Introduction

We were in the second year of the war, and already they looked as if they were at the end of their strength. The end of the war was their concern more than anyone's. They not only had their beloved at the front, but they also had to supply Turkey and her army with the means of living. Somehow though they struggled on six more years in their barren fields, with a hopeless wait for their men, which in most cases was in vain.<sup>252</sup>

So writes Halide Edip in her memoir to depict an Ottoman village (in central Anatolia) during WWI, where all young men were drafted in the army and women were the main producers and the organizers of social and economic life. This account provides the reader with clues about the hardship of life in the rural at the absence of men, and the struggle of women for survival under conditions of war, which at the same time necessitated their material support for the army. Petitions by women to the Ottoman state during the war also include those written by the families of the soldiers who were in combat at the front. It was generally mothers and wives who petitioned the state as the representatives of the family. In this chapter I turn to these petitions in order to analyze the

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<sup>252</sup> *Memoirs of Halide Edip*, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005, p.392-93.

relationship that was established between the Ottoman state and the peasant women whose sons (and husbands) were drafted in the army during the war. In order to contextualize and analyze these telegrams and the responses given by the state to the demands in these telegrams, I also focus on the gap between the idealized notion of peasant women in the national discourse and the details of peasant women's struggle for survival. Thus, together with the telegrams, I analyze how national discourse on peasant women were shaped in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, also in *Türk Yurdu* and *Türk Kadını* along with the literary works about the period of WWI.

Most of these petitions were sent to Istanbul in the form of telegrams that voiced out the complaints of peasant women who were struggling with poverty due to war conditions. I analyze these telegrams of complaint sent by mothers and wives on behalf of soldiers' families in order to grasp the content of the complaint, the language used by the petitioner and the response they received from various state institutions.

As discussed in Chapter I on motherhood, peasant women who were usually referred to as "Anatolian women" were presented as pure, self-sacrificing, ideal patriotic mothers. In this chapter, I point to the gap between the representation of "the ideal" mothers and the daily wartime concerns of these peasant mothers. In doing so, I discuss the form and the content of the citizenship tie between these women and the state. I argue that, the gap between the representation and daily experiences of peasant women, to a certain extent, affects the relation between the state and the peasant women. The state developed certain pragmatic strategies to manipulate this gap in order to manage the war conditions. The state had to assure that women who were left behind were able to reproduce the agricultural produce for the whole country, and thus support the army by producing the food supply. The state also had to convince men in the fronts that the women they left behind were in good conditions and the state is taking care of them.<sup>253</sup> Peasant women, as the telegrams prove, were not idealistic patriotic mothers in self-sacrificial activities, but rather "ordinary" peasant women who tried to respond to the difficulties and challenges brought by the war. What could have been defined as "self-sacrificial" were in fact

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<sup>253</sup> For a detailed discussion on the mobilization of men during WWI see: Yiğit Akın, *The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society, and Culture*, PhD Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2011 and Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War*, Brill, 2012.

survival strategies developed by women to adapt to harsh wartime conditions. The state, on the other hand, while aware of the gap, made efforts to minimize the gap by trying to solve the problems raised by these women to the extent that it was possible. That is to say, so called “sacrifice” of peasant women had to be managed by the state in a way that these women would not stop making sacrifices such as agreeing to send their sons and husbands to the front or paying a certain amount of tax. Thus, the state had to govern their needs to keep the threshold of sacrifice at a certain point by tending a balance between the resources and capacities of the state and the demands of these women.

As the complaints raised in these telegrams prove, these women were not the “national heroes” of the war period, but peasants who struggled for their daily survival. These peasant women living in Anatolia, were among the poorest yet they had to both carry the financial burden of war as peasants, and also endure the deaths or absence of men as beloved ones and as breadwinners.

This chapter uses telegrams that are kept in the state and military archives (BOA and ATASE) written by the mothers and the wives of the soldiers fighting at the front. All of these telegrams, except the one from İçeren Köyü /İstanbul, are from different cities of Anatolia written between the years of 1916 and 1918. Most of them were written directly to Interior Ministry (*Dahiliye Nezareti*). Interior Ministry forwarded these complaints by soldiers’ families to local governors (*mutasarrıflık*), usually with a special stress that the problems of these families should be taken care of with special attention. Some of these telegrams were written directly to the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezareti*). As a response, Ministry of War sent these telegrams to Interior Ministry with a special note, drawing attention to the urgency of the case.

These official correspondences demonstrate that the Ottoman State took these complaints seriously and made sure that the bureaucratic process worked in responding these telegrams. However, for the scope of this research, it is not possible to follow whether these problems raised in these complaints were actually solved or not.

These telegrams also enable us to grasp the dynamics of the relationship and tension between various state institutions during the war. The tone of the language between the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of War obviously highlights the relation between these ministries where the Ministry of War is higher in the hierarchy. Moreover,

these telegrams also render visible the tension created between the center and the periphery, in this case, between Interior Ministry and local governors due to the complex conditions created by war. Interior Ministry and the Ministry of War as the top representatives of the Ottoman State tried to keep soldiers' families in peace, since they were ultimate suppliers of both food and men during the war. As peasants, they were still in the process of production feeding not only the army but also the rest of the population. As families, they were "reproducing" soldiers for the fronts; accordingly they had to be treated well by the state. However, as reflected in the telegrams, the power conflict was not only among the ministries but between the ministries and local governors. Local governors, as agents acting between the State and the local population had become the negative figure for local people which had to implement the negative policies necessitated by war.

### **3.2. Feminist Discourse on Peasant Women in *Kadınlar Dünyası***

The discourse on peasant women, who are also usually named as "Anatolian women," is shaped around the idea that those women are illiterate, ignorant women on the one side and naive and strong women on the other side. In the nationalist / patriotic discourse during WWI, peasant women are described as fighting their good fight against the enemy first of all by giving birth to soldiers, then supporting their sons and husbands at the front and lastly by cultivating the land and feeding the country in the absence of men. In the first chapter, in the discussion on "motherhood" some aspects of this discourse are discussed. However, such an ideal, self-sacrificing image of "peasant women" in the nationalist discourse is also accompanied with their being illiterate and ignorant. These self-sacrificing, ideal, pure peasant women are treated differently from urban and educated women. Urban women, different from peasant women, are given the responsibility not only to give birth to future generations and soldiers but also to educate those generations by educating themselves first. Their mission is to create "the new family," as discussed in Chapter I. However, future generations are left in the hands of urban women, with the condition that they embrace nationalist feeling themselves. It is at this point that peasant women are described as an ideal example to be imitated by urban women. Peasant women,

being away from cosmopolitan deviations that have already negatively influenced the national identities of urban women, have self-sacrificial, patriotic attitude. Here the term “sacrifice” is crucial, since those women who put their personal interests ahead of national interest are described as selfish and thus as traitors. Patriotic women are defined as the ones who put national good ahead of personal good. Peasant women, according to this view, are almost by nature self-sacrificing, devoted women. Thus, urban women are invited to leave their personal interests behind and imitate peasant women to become patriotic citizens.

There are texts in *Kadınlar Dünyası* published right before WWI, which “look down on” peasant women, depicting them as women who are treated as “worthless tools at the hands of their husbands.” They are not just ignorant and illiterate, meaning deprived of rationality, but they are even deprived of emotions, that is, the capability of feeling the suffering they have been through. Hence, they cannot complain or ask for mercy to stop the misery they are living in. The world they know is limited by their own miserable experience, they are not aware of life out of their villages. This is what they see from their mothers or grandmothers. They would even refuse to be educated so that they could feel, since they have the belief that reading and writing is not an honorable act.<sup>254</sup> Feminist activism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is shaped around the struggle against that dichotomy which excluded women from the political sphere as irrational, emotional subjects by nature<sup>255</sup>. In this text, however, the writer, a woman, depicts a peasant woman not only as an individual deprived of rationality but also of emotions. Here, peasant women are not considered even as women. Such a position does not only conflicts with the nationalist ideology, which defines peasant women as purely emotional women sacrificing

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<sup>254</sup> “Bunlar kocalarının elinde kıymetsiz birer vasıta-i hizmettir..... Bi-çarelerin dilleri hatta duyguları yok ki hallerinden şikayet ederek merhamet dilensinler. Onlar yaşamının bundan ibare olduğuna kanidirler. Çünkü analarını da ninelerini de böyle bir yaşayışta buldular, gördüler. Şimdi onları duygu sahibi etmek için okutmaya kalkışılrsa buna da razı olmazlar. Çünkü onlar okuyup yazmanın lüzumuna değil, muzur ve mugayir-i iffet olduğuna kaidirler.” Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu: Rodoslu Nazife “Bi-çare Köylü Kadınlarımız” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 56, 29 Mayıs 1329 (June 11, 1913), in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.62.

<sup>255</sup> Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Teori*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

themselves for the nation, but also with the feminist ideology of the period which promote the idea of sisterhood to include all women into the struggle.

The text discussed above should be considered as an exception in *Kadınlar Dünyası* among the ones, which develop a more “missionary” perspective against peasant women. Educating peasant women is set as a primary goal not only for the state in general but also for urban educated women.<sup>256</sup>

There are also pragmatic approaches against peasant women in the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Women’s right to work is one of the issues that is repeatedly raised in the journal. In a text titled “It is our right to work (*Çalışmak hakkımızdır.*)”, although there is not direct reference to peasant women, by referring to the women of Anatolia (together with women of Arabia and Kurdistan), the writer implies peasant women.<sup>257</sup> How a feminist discourse is developed within/through a nationalist discourse about women’s right to work in *Kadınlar Dünyası* is beyond the scope of this research. However, in this text, the writer uses the difference between urban and rural women in the advantage of herself by implying that “even those women in underdeveloped rural areas, in villages have the opportunity to work together with their men, while they, women living in Istanbul are deprived of the right to work in public sphere”. Such an implication reverses supposedly hierarchical relation between urban women of Istanbul and rural women of Anatolia in a way to stress the freedom that peasant women experience in terms of working life.

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<sup>256</sup> Konya’da: Lütfiye İnas Mekteb-i İbtidaisi muallime-i saniyesi Hatice, “Köylü Kadınları”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 51, 24 May 1329 (June 6, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.10.

<sup>257</sup> “Biz Osmanlı kadınları artık kurun-ı vusta hayatı yaşamaya mütehamil değiliz. Erkeklerimizin cehaleti yüzünden kendimizin, vatanımızın çekmekte olduğu masaip artık yeter. Mevkimiz taayyün etmelidir, hem de pürüzsüzce tayin edilmelidir. Bu yurt üzerinde bizim de bir hakk-ı hayatımız, bir hakk-ı ictimaimiz vardır. Biz de çalışmak adab-ı milliye, ahkâm-ı diniyemize riayetkâr olarak çalışmak isteriz. Bugün Arabistan’da olsun, Kürdistan’da olsun, Anadolu’da olsun, erkekleriyle teşrik-i mesai etmekte olan kadınlarımız az mıdır? Onlar irfan ve malûmatlarına göre çalışmakta, biz de irfan ve malûmatımıza göre çalışmak isteriz.” “Çalışmak hakkımızdır”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 19, 22 Nisan 1329 (May 5, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 187.

Peasant women are also considered as a category of women that *Kadınlar Dünyası*, - a journal which has a missionary target of promoting women's rights- has to get in contact with. Women living in Anatolia, who are specifically referred to as mothers of soldiers, are advised to be considered among the readers of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. In a passage on the mission of the journal, the writer stresses the importance of getting into connection with the women of Anatolia, whom she refers to as mothers of soldiers. Although those peasant women are not literate, they can still find someone to read the journal to them. Thus, she continues, it is critical to publish articles in the journal that will easily be understood by those women. They should be inspired by the ideas promoted by *Kadınlar Dünyası* so that their movement (women's movement) would become a country-wide movement. More than that, for the writer the concern or attempt to include all not only educated women of Istanbul but also other women from different places or social strata constitute the basic difference between male journalists and the journalists of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Among women whom the journal was aiming to reach, peasant women, supposedly as the mothers of soldiers, constitute the most important target group.<sup>258</sup>

Again in another text titled "What do Anatolian women say?" (*Anadolu Kadınları Ne Diyorlar?*) Atiye Şükran opposes the idea that peasant women are illiterate and ignorant. On the contrary, she stresses the point that Anatolian women are quite knowledgeable about their own conditions and about other women's conditions living in Istanbul who supposedly have better living conditions than themselves. According to Şükran, Anatolian women complain about the inequality between themselves and urban women in terms of the workload of peasant women compared to urban women. Peasant women work more, while urban women live in laziness since they consume what Anatolian women produce. They are also aware that they are like slaves to their husbands, but still

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<sup>258</sup> "Biz düşüncelerimizi İstanbul'a hasır edersek aldanırız. İstanbul'da da seviyeten dîn kadın var ya!- Bizi yaşatan, askerlerimizi yetiştiren valideler ihmal olunmaya gelmez. Gazetemiz biricik Anadolumuza gittiği zaman o valideler kendisi okuyamasa, hiç olmazsa birisi okurken yazılarımızı anlamalı. Fikirlerimiz onları da düşündürmeli, mütehassis etmeli ki her hareketimiz umumi olsun. Biz kendi kendimize hitap edeceksek, erkek gazetecilerinden ne farkımız kalır, hani bizim teceddüdümüz?" Cihangir: Sacide, "Bir Hasbihal," *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 20, 23 Nisan 1329 (May 6, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.205.

appreciate them. More than that, they are ready to sacrifice their sons for the sake of the country. Their sons are already in the borders fighting the enemy. Telling all these, Atiye Şükran praises Anatolian women for being naïve and hardworking, and for the love they have for their country.<sup>259</sup> In this text, there is no evidence about where Atiye Şükran collected such an informative data about peasant women. Even if she conducted interviews with those women or visited some villages, there is no reference to such interviews or visits. Thus, it is highly possible that she is using her own ideas or using clichés about peasant women, to warn or rather, to lecture educated women of Istanbul to behave as patriotic women/mothers following the model of those peasant women.

A similar argument about how upper class educated women of Istanbul lost themselves in luxury and hedonism, while Anatolian women worked with an endless effort to feed not only their families but also the whole country, is also made by Ulviye Mevlan. In her text, upper class women who keep shopping from foreign stores not only let the foreigners exploit the country's wealth, but also add to the poverty of the nation.<sup>260</sup> As observed in this text, the duality established between rich and extravagant Istanbulite

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<sup>259</sup> “Anadolu kadınları deyip de geçivermemeli. Her şeyi biliyorlar, her şeyden dem vuruyorlar. İstanbul kadınlarından bahsedildi mi biz çalışalım, onlar yesinler, işkembe şişirsinler(!) demekle beraber bizim bu kadar çalışmamıza rağmen onların büsbütün âtil bulunmalarından, daha nelerden, nelerden bahsederler. Onlar da bizim gibi ne için çalışmıyorlar, onlar da bizim gibi ne için bir iş tutmuyorlar demekten kendilerini alamazlar. Biz kocalarımıza esir gibi çalışmakla beraber onlardan memnun ve müteşekkirimiz. Ve yine evlâtlarımızı vatan uğruna fedaya âmadeyiz. Nitekim her vakit çocuklarımız hudut boylarında, düşmanlara göğüs germektedirler. Maahaza vatan muhafazasına bütün evlâtlarımız feda olsun demekten de kendilerini alamazlar. Görüyorsunuz ya! Ne safiyet, ne faaliyet, vatan hakkında ne gibi hüsn-, niyet...” Atiye Şükran, “Anadolu Kadınları Ne Diyorlar?”, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 42, 15 Mayıs 1329 (May 28, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.426.

<sup>260</sup> “Bugün bonmarşelerde, Karlmanlarda avuç avuç altın serpererek memleketin kanını ecnebilere mass ettiren hanımlarımızın milliyetle kabil-i telif olmayan o harekât-ı hafif meşrebanesi yüzünden milletimiz kemik ile deriden ibaret bir kadit halindedir. Anadolu'daki fakir çiftçi hemşirelerimizin kendilerini her türlü ziynet ve saadetten mahrum ederek verdikleri paraları bu suretle israf ettiğimizden millet istikrazlar içinde boğulmuştur.” Ulviye Macit, “Yurt Hemşirelerime,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 8, 11 Nisan 1329 (April 24, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p.78.

women and poor, hardworking, self-sacrificing Anatolian (peasant) women serves, to define both the characteristics of “patriotic woman” with reference to peasant women and the character of “traitor woman” urban women.

### 3.3. Nationalist Discourse on Peasant Women

In the journal *Türk Yurdu*, “women’s question” is discussed from a Turkish nationalist perspective with the intention of attaching women, specifically women’s right activists to the ongoing Turkish nationalist project. War is situated at the center of the discourse in formulating Turkish nationalism in relation to national economy and women’s roles. Philanthropic activities were imagined as a major field through which women could contribute to the war effort.

Among various articles developing theories of Turkish nationalism, nationalist economy and war efforts of the empire in general, some of the articles specifically focus on the developments in the field of women’s rights and activism. These articles appreciate and also promote the spreading of nationalist ideas among Turkish women, especially with reference to war efforts of Turkish women such as philanthropic activities.

In an article published in the journal titled *Türk Kadınlığının Harbi Umûmideki Faaliyetleri* (“Activities of Turkish Womanhood during Great War”), which is a response to an article that praises German women for filling the positions in public space emptied by drafted men, the author details Ottoman women’s activities during the war.<sup>261</sup> In the original article the author refers to his observations during a visit to Berlin. He writes that German women are disciplined, hardworking and patriotic women who successfully filled the positions previously held by men in the work force. Thus he argues, German society and economy was able to survive social and economic crises brought by the Great War. Not only in the cities but also in the rural, German women took over positions emptied by men. More than that, they were active in the war effort itself as nurses or in other military positions. They were also active in philanthropic activities becoming the mothers of the

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<sup>261</sup> Lebib Selim, “Türk Kadınlığının Harbi Umûmideki Faaliyetleri”, *Türk Yurdu*, vol.5, no: 94, 8 Teşrinisani 1331 (November 21, 1915), pp. 250-251.

nation, healing the wounds of the society by raising funds in support of the poor and needy Germans.

In his response to this article, Lebib Selim argues that, the efforts of Turkish women during Great War should not be underestimated. He draws attention to the harsher conditions that Turkish women endured compared to German women. Turkish women (as did Turkish nation) were the late comers in the field of women's activism. But still, by looking at the institutions that Turkish women founded and by examining the activities that they organized in these institutions, it could be argued that they had already accomplished much in assisting the Turkish nation during the war. More than that, while some (usually upper or middle class women who could financially survive during the war) worked in philanthropic organizations, some began to work in factories, especially those producing military supplies, such as uniforms.

The main focus of this article on the other hand, is women of middle or lower classes living in the cities. Some of these women began to work in the factories or in public service to compensate the need for labor. Women living in the rural areas, specifically peasant women who were left alone in cultivating the land, were mentioned just in a paragraph in the whole article. It is possible to argue that such a tendency could be traced in almost all issues of *Türk Yurdu*. It is usually the activities of urban women that are mentioned and appreciated in the journal. One of the reasons for that may be the little knowledge the authors had of peasant women except that they had to cultivate the land alone when male members of their families were fighting at the fronts. Besides, both the writers and most probably the readers of the journal were from the capital and they were familiar with the activities of women's philanthropic organizations, even as the activities of their own wives or daughters.

In this context, in the article summarized above, peasant women were mentioned in short but in a highly appreciated way. Great War was described to cut all the connection the empire had with the world and all young (male) labor was called under arms. It was under these desperate and terrible conditions, the hands who fed the country were the hands of peasant women. Anatolian women were harvesting the product, shepherding and providing

the supplies for the soldiers. These were the fundamental activities for the nation, for the country and for the state so that they could survive during the war.<sup>262</sup>

In the literary sections of the journal, which included poems and stories, peasant women are represented as mothers eager to send their sons to war. In these works, women also appear as fiancés or wives, who are not that eager to send their men to the front, but are eventually convinced to send them promising that they will wait for their return. Men in these literary works, on the other hand, are represented as to be surrounded by the love of two female figures, their mothers and fiancés while in the battle field. Although the work load of peasant women, the harsh conditions they endured in the village and the poverty they had to fight against were all acknowledged in these texts, the emphasis was always put on the difficulty of “waiting.” Writers or poets, who directly wrote about women or “mention” women in their texts were all men. Thus, since they defined fighting in the trenches as “the real” or “main” war time activity, staying behind, in the village was mainly associated with the act of “waiting” that was passive, constant but emotionally tough and hard. In a long poem titled *Ahmet’le Emine* (Ahmet and Emine) by Vedat Nedim, life and love story of a peasant couple was dramatized.<sup>263</sup> Ahmet’s father died in the war with

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<sup>262</sup> “Bugün harp dolayısıyla hemen bütün dünya ile münasebetimiz kesilmiş ve memleket dahilinde iş görecek bilcümle genç kuvvet silah başında davet edilmiş olduğu bir zamanda, bu memleketi doyuran ellerin en çoğu ve en kuvvetlisi hiç şüphesiz köylü kadın elleridir. Bugün harmanını toplayan, çobanlık eden ve askere erzak hazırlayan Anadolu kadınlarından sarf-ı nazar yalnız paytaht hanımlarının bu Harb-i Umumi’de gösterdikleri himmetlerinden bahsedecek olursak, Türk kadınlarının düşmanlarla çarpışan erkeklerine hakiki bir istinatgâh olduklarını görürüz.” Lebib Selim, “Türk Kadınlığının Harbi Umûmideki Faaliyetleri”, *Türk Yurdu*, vol.5, no: 94, 8 Teşrinisani 1331 (November 21, 1915), p. 250.

<sup>263</sup>

*Emine’nin Hicran Türküsü...*

<i>Hicran günlerini sessiz sayarken;</i>	<i>Gelecek sanırım seni apansız</i>
<i>Hep seninle geçen anları andım.</i>	<i>Günü selamlarken yorgun bir yıldız;</i>
<i>Güneş al rengini ufka yayarken;</i>	<i>Benim gibi garip dağlarda yalnız</i>
<i>Hudutlarda akan kanları andım..</i>	<i>Yolları gözleyen canları andım</i>

*Ben her akşam üstü, Ahmet’im inan;*  
*Uzak ufuklara doğru kıvrılan,*  
*Kuru yapraklarla örtülü yoldan*  
*Hep getireceğin şanlıları andım...*

Greeks. His mother was left alone and worked hard to raise Ahmet in healthy and good conditions. Ahmet fell in love with Emine when he grew older. However, as his father, Ahmet also had to leave his home to fight in the front during WWI and Emine, similar to the experience of women of older generations, had to wait for the return of her beloved one. Fatma, the mother, although she experienced the worst side of the war and lost her beloved husband, and was left alone with her son, was strong, brave, and patriotic enough to encourage her son to go to the front. The young fiancé, on the other hand was scared about Ahmet's leaving, but still agreed that he had to leave to defend his country. Consequently, Emine (together with the mother, Fatma) took the flag of "waiting" the beloved man. "Waiting" included not only remembering the good old days when the beloved one was by her side, but also remembering other young men dying in the fronts. While waiting Ahmet's return, she also recalled those other women waiting for their beloved ones.

These might have been the reference points that represent how women became nationalized themselves and as potential mothers how they nationalized their children. They remember stories of old wars, they remember that their beloved ones are not alone, they are in a fight with other young men, they remember that they are not alone that there are other women waiting for their beloved ones. Thus, the nation was divided into two by gendered division of labor: Those men fighting in the fronts and those women waiting in the home front. What women waited was not only their beloved men, but also the honor that he would bring along. In this division of labor, peasant women, as mothers, are given the responsibility of remembering and reminding.

As in the story of Enis Tahsin<sup>264</sup>, sending a son to the army is a blessing itself. Those sons who go to the army take over the mission of fighting the enemy from their

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Vedat Nedim, *Türk Yurdu*, year:5, no:95, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (December 5, 1915), p.258.

<sup>264</sup> "Maşallah, maşallah, demek Osman da asker oluyor. Çok şükür Cenab-ı Hakk'a bana bugün de gösterdi, bak oğlum büyük baban Moskof harbinde şehit düştü. Üzerinde çıkan mektubu bana gönderdiler, bu mektupta şehit olursa Türk ve Müslüman düşmanlarından intikam almayı oğullarına vasiyet ediyordu. Baban vazifesini yaptı. Sıra sana geldi. Sen de yüzümüzü ağartırsan ben gönlüm rahat olarak Allah'ıma kavuşacağım.' Osman bir iki dakika sükuttan sonra cevap Verdi: -Dinim hakkı için yemin ederim ki ben de büyük babamın vasiyetini yerine getireceğim, o uğurda ya gazi ya şehit olacağım." Enis Tahsin, "Son Tebessüm" *Sabah*, No:9348, 8 Eylül 1331 (September 21, 1915) in *I. Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, Istanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, pp. 40-43.

fathers and grandfathers. The stories, together with the bequest of fathers who died in the front to their sons to fight the enemy following their fathers and grandfathers, is told to sons by mothers. Mothers are not only responsible for telling war stories and bequests of fathers and grandfathers, they are also responsible for recognizing the vow of sons to fight the enemy.

Halide Edip Adivar, in her memoirs, on the other hand, wrote about a village they visited, where almost all men were at the front and only women were left behind:

The large stretch of bare yellow land from Eskishehir to Konia was desolate and hot in the extreme. As the train stopped before Konia, near a little village, we spent nearly two hours visiting the place. It was a tiny village with twenty-five houses, and there was hardly a man to be seen. Old women sat at the door of their huts, and little children played about, while a group of young women returned from the fields with their seythes on their shoulders. The heat, the dust and the sadness of the lonely women were beyond description; the younger ones squatted in the dust and asked us when the war would end and told us the names of their husbands. We were in the second year of the war, and already they looked as if they were at the end of their strength. The end of the war was their concern more than anyone's. They not only had their beloved at the front, but they also had to supply Turkey and her army with the means of living. Somehow though they struggled on six more years in their barren fields, with a hopeless wait for their men, which in most cases was in vain.<sup>265</sup>

Halide Edip's presentation of peasant women in her memoirs contradicts with the image of strong patriotic women/mothers who would constitute a role model for patriotic/nationalist motherhood. The village, first of all, is described with dust, heat and sorrow, absent of men and characterized by lonely women, tired, disgusted of war conditions. They are tired of working alone in lands to feed the whole country and contrary to the other examples above, they seem more as tired, than as proud women of the nation. They are not only tired of the work load brought by war conditions, but also of waiting for their beloved ones fighting in the front. The act of "waiting" which is glorified in the other examples above, is on the contrary, a process of suffering for women in Halide Edip's text. Thus, in this text nationalist, patriotic, peasant women who willingly and proudly confront

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<sup>265</sup> *Memoirs of Halide Edip*, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005, p.392-93.

harsh war conditions is replaced by women in desperate conditions using their limited energy left to survive in life.<sup>266</sup>

In *Türkün Ateşle İmtihanı*, Halide Edip wrote about a scene took place right after WWI. Peasant women surrounded Halide Edip to learn whether they would have to face another war. Contrary to the ideal image of peasant women, who would never hesitate to support war efforts of the country, these women were afraid of the possibility of a war. For Halide Edip, they looked miserable and it was a miracle that they could stay alive after all the trouble that war brought to their village. More than that, again contrary to the ideal image of self-sacrificial peasant women, these women, although mourned after their dead husbands, they still looked for new men to accompany them, however male population had already decreased due to war conditions. Halide Edip advised one of those women to choose one among young nationalists and the woman responded that she had already thought of it but did not like anyone among those men. This last story also challenges the ideal image of peasant women who, supposedly would undermine her individual interest or joy or need in the name of patriotism. More than that she would never look down on a

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<sup>266</sup> Halide Edip's memoirs also present other contradictory examples which diminish the ideal image of soldiers who trust in the state that his beloved ones he left behind will be taken care of by the state: "*İçimde yer eden ikinci bir olay, bir Makedonyalı ile ilgilidir. O da iki bacağınan yaralı ve kırılmış kolunu yanlış düzeltmiş oldukları için çok büyük bir acı içindeydi. Yatağında oturuyor, durmadan sallanıyor ve inliyordu. Biraz sonra bu inilti ve sallantının aynı zamanda manevî bir acıya dayandığını öğrendim. O da şuydu : Bulgarların işgal etmiş olduğu İskeçe'de karısını ve çocuğunu bırakmıştı. Bulgar işgali sırasında, ortada dolaşan kitle halinde öldürmelerle ve öbür korkunç olaylarla ilgili söylentiler onu çileden çıkarıyordu. Çünkü ailesinden şimdiye kadar hiç bir haber alamamıştı. Belediyede o zaman bir «Muhacirin Komisyonu» vardı. Her gün oraya arkadaşlarından biri gidiyor, dört yaşındaki Hatice adlı yavrusuyla yirmi beş yaşında Emine adlı karısı hakkında haber olup olmadığını soruyordu. Ve ben her sabah yaralı odasına girdiğim zaman, gözündeki umutsuzlukla karşılaşılıyor, her defasında : «İskeçe uzak, daha gelmeleri umudu var. Çocuklu kadın herkes gibi yürüyemez ki!» diyerek avutmaya çalışıyordum. O da dışlerini sıkarak: «Öküz arabası vardı.» dedikten sonra sallanmasına, iniltisine devam ediyordu. Bu adsız er kitlesinin sabrı, ıstırap karşısında bile elden "bırakmadıkları ağırbaşlılık söze sığmayacak kadar büyüktü. Aynı zamanda onları bozgun o kadar utandırmıştı ki, en küçük yardım ve ilgiye karşı kendilerini büyük bir yük altına girmiş sayıyorlardı. Yenik düşmüş Türk ordusunun, Makedonya'nın düşman çevresi içinden, aç, susuz ve titreyerek İstanbul'a gelişleri hâlâ kafamda bir kâbus gibi yaşar." Halide Edip Adıvar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2000, pp. 150-151.*

nationalist man, on the contrary a nationalist man would be attractive for just devoting himself in the service of the nation.<sup>267</sup>

Actually, there are also passages in the nationalist literature that exemplify how women, especially mothers, are “forced” or manipulated to act as patriotic, nationalist individuals. As can be observed in Yakup Kadri’s story *Zeynep Kadın*, nationalist, almost “pain-free” motherhood is not something inherent to Muslim Turkish peasant women, rather something that is produced by social oppression. Yakup Kadri, in his story, “Sılada”<sup>268</sup> criticizes peasant men, who despite the fact that they have strong patriotic, nationalist feelings, they are not capable of understanding the role and mission of women in war time. In the story, a soldier who has recently come back from the front begins to argue with his wife about his newly born daughter. He gets angry with his wife since she cannot give birth to a son and says that his daughter will not be able to replace him as a soldier when he gets older. Thus their family will not be able to serve the country when a war breaks up in the future. Although his wife behaves patiently, respecting her husband and trying to comfort him since he has just come from the front, in the end she cannot stop herself and cries out: “Come on, are you going mad? If everyone goes to the front, then who will give birth those who goes to the front?” Thus, once again, nationalist discourse

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<sup>267</sup> “Biraz sonra, köy kadınları, ayaklarının ucuna basa basa, odaya geldiler, yatağının etrafını aldılar. Hepsi yeni bir savaş ihtimalinden korkuyor. Birçok sorular soruyorlar. ‘Aman Allah’ım, inşallah bu son olur!’ diyorlardı. Bütün ömürlerinde savaş belâsı içinde yaşamış olan bu kadınların halleri içimi paralıyordu. Âdeta bir mucize olarak yaşayabilmişlerdi. Bir tanesini iy hatırlıyorum. Bir yandan örgü örüyor, bir yandan savaşta şehit olan kocasından söz ediyor, aynı zamanda erkek sayısı azaldığı için, koca bulmanın zorluğunu anlatıyordu. Fakat, kimsenin kocasını da elinden almak istemiyordu. Dedim ki: ‘Bu genç milliyetçilerden bir tanesini kaçır, al.’ Kahkahalarla güldü: ‘Ben de düşündüm ama, hiç birini beğenmedim’ diye cevap verdi.” Halide Edip, *Türkün Ateşle İmtihanı*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998, p.92.

<sup>268</sup> “Emin Onbaşı muvasalatının üçüncü günü karısıyla tuhaf bir kavga etmiş, bu kavganın sebebi de, karısının dünyaya bir erkek çocuk yerine bir kız çocuk getirmesi imiş. Emin Onbaşı ikide birde çocuğa bakıp bakıp da diyormuş ki: ‘Bu neye yarar? Günün birinde, tam benim ihtiyarlık zamanımda bir muhabere çıkacak...’ Karısı bir dinlemiş, iki dinlemiş, sonra boşanmış: ‘Ayol, demiş, sen aklını mı bozdun, herkes muharebeye gidecek, pekala, ya gidenleri kim doğuracak?’ O günden beri karı koca hiç konuşmuyorlarmış.” Yakup Kadri, “Sılada,” *İkdam*, no:6970, July 7, 1916, in *I. Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, pp. 103-108.

strengthens the image of peasant women not only as mothers of soldiers, but also as strong women who can confront even their beloved ones in the case that they undermine their roles in the service of their nation and country.

### 3.4. Telegrams and Petitions of Soldiers' Families

Ottoman state developed strategies to take care of women who were in need of support since breadwinners of their families, meaning their son, father, or other male relatives had been drafted into the army and were actively serving his country<sup>269</sup>. One of these strategies was to leave at least one man, as breadwinner at home, so that, women together with other needy members of the family could continue their living.

There were rules regulating the procedures of exemptions from the military service. The families who could declare that they were *muinsiz*, that is, the sole breadwinner of the family was the man who was called to the military service. These regulations mirrored family structures of the period not only within the family unit itself but also in their relation with the state as a political unit. *Muinsiz* were not enlisted to regular troops (*nizamiye* or *ihdiyatiye*), but were rather in reserve troops (as *redif*). They later became *mustahfiz*, which meant that, during the war or mobilization they would be called up to join the army, thus their families would be left without breadwinners<sup>270</sup>.

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<sup>269</sup> Attempts for structural changes in the Ottoman military system started in early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the attempts and reforms of III. Selim and II. Mahmud and continued throughout the century. Conscription Law of 1871 (*Kur'a Kanunnamesi*) represented a basic change in the recruitment system with some modifications in 1879 and in 1885-87. The Law of 1871 constituted the base of the recruitment system during WWI. In 1909 the term of service with the regular army was decreased to two years for those soldiers working in unhealthy climates. With the last conscription law of May 1914 the term of three years was decreased to two years for the whole infantry. However, due to war conditions of 1914 and afterwards, these periods of military service remained theoretical. For detailed information about the conscription system in the Ottoman Empire see: Erik-Jan Zürcher "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918", *International Review of Social History* vol. 43, no. 3, 1998, pp. 437-449; Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, "Inclusion and Exclusion: Conscription in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Modern European History*, no. 5, 2007, pp. 264-286.

<sup>270</sup> "The father-in-law is not to be considered as the supporter of a husband, but he may be considered so in a case where the wife inhabits the home of the father-in-law of her

During the mobilization for the Balkan wars, in 1912, a law was passed dealing with the families of *muinsiz* who were called under arms during mobilization. According to the law, the family of a *muinsiz* would receive an allowance of 30 *kuruş* per month. Ministry of Finance was responsible for those payments that would be paid from the national budget with a special provision. The government also took a step to increase the number of families that would receive those payments. Accordingly, the allowance would include not only the families of *muinsiz efradı- redife ve mustahfıza*, but also “the families of *muinsiz efrad-ı ihtiyatiye* (breadwinner reservists in the standing army) and the families of regulars and reservists who had become *muinsiz* after joining the army. To fund the allowances a special fund of 10 million *kuruş* was created in the budget of the year 1329 (1913-1914). Large amounts were allocated to this special budget several times, over the years.<sup>271</sup>

In the law on military service issued in May 1914 (*Mükellefiyet-i Askeriye Kanunu-u Muvakkatı*, 16 Cemaziyelahir 1332/29 Nisan 1330) and its revisions in the following years and finally in 1916, soldiers’ families turned out to be a critical issue.<sup>272</sup> According to Article 49 of this provisional law, a *muinsiz* family would get financial support at the moment breadwinner of the family was taken under arms, and the payment would continue until he was discharged. The allowance to be given was 30 *kuruş* a month per person. The same rule was valid also for the families of those reservists (*efrad-ı mezune, ihtiyatiye ve*

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husband (i.e. of her own father). A young married man whose wife is dead or divorced leaving children is exempted. The care of the latter is the duty of the young father, even though natural supporters of the young woman exist, as for example, her father, father-in-law and brother. This is in order that the orphans may not be allowed to fall into the hands of the stepmother.” PRO/FO 195/2323, report of 26 September 1909 cited in Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice,” in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, Erik J. Zürcher (ed.), London, New York: I.B Tauris Publishers, 1999, p. 87.

<sup>271</sup> Public Record Office, London, FO 195/2323, no.116, 26 September 1909 and BOA. DH.SYS 112-19/35, 26.11.1331 cited in Nicole van Os, “Taking care of soldiers’ families : the Ottoman State and the Muinsiz Aile Maasi, ” in *Arming the State :Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, Erik J. Zürcher (ed.), London, New York: I.B Tauris Publishers, 1999, p.97.

<sup>272</sup> For a detailed discussion on these regulations also see: Yiğit Akın, *The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society, and Culture*, PhD Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2011.

*mustahfiza*) who served for more than forty-five days. Moreover, those receiving this financial support were not obliged to pay any cost related to the bureaucratic process to take the support.<sup>273</sup>

It is critical to note that, in all these regulations, family is considered not only as an economic and military but also as a political unit. As will be discussed below through the complaint telegrams, the relationship between the state and the families which were represented by women reflects political concerns of the state and women, together with the economic and military ones. These official regulations and the execution processes of these regulations had direct effects on daily lives of Ottoman women and when there was a problem in the implementation of these regulations women responded by making applications to the state institutions.

The Ottoman State, took measures to guarantee the financial safety of the Ottoman family. As those the regulation on *muinsiz* families presents, for the Ottoman state, family necessitated the husband/father as the head of the family responsible for his wife and children. This responsibility could not be delegated to any other member of the larger family easily. The regulation aimed to arrange financial protection both for the wife and for the children through the husband. During the war, in the absence of father and husband, the state took the responsibility of guaranteeing the financial income of the family. In the following of the chapter, the relationship between the state who replaces fathers and husbands of Ottoman families and mothers and wives as the representatives of soldiers' families will be focused on.

The telegrams written in the name of soldiers' families, as will be presented below individually, have both similarities and differences compared to the ones written by Armenian mothers. The form of telegram and petition are different by nature. Petitions of Armenian mothers, although have their own standardized, bureaucratic language and form, they still include individual stories signed by individual mothers. In the complaint telegrams sent on behalf of soldiers' families, on the other hand, the language is simpler, content is more to the point and shorter. Obviously, in a telegram one cannot include long and complicated sentences. Besides, these telegrams do not communicate individual

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<sup>273</sup> *Mükellefiyet-i Askeriye Kanun-u Muvakkat*, (İstanbul, 1330/19); *Mükellefiyet-i Askeriye Kanun-u Muvakkat*, (İstanbul, 1332/19) cited in Van Os, 97.

complaints or demands. They were written on behalf of a number of soldiers' families represented by the signatures of more than one woman, mostly standing for the whole village. Thus, rather than including individual stories of these various women or families, telegrams refer to common problems, demands or complaints that were expressed in compact and simple sentences. There is usually a long list of signatures after the telegrams, where not only the names but also whether they are wives of mothers, is written.

Another difference between the petitions sent by Armenian mothers and the telegrams sent by mothers and wives of soldiers in the name of soldiers' families is related to their self-perception and self-representation vis-à-vis the state. As discussed in the chapter on the petitions of Armenian mothers, the main concern was to prove that they were loyal citizens, so did their sons. They were writing as citizens whose citizenship ties has been affected by the genocide process, thus in the petitions they, in a way, attempted to recover the citizenship ties between them and the state. Muslim peasant women on the other hand, were writing from a different position, they were already certain that the state relied on them in economic terms, as human power to work the land, and on their men as soldiers to fight in the trenches. More than that, they were mothers of soldiers or potential soldiers, which also stressed their role through the reproduction of the population.

A telegram was sent in 1916 from Andırın (in Maraş *Sancağı*), on behalf of soldiers' families in Çiçekli Karyesi (Mazgirt/Elazığ).<sup>274</sup> It was written to Interior Ministry and signed by Fatma and her female friend representing soldiers' families. There was not any specific information about Fatma and her female friend about their familial connections to the soldiers, whether they were mothers or wives of soldiers fighting in the front.

Unlike the petitions written by Armenian mothers that presented their case with complicated sentences and included details these telegrams are short and compact. On the other hand they still include expressions that define these families as those of soldiers who died or risked their lives to protect the motherland. For example, a telegram opens as: "*Muhafaza-i vatan uğrunda kanlarını döken asker ailesinin temin-i ihtiyacında...*" (...to provide the needs of those soldiers' families, who shed their blood to save the country...) The complaint of Fatma and her friend is about the rate of *öşr* that they have to pay as a

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<sup>274</sup> BOA, DH.İ.UM 7-1 / 23, 1334 Ra 24

soldier's family and how this unjust payment adds to their poverty. They petition the state to provide them with extra amount of grain stocks in order to compensate for the suffering they have been enduring. They also stress that they delivered a similar complaint before, however they were unable to receive a response. Interior Ministry sent this letter of complaint to *Maraş Mutasarraflığı* ordering the immediate solution of the problem. In its response to the ministry, *Maraş Mutasarraflığı* stated that the procedure applied to these soldiers' families was accurate.

This telegram can be considered as a typical example of a telegram written by soldiers' families not only in terms of the language used by the women (mothers and wives of soldiers) but also in terms of the responses given by state authorities. As will also be seen in the telegrams below, almost all of the telegrams raise issues related to economic problems, so does this one. These mothers and wives raise their complaints, after acknowledging that, they are a group woman whose men serve the country by fighting in the front. Hence, they mean to stress their "right" to complain about a problem that is created by the state and also can be fixed by the state. Besides, collective signs by mothers and wives also strengthen on the one hand the legitimacy of their complaints as peasant mothers and wives and on the other their right to raise an issue against the state as citizens.

The response by the state, which can be traced though the correspondence between state institutions, reflects not only power relations among different branches of the state, but also how this different branches are positioned vis-à-vis citizens, in this case peasant mothers and wives. These women write directly to the Interior Ministry, not to the local government. The ministry asks the local government to solve the problem. As will also be seen in other telegrams, the tone of the language used by Interior Ministry is authoritative to investigate and fix the problem. The stress is on "fixing" more than "investigating". The reply, of the local government, stressed that they have followed legal and legitimate procedures against soldiers' families. The implication is that local governments have direct relations with soldiers' families and at the local, they face the difficulty of managing the demands raised by local population within the limits of war economy. In another words they become "the bad guys" while obeying the decisions taken by central government. More than that, they are the ones who are put into a position of giving account to the

Interior Ministry who supposedly have limited information about the difficulties of local politics and economics during the war.

Another file dated to July 31, 1916<sup>275</sup> contained correspondences between institutions about the complaints of soldiers' families from Keşan. The telegram itself is not kept in the BOA file. As the other documents reveal, women from Keşan wrote their complaints and demands to the Ministry of War. Ministry of War forwarded the telegram to Interior Ministry attaching a paragraph to it signed on behalf of the Minister of War. Ministry of War asked Interior Ministry to solve the problem stressing that the issue is of high importance and to be handled with special attention. Interior Ministry, on the other hand, forwarded the telegram to Zekeriya Bey, the governor of Edirne, on behalf of Talat *Bey*, stating that needs of these soldiers' families should be taken care of and these families should be kept away from misery. As could be followed in this file, power relations among state institutions become more when Ministry of War is included into the correspondence. It is quite possible to argue that the language used by the Ministry of War in its letter to the Interior Ministry stresses the hierarchy between these two ministries under war conditions. The language used by the Ministry of War implies that the ministry "takes" these mothers and wives under its protection and thus asks the Interior Ministry to handle the case, expectantly in favor of soldiers' families. In accordance, Ministry of Interior uses a similar language and tone while forwarding the complaint to the local government. The language used in the correspondence among state institutions highlight not only power relations among institutions but also citizenship ties between the state (in different levels) and peasant women (as mothers and wives of soldiers).

It is possible to follow the same pattern in various other cases. In 1916, a telegram signed by Seher, on behalf of all immigrant soldiers' families from Uzunköprü was sent to the Ministry of War<sup>276</sup>. The problem raised in the telegram is that, these immigrant soldiers' families were unable to receive their "*muinsiz*" wages that were allocated by the State to the families of soldiers. Similar to other telegrams, these families mainly complain about poverty and hunger. Ministry of War forwards this telegram to the Interior Ministry

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<sup>275</sup> BOA 18/28 1334 L 8

<sup>276</sup> BOA 21/23 1334 Z 5

signed on behalf of the Minister of War ordering to take the requests of these families into consideration.

Mothers and wives of soldiers from Kırkkilise send a telegram to Interior Ministry in 1916,<sup>277</sup> complaining that the local officials attempted to seize the grain they had without leaving them a sufficient amount for the survival of the family. This telegram was signed by twenty-five women by the names Fatma, Ayşe, Şerife, Hatice, Hanife, Hafize, Elif, Salise, Huriye, Hanife... under the title “mothers and families of soldiers” (*asker evlatlarının valideleri ve aileleri*). Interior Minister Talat Bey forwarded the complaints of these women to Zeki Bey, the governor of Edirne, with a request for the problem to be solved. In his reply to the Ministry, governor of Edirne stated that the local government followed the ordinary and legal procedure both in the collection of taxes and in the distribution of official aid to the soldiers’ families. Thus, he argued, that the complaints raised by these women did not reflect the truth. This telegram is also a typical one exemplifying the conflict at the local level between mothers and wives of soldiers and local governments.

Women from Ermenek send a telegram to the Ministry of War in 1916 raising their problems of daily survival during the war.<sup>278</sup> These women complained that they ran out of grain supplies to feed themselves and their families. Nothing was left from the previous year and since they had to provide a certain amount as *aşar* to be handed to the army, there was not enough amount of grain either to feed the family or to sell. As the telegram goes, they were literally facing and fighting hunger. They tried to attract the attention of the authorities, stressing that while their sons were fighting against the enemy in the fronts they, -those left alone-, were facing hunger. Thus, they asked the state to insure their living. The telegram was signed by thirty four women: Ayşe, Emine, Şerife, Mesude, Huriye, Hatice, Zübeyde, Sultan, Fatma, Havva, Huriye, Rukiye, Sıdıka, Esmâ, Ümran, Zahire, Şerife... Ministry of War forwarded the complaint of these women to *Aşar-ı Umumiye Merkezi*, asking the request to be taken into consideration. Interior Ministry sent

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<sup>277</sup> BOA 80/35 1334 Z 9

<sup>278</sup> BOA 1-23 / 2 1335 M 1

a telegram in the name of Minister Talat Bey, to the local governor of İçel with a request to solve the problems raised by soldiers' families of Ermenek.

Hamdiye and her friends from Mudanya wrote a telegram in 1917.<sup>279</sup> The telegram was addressed to Interior Ministry and signed by Hamdiye and other women. They, as the mothers and the wives of soldiers who were in the service of the nation, suffered hunger and poverty. They not only tried to survive the difficulties of war conditions themselves, but also undertook the responsibility of family care, meaning taking care of elderly and children. Although they worked hard, it was impossible to feed the whole family with the grain and money in hand. Interior Ministry forwarded this telegram to İsmail Hakkı Bey, the governor of Hüdavendigar, in the name of Nazır Talat Paşa asking the issue to be handled appropriately.

As mentioned above, most of these telegrams were sent from different districts, different villages of Anatolia. This one, dated 1917<sup>280</sup> was sent from a village of İstanbul, İçerenköyü. Fatma's son was drafted from İstanbul. As his mother, Fatma was put on a salary. However, this salary was cut in a short while ago putting her in a difficult situation. She faced hunger and poverty since she did not receive any help from any other family member or institution. She asked the state to put her on salary again. Interior Ministry forwarded the complaint to the local governor asking the problem to be handled properly. In his long reply to the Ministry, assignee of the governor stated that, according to the relevant code in Law of Army, the mother was not allowed to receive the salary

Women from Arabsun sent a telegram to Interior Ministry dated, 1917<sup>281</sup> raising the problem that, they as "*çiftsiz, çubuksuz*" soldiers' families were almost left to death due to hunger and poverty. Only some of the families who applied for grain could get the aid and even these limited aids were left to the will of the officers working in the warehouse. They were in a desperate situation and asked for a solution to their problem of hunger. Similar to the telegrams described above, the number of signatures were high. Interior Ministry, sending the telegram to the local governor asked the issue to be investigated.

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<sup>279</sup> BOA 29/2 1335 Ca 14

<sup>280</sup> BOA 31/48 1335 B 3

<sup>281</sup> BOA 42 / 71 1336 S 13

Makbule, from Fethiye sends a telegram to Interior Ministry in 1918 asking for the regular payment of wages of the soldiers' families in need of assistance.<sup>282</sup> She raises her criticism of the misery of soldiers' families and states that if necessary they themselves would join their sons in the front to fight the enemy. The telegram written by Makbule on behalf of soldiers' families of Menteşe was sent to the local governor of Menteşe, Hilmi Bey by Interior Minister Talat Paşa, with a request of the case to be examined and solved. In its response, local government stated that wages of the soldiers' families were indeed paid regularly and the complaint was due to a procedural rearrangement.

Most of the telegrams discussed above contain the complaints of the soldiers' families to central institutions of the state such as Interior Ministry or Ministry of War about local powers' unjust or immoral behaviors. However, one of the telegrams written in 1918<sup>283</sup> included the demands of lieutenant governor to meet the needs of soldiers' families. Lieutenant governor requested the government to provide coins or grain to tend the needs of soldiers' families and children of the martyrs in Urfa. However, Interior Ministry, after consulting Ministry of War and Ministry of Finance, replied that it was impossible to make payment in coins.

In a telegram dated 1918<sup>284</sup> soldiers' families from Uşak raise a complaint that the local officers force them to bring their taxes (paid as grain - *öşür* and *iaşe*) to the central district, which is ten hours away from their village. The long distance that they had to cover in order to pay their taxes costs them both in terms of money and time. They request to have the right to deliver their taxes to a closer district, which is two hours away from their village. Given the poverty and suffering they already endured; they demand that the state would intervene and better their situation. The telegram has been signed by women whose sons were in the army. It is specifically stressed that these women were mothers of soldiers. In his response to the Interior Ministry, lieutenant governor states that, for a direct transfer of grain to the army, it is necessary for the peasants to bring their share of grains

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<sup>282</sup> BOA 45 / 64 1336 Ra 25

<sup>283</sup> BOA 20-02 2/48 1336 Ca 23

<sup>284</sup> BOA 20-01 / 1/14 1336 C 04

as taxes to the central district. However, the telegrams continue, they promise to arrange the collection of taxes in accordance with the orders of the Ministry.

Another telegram sent from Mucur and signed by Meryem (mentioned as wife of *Arabacı* Mehmed) on behalf of soldiers' and martyred soldiers' families dated 1918.<sup>285</sup> According to the case presented in the telegram, these families applied to the district governorate since they could not receive their monthly wages. However, as told in the telegram, they were insulted and jailed as a response to their demand.

In another telegram signed by Fatma, wife of Yusuf, who represents soldiers' families from Göynük, is dated 1915.<sup>286</sup> As the documents in the file show, this case turns out to be a complicated and rough issue for the state. As written in the telegram signed by Fatma, soldiers' families went to the district governorate to receive their commissariats. However they could not receive the amount that they should have taken and when they opposed they were beaten by the gendarmes and taken into custody. In the investigation run by the state, a public figure *Kadı* Halil was found guilty of provoking the public and he was exiled to Suruç. War policies in the home front depended on the "well-being" of soldiers' families who not only provided soldiers for the front but who also constituted the workforce for agricultural production in the home front. Thus, such cases that reveal state officials' brutal behaviors against soldiers' families was taken into serious investigation by the state so that the soldiers' families would see the effort of the state to create justice. On the other hand, it was also important that the decisions taken after the investigation would not dishonor state organs or state officials.

As tried to be shown above, complaint telegrams sent in the name of "soldier's families" constitute a certain and important group of demands raised by a group of Muslim mothers, whose demands are taken seriously and tried to be solved at the official level. However, it is also important to state that, there are also other petitions sent by Muslim mothers raising demands or complaints during the war. Their petitions or complaint telegrams will not be analyzed individually as the telegrams of mothers in the name of

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<sup>285</sup> BOA 110/59 1336 R 18

<sup>286</sup> BOA DH.İ.UM.EK 7/70 1333 Ca 12

soldiers' families. Here, only a general view about the topics and issues that are raised in these petitions and telegrams will be presented.

Another group of petitions belong to the mothers of police officers whose sons are either dead, or kept as war prisoners. These mothers usually raise their problem about the salaries they receive as mothers of police officers. They either ask for being able to receive the salaries or ask for a raise in the amount of salaries so that they could cope with the harsh economic and social conditions of war as mothers of police officers.<sup>287</sup> There are also petitions by these mothers of police officers (some of them written right after WWI) whose sons were kept as war prisoners and again asking to be put on salaries as mothers of police officers. State mostly replies positively to those demands.<sup>288</sup>

However, payment of salaries to the mothers of soldiers was valid in the case that those mothers do not have any husband, so that they would be counted as “needy” as a relative of a soldier.<sup>289</sup>

Soldier's families, mostly mothers and wives, were put on salary by the state. However the state had to declare ordinances to standardize or in some cases to limit the conditions under which the women would receive salaries as soldier's families. For example, in 1916 a decree was announced that those women who gave birth after their husbands were taken under arms would be able to receive wages in the case that they got pregnant before their husband joined the army.<sup>290</sup>

Again, in order to clarify the response to the demands of soldier's mothers, a decree was announced just a few days later reminding the fifth article of *Mükellefiyet-i Askeriye Kanunu* which stated that those mothers who had husbands were not defined as a dependent relative, thus they would not receive salary under that title.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> DH.EUM.MH.. 100/61 1333 Ca 14; DH.EUM.MH. 101/79 1333 C 10; DH.EUM.MH.. 116/66 1334.

<sup>288</sup> DH.EUM.MEM. 105/93 1337 C 15; DH.EUM.MH.. 153/5 1335 B 08

<sup>289</sup> DH.İ.UM.. 88-3 / 4-25 1334 R 14; There it was reminded that mothers with husbands were not included among the needy/poor relatives according to *Mükellefiyet-i Askeriye Kanunu*.

<sup>290</sup> DH.İ.UM 88-3/4-24 1334 R 11

There were serious attempts of the Ottoman State to investigate whether those soldier's families who applied for or already receiving wages in terms of soldier's families in need of support (*Yardıma Muhtaç Asker Aileleri*) met the criteria of dependent/needy families.<sup>292</sup> There were also cases where the demand of the mothers of soldiers were rejected on the ground that the petitioner was found to be "wealthy" to receive a wage through the position of being "dependent".<sup>293</sup>

Women sent telegrams under the title of soldiers' families to receive *muinsiz* wages or to complaint about the cuts in the *muinsiz* wages they were already receiving.<sup>294</sup>

Again women received wages under the category of "support" (*müvasat*) as soldier's families, when their son or husband died in the front.<sup>295</sup>

Even in the cases where the Ottoman State could not positively respond to the demands of soldier's families when they asked for regular support to face poverty and hunger, the state tried to provide "daily" solutions like giving food supplied for once.<sup>296</sup>

There were also petitions with the collective signs of women in the name of soldier's families complaining about the bullying activities of local notables. In a file dated 1917, Women writing in the name of Crimean Muslim migrant soldiers' families settled in Osmaniye in Ereğli in Konya complained that ex-deputy Salim *Efendi* and *Hafız* Hasan seized their land illegally and prevented them from cultivating the land.<sup>297</sup>

Similarly, there was a telegram sent from Maraş to the Ministry of War, by a woman named Zeliha, wife of a lieutenant demanding a legal investigation for the illegal

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<sup>291</sup> DH.İ.UM 88-3/4-25 1334 R 14

<sup>292</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK. 8/15 1333 B 10

<sup>293</sup> DH.İ.UM 88-3/4-38 1334 B 03

<sup>294</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK. 107/22 1335 Ca 17; DH.İ.UM.EK. 24/13 1335 M 24.

<sup>295</sup> DH.KMS. 39/36 1334 N 29. Süleyman Kemal *Efendi*, clerk at the parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan katiplerinden*) died at the Caucasian front and it was decided that his family would receive wage under the category of support.

<sup>296</sup> MF.MKT 1224/36 1335 C 02. The mother of a soldier, who used to be a teacher was given a certain amount of wheat.

<sup>297</sup> DH.İ.UM 84-2/55 1335 Ş 08

activities of the local civil servants which included occupation of fields and other corruptive activities.<sup>298</sup>

There were also petitions given by men, which complained about the bullying activities of military officers. For example, in a petition sent in 1917 from a village of Haymana in Ankara, Abdullah stated that half of his brother's house was occupied to be used as a gendarmerie station and his brother's family was living in a desperate situation in the rest of the house. He asked the state to evacuate the house so that her brother's family could live in peace.<sup>299</sup>

In a telegram signed by a group of women in the name of soldiers' families from a village of Fatsa (Ordu) stated that paying taxes other than *aşar* (meaning *ordu hissesi* or *hisse-i aşar*) would lead to the suffering of the families. Thus they asked the state to keep *aşar* as the sole tax to be paid for soldiers' families.<sup>300</sup>

There was also telegram sent from Boğazlıyan (Yozgat) signed by women in the name of soldiers' families demanding grain.<sup>301</sup>

Four women, Ayşe, Zeyneb, Fatıma and Elif sent a telegram from Ayntab stating that their camels were confiscated and were used by the military since beginning of the mobilization. They demanded the camels to be given back.<sup>302</sup>

Most of the petitions (also telegrams) written by soldier's families were moderate and to the point asking for financial support, complaining about the rates of taxes or complaining about corrupted state or military officials. One of the petitions sent to the Military of War was quite unique both in terms of language and in terms of points raised. Ten women gave a petition to the commandership of army corps with the individual signatures such as "the family of first lieutenant, Naciye (*Mülazım-ı evvel familyası Naciye*)" in June 1915.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> DH.İ.UM 84-2/32 1334 Ra 02

<sup>299</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK 46/15 1336 R 18

<sup>300</sup> DH.İ.UM 20-11/3-12 1336 R 15

<sup>301</sup> DH.İ.UM 20-11/3-44 1336 C 28

<sup>302</sup> DH.İ.UM 76/1-15 1334 Za 01

Again in another petition given to *Merkez Komutanlığı* in 1915, a mother stated that her son was dead in March 17, 1915 in *Anafartalar*. Her son's family, which consisted of seven people, was in Aleppo at the moment and they were in a desperate situation fighting with poverty and hunger. The mother wanted to move from Aleppo and come to live with herself. However they did not have the necessary money to be able to leave Aleppo. Thus the mother asked whether the army could pay the expenses of the travel.<sup>304</sup>

In another petition given to the Ministry of War in 1917, a woman, who was a wife of a lieutenant in the Sixth Army, wrote about a problem she was living with a man living in her house located in Galata, İstanbul, probably as a tenant. Since she did not have any other place to live at the moment she wanted to move to the house at Galata and asked the man to leave her house, however he refused to leave. Thus, she asked the Ministry to intervene and solve her problem.<sup>305</sup>

There were similar other various petitions by women as soldiers families asking for financial support to survive poverty and hunger, with the terminology referring to the honor and humanity of the institution they were referring to. When they were writing to the

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<sup>303</sup> (ATASE) B.D.H. 4087/21/1-58

*Halep Kolordu Kumandanlığı Huzur-ı Samisine,*

*Mar'uz-ı cariyanemizdir,*

*Zevçlerimiz elyevm sine-i sadrlarını tecavüz eden düşmanın mermilerine siper edib kahramancasına vatanın selameti uğrunda feda-i can etmek üzere Çanakkale müdafasında bulunuyorlar ve bizim gibi bîkes ve garîb'ül (...) olanları milletin merhamet ve şefkatine terk edüb meydan-ı cihada arslan yavruları gibi atılmışlardır. Ve kendi kan pahası olan maaşatlarından siparişi tahsis edip müsterih'ül (...) olarak vazife-i mukaddeslerini ifa etmektedirler. Halbuki Dersaadet ve mahal-i saire (...) (...) ahz ettikleri halde bizler ise Mart'tan itibaren akçe-i (...) vahid olmayıp perişan bir halde (...) hiçbir vicdan sahibi kail ve razı olmadığı bedihi olduğundan giriftar olmuş olduğumuz şu muzayakadan tahlis-i giryân üzere sipariş-i maaşatlarımızın celb-i adalet (...) Osmaniye namına feryad ve (...) taharr-i hal ederiz. Ol-babda emr-ül ferman hazreti men lehü'l emrindir.*

*Mülazım-ı evvel familyası Naciye, Mülazım-ı evvel familyası Hatice, Mülazım-ı evvel familyası Resmîye, Doktor Familyası Resmîye, Tüfekli (...) Familyası, Tüfekli (...) Familyası Halime*

*24 Mayıs 331*

<sup>304</sup> (ATASE) BDH 1757/174A/15

<sup>305</sup> (ATASE) BDH 2291/28/3-49

Ministry of War, they might have used words like “honor (*namus* and *şeref*)” and “humanity (*insaniyet*)” to convince the ministry in accepting her demand.<sup>306</sup>

### 3.5. Telegrams and petitions of Non-Muslim Soldiers’ Families

Most of the complaint telegrams that could be located in the archives are written by Muslim peasant women. However, besides these complaint telegrams which raise economic problems of these women and their families and reflect how they struggle with poverty, there are also complaint letters from Armenian soldiers’ families and encoded correspondences among state institutions asking for or giving information about the number of or condition of Armenian soldiers’ families. As could be observed from the examples below, the problems or complaints raised by these group of women, as mothers or wives of Armenian soldiers are different from the ones raised by Muslim women. Armenian mothers or wives were applying to the state to be recognized as soldiers’ families so that they could escape deportation. Different from the petitions discussed in the previous chapter which are written by Armenian mothers living in Istanbul, citizenship ties between the state and Armenian women living in Anatolia has been destroyed almost totally during the process of genocide. However women (as mothers and wives) representing soldiers’ families request to use the legal exception for soldiers’ families<sup>307</sup> so that they could stay in their homes and thus reestablish the citizenship tie between the state and themselves. In this sense the experience of Armenian women as soldiers’ families are different both from Muslim peasant women and Armenian women living in Istanbul in terms of their relationship with the Ottoman State.

As could be followed from the decoded telegrams in the correspondence between state organs, Ottoman State tried to organize and manage the Armenian population who

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<sup>306</sup> (ATASE) BDH 4087/21/1-40

<sup>307</sup> According to the order sent by Enver Paşa to the army commanders, Armenian soldiers’ families who are exempted from deportation, should not be allowed to stay in their own villages, they should be distributed to other villages and the number of Armenian families should not exceed five percent of the population in any of the villages. DHEUM.VRK. 15/49 cited in Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008, p. 299.

are considered as soldiers' families. In a decoded telegram dated August 25, 1915<sup>308</sup> Security General Directorate wrote to the local government of Eskişehir that if the population of Armenian soldier's families in the district was low in number then they would be distributed to Muslim villages or districts and the directorate should have been informed about the concrete number of these families. As mentioned in the telegram, this was a response to a previous telegram by the local government of Eskişehir. However, that original telegram could not be located in the archive.

In a later telegram, on the other hand, dated as September 9, 1915 Security General Directorate wrote to the local government of Niğde that, the orders about Armenian soldier's families did not cover those families who had already been deported.<sup>309</sup>

Besides these cases, as the documents show, families of Armenian deserter soldiers had been a separate issue for the state to be handled. In a decoded telegram written by the local government of Niğde to the Ministry of the Interior, dated October 24, 1915, local governor asked about the legal process of the deportation of the families of the deserters and about their properties left behind.<sup>310</sup>

Personal telegrams of Armenian mothers and wives who write on behalf of soldiers' families give more information about individual stories and self-perception of these women facing the disastrous conditions of the genocide. One of the telegrams dated August 29, 1915<sup>311</sup> was written by Security General Directorate to the local government of Konya (*Konya vilayeti*) about a case of Armenian soldier's family. According to the telegram, Artin's wife sent a telegram to the General Directorate mentioning that her family should have been treated as a soldier's family. The original complaint telegram could not be located in the archives, however, it is highly probable that Terzioğlu family had been subjected to deportation as a part of the Armenian population of Anatolia and they asked to be treated as Armenian soldier's families thus not to be deported. In its telegram Security General Directorate asked the local government to investigate the case

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<sup>308</sup> DH.ŞFR 55/213 1333 L 14

<sup>309</sup> DH.ŞFR 55A/160 1333 L 29

<sup>310</sup> DH.ŞFR 494/85 1331 Te 11

<sup>311</sup> BOA DH.ŞFR. 55/317 1333 L 18

and if Terzioğlu family was declared to be a soldier's family then they should have been treated accordingly.

An Armenian woman, whose family used to live in Nallıhan in Ankara was deported to Tarsus with her family. She wrote a petition to raise her demand her family should have been treated as soldier's family and would be allowed to return back to their hometown.<sup>312</sup>

There is also a petition that could be located in the archive dated October 3, 1916 which was written by Aygül Keşişyan, wife of deceased Agopcan, to the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>313</sup> As written in the petition, Aygül's family had been living in Talas (district of Kayseri) and due to "political reasons" ("*esbab-ı siyasiye*") she had been deported to Halep together with her daughters and grandchildren. She stressed how their life turned out to be miserable after leaving home and fighting with poverty and hunger. Her son in law was a soldier in the army "serving the state and the nation" thus their family was a soldiers' family. Aygül's complaint was that, despite the order about Armenian soldiers' families which protects them from deportation, their family had been deported to Halep. She asked for mercy, justice and permission to come back to Istanbul with reference to the order about Armenian soldier's families. Together with the petition, Aygül also presents all members of her family members, including their daughters and grandchildren with their names, ages and also with the names of their sons in law. The response to this petition could not be located in the archive. However, it is possible that, as in the previous telegram, the Ministry of the Interior asked for an investigation to confirm the information given in the telegram and then ordered for treating them as soldier's family. On the other hand, since the petition was sent from Halep and since the deportation already took place, it might have been difficult to reverse the order. It is also interesting that Aygül asked for return to Istanbul, not Talas. The reason might be that, since Armenian population of Istanbul was not deported, she might have thought that they would be safe in Istanbul. It might also be difficult for the family to get permission to return to Istanbul.

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<sup>312</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 13/18 1333 Z 19

<sup>313</sup> DH.EUM.2.Şb. 28/49 1334 Z 05

In this telegram, the Armenian mother, similar to the Muslim mothers discussed above, specifically states that her son in law is a soldier “serving the state and the nation”. Thus she points to “the fact” that they are loyal, patriotic citizens and thus they deserve to be treated accordingly. Although these phrases may seem similar to the ones used by Muslim peasant mothers which highlight the patriotism of these mothers and their families, so that their request should be taken seriously by the state, there are also differences between these telegrams. It is obviously the genocide process that creates the difference. The basic motive for the Armenian mothers who write to be considered as soldiers’ families, is to be able to escape deportation and stay alive. Contrary to Muslim peasant women, they do not write through a self-confident position asking their rights, on the contrary they write from within an oppressed citizenship position trying to convince the state that they are innocent and loyal citizens, so that they can stay alive. It is critical to note that, the language and discourse in this telegram is also different from the petitions written by Armenian mothers living in Istanbul. They face directly violent and harsh conditions of deportation, thus their first and the most aim is to escape those conditions. However in their attempt, they use the language necessitated to reestablish citizenship ties and also remind the state about their legal rights.

Another decoded telegram was written by Security General Directorate to the local government of Eskişehir and dated as September 4, 1915<sup>314</sup>. It is stated in the telegram that a complaint telegram was sent to Liman Paşa, the Commander of 5<sup>th</sup> Army with the signatures of Bayerden and Makri. Makri and Bayerden asked their families to be treated as soldier’s families and thus escape the forced deportation of Armenian population. The Directorate ordered for the investigation of the case and to treat these families according to the laws considering Armenian soldier’s families given that they were really soldier’s families.

The topic of “*muinsiz*” was not only raised in the petitions of Muslim soldier families but also in the petitions of non-Muslim women. In a correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the governor of Istanbul in May 1917<sup>315</sup>, a petition given by a woman Maria was focused on. Maria used to live in Çatalca and getting a “*muinsiz*” wage

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<sup>314</sup> DH.ŞFR 55A/45 1333 L 24

<sup>315</sup> (YB63) DH.İ.UM.EK 32/4 1335 B 12

there. She had to move to Dersaadet, thus she made an application to local headman, *muhtar* to receive necessary documents for the transfer of her address to receive “*muinsiz*” wage in Dersaadet. However, as she complained in her petition, *muhtar* refused to give the necessary document. Local governor of Istanbul informed the Ministry of Interior about the complaint, henceforth the Ministry replied back by confirming the request of Maria and ordered the local governor to warn the *muhtar* given that staying for more than six months in a place necessitates the transfer of the official address. Different from most of the correspondences, in this case the official letter from the Ministry of Interior was sent in the name of Talat Paşa, the minister.

### 3.6. Conclusion

“Soldiers’ family” is a specific category for the Ottoman State during the war period with social, political and economic connotations. However, as tried to be shown in this chapter, soldiers’ family is not a homogeneous category. Experiences of Muslim soldiers’ families are different from the experiences of non-Muslim soldiers’ families, specifically Armenian soldiers’ families. Among the Muslim soldiers’ families, on the other hand, *muinsiz* families are the ones who face serious financial problems, poverty and even hunger. Together with those problems, they are the ones under the financial protection of the State as far as war conditions allow. As can be seen from the telegrams, most of the soldiers’ families who raised their complaints and demands and receive positive replies from the state were Muslim peasant women. Armenian soldiers’ families, on the other hand, experienced almost totally a different face of “home front” compared to Muslim soldier’s families. Their effort was to prove that they were soldiers’ families, so that they could escape deportation.

Women were the representatives of soldier’s families as mothers and as wives of soldiers. These women considered to be the citizens of the Ottoman State, as a member of a family. The bond of citizenship had been established through familial representation. Demands or complaints mentioned in the telegrams did not have personal representation.

Correspondences between the state institutions reflected conflicts among these institutions and also the financial problems faced by the state during the war. However,

despite these difficulties the overall reaction on the side of the state was positive, treating Muslim peasant mothers as “eligible” citizens. In the case of the petitions written by Armenian women (both the petitions written by Armenian mothers living in Istanbul and petitions/telegrams written by Armenian mothers and wives on behalf of soldiers’ families), although those women and their demands were officially “recognized” by the state, both the language used and the responses given to Armenian women carried a tone of “disinterest” compared to the responses given to Muslim peasant women.

Another critical point to be mentioned under this topic is that, these Muslim peasant women were “the Anatolian women” who were stereotypically represented in the Ottoman press and literature as “the ideal Turkish women” who were supposed to carry the burden of war as courageous and self-sacrificing women. This representation started with the rise of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire and continued in the Republican Period. Although the burden, suffer and hunger was easy to follow in the telegrams, it is critical to keep in mind that these were complaint letters which presented not the ideal picture of heroines but ordinary women who tried to survive war conditions. These women, on the other hand, were among the poorest people of the war period. They were not only carrying financial burden of war as peasants, but also the burden of deaths or absence of male family members as beloved ones and as breadwinners. As the complaints of telegram proved, these women were not “national” heroines of war period, rather survivors of hunger and death they faced in war. Thus these telegrams are critical in presenting evidence for daily concerns of Anatolian peasant women as opposed to “Turkish heroines of Anatolia.”

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **WIDOWHOOD: AN EXPERIENCE TO BE REGULATED**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on widowed women, who had an ambiguous position with reference to “family” as an institution. In the previous chapters, I tried to present the relationship between women and the Ottoman State through the practices of women as citizens during WWI by focusing on petitions and telegrams. Although women whose petitions and telegrams I studied so far had differentiated experiences and their relation to the state during the war differed drastically, they had a commonality: they were defined by the state in relation to their families. Even though their sons, husbands, fathers or brothers were away from home, either deported by the state or taken under arms to fight for the Ottoman army, these women were recognized with reference to their familial ties to their men.

In this chapter, I will first analyze the perception of widowhood during WWI with reference to the literary work of the period. Secondly, I will examine the state documents to trace the topics and conditions under which the Ottoman state established ties with widowed women during the war. Focusing on the literary work of the period sheds light on the anxiety the increased numbers of widows created within the society. In the first chapter I present examples that illustrates the way in which widows considered as a vulnerable population and at the same time a potential threat to public order and morality. Official documents, on the other hand demonstrate how the state intervened and regulated

lives of widows and control their sexualities to prevent them from harming public decency. As these documents prove, compared to the women described as mothers, wives or sisters, widowed women are mostly in a passive position in terms of citizenship practices. The term “widow” mostly used in documents as a category of data rather than an identity referring to a subject position such as in a petition signed by a woman who defined herself as a widow.

#### **4.2. The Perception of Widowed Women during WWI in Literature**

As discussed in the previous chapters, literary work (together with nationalist/feminist political writings) produced during the war or written on the war, usually glorified Muslim Turkish mothers as the heroines of the war period. Motherhood was formulized as the most legitimate status of womanhood which, would serve the needs of the society during the war. Widows, on the other hand, were far away from being the heroines of the nation. On the contrary, they were the “losers” of the war. By losing their husbands, they also lost their tie with the institution of the family and thus, not lost but loosened their ties with the society. Widows were represented as poor unprotected women in need. On the other hand, being a “widow” not only meant to be in need, but also to be a “threat for the social order” with their “unregulated” sexuality. They were described and defined as being open to be deceived or seduced by men and also being the deceiver or seducer themselves as sexually experienced single women. They were regarded as a potential danger for the order of a society made up mainly of families.

In an article published in *Türk Kadını* on June 20, 1334 a priest comments on the way women should be dressed. This article is the translation of his talk given in Paris during the war. He categorizes women into three: married, young single women, and widows. According to this priest, married women should dress up only for their husbands, otherwise it is legitimate to question the reason behind her effort to look good: For who does she dress up, if not for her husband? Second category is young women. Young women have the right to dress up for various men. However, their intention should be to attract one man among these various men to be able to get honorably married. Widows are the third and more complicated category. Widows are “allowed” to get dressed up if they

aim to get married again. Otherwise, they should never put on fancy clothes, not to give wrong impressions to the men around them.<sup>316</sup>

Nazım Hikmet, in his famous verse-novel *Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları* (Human Landscapes from My Country) tells the story of Basri, a soldier who succeeds to desert his troop and leaves Istanbul to go to a village in Anatolia to hide.<sup>317</sup> Making up a

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<sup>316</sup> “Evli bir kadın ancak zevci için süslenebilir. Şu şartla ki zevci bunu arzu etsin. Zevcin gıyabında zevce süslenecek olursa kime hoş görünmek için süslenmek istediği câ-yi sualdir. Genç kızların vaziyeti başkadır. Bir genç kız birçoklarına hoş görünmek emeliyle süslenebilir. Fakat maksadı birçoklarından birini nâmuskârâne bir izdivâc için celb ve teshîr etmekten ibâret olmalıdır. Bir defa daha isteyen dulların da biraz daha i’tidâle riayet etmek şartıyla süslenmelerine bir şey denilemez. İkinci defa evlenmek azminde olmayan dullar süsten geri durmalıdırlar, çünkü misafîr kabul etmek istemeyen adamın kapısı üzerine “burası oteldir” diye levha asmalında ma’nâ yoktur.” “‘Moda’ Hakkında: Harb zamanında Paris’te bir papazın moda hakkında vaaz ve nasihatı” *Türk Kadını*, 20 Haziran 1334 (June 20, 1918), no: 3, in *Türk Kadını (1918-1919)*, Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, Birsen Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (eds.), 2010, p.78.

<sup>317</sup> *Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları*

*Korku zekidir,  
Basri’ye Basri adına  
ihraç kâadı yazdıracak kadar zeki.  
İstanbul şehri elveda.  
Ve merhaba ey Akhisar’ın Söğütler Köyü.  
Söğütler Köyünde elbette bir Hasan vardı,  
Hasan’ın da elbet anası olur.  
Ve cephedeki Hasan’dan  
malûl gazi Basri Çavuş,  
selam getirdiği zaman  
(tütünlerin de çapa zamanı ise),  
Hasan’ın kara kaşlı fakat bir gözü kör anası  
Basri Çavuşu elbette evinde konuk eder.  
Ve ne kadar da yorgun olsa dul kadınlar  
ararlar göbeklerinin üzerinde  
erkekli gecelerin yorgunluğunu.  
Ve bir gözü kör olmak  
Aratmamaya yetmez bunu.  
Basri, kara kaşlı dul yârine alışıp  
tütün tarlalarına  
ve korkuya alışamadan  
yaşadı Söğütler Köyünde mütarekeye kadar.  
Ve müjdeyi aldığı gün  
Düşünmeden yaşartacağım diye*

story to cheat a widowed peasant woman: He comes up with a common Muslim male name, Hasan. He tricks a widowed woman, whose sons name is Hasan, by telling her that he brought news from Hasan fighting in the front. Hasan's mother welcomed Basri, whom she never knew before, thinking that he was a friend of her son. Harvest time was approaching and Basri could help him in the fields. The widow was known for her dark eyebrows. She was blind in one eye. It was not only her hospitality for a friend of her son or her need of labor force to work her land, but also her sexual desires that got the widow closer to Basri. We do not know the name of this widow; she was identified not by a name but by her marital status: being a widow. This widow struggling for survival under the conditions of war needed a man to work on her land and to satisfy her sexual needs. She was fooled by a stranger, not because she was naive, but because she was in need and she preferred it as a survival strategy. Hearing that the war was over and ceasefire was declared, Hasan sold the oxen and the oxcart of the widow in the market and left the village for good, leaving behind a widow in pain.

In another literary work, Kemal Tahir's story *Arabacı*<sup>318</sup>, a man, takes two women to his carriage, offering them a ride (close?) to their village. The driver is a single man, spending most of his life on the roads. These two middle aged women are sisters. One of these sisters is a widowed woman who lost her husband during the war. She lives with her daughter who is also a widow since husband left her. These women offer the driver to marry the widowed daughter, so that he can have a home to live and a land to cultivate. The man agrees at least to see the young woman and spends a night in their house. In this story, the widowed young woman is described as silent and shy compared to her mother who does all the talk to convince the driver to marry her daughter. However, the man

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*bir dul kadının  
biri açık, biri kör gözlerini  
götürüp pazarda sattı kendi korkusunu  
ve onun kağnısıyla öküzlerini.  
A benim kara kaşlı dul yârim,  
a kahrolası tütün tarlaları  
ve Söğütler köyü elveda...*

Nazım Hikmet, *Memletimden İnsan Manzaraları*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013, pp. 60-61.

<sup>318</sup> Kemal Tahir, *Arabacı, Öyküler*, İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1999.

recognizes that the young widowed woman gains confidence and courage as they get into their home: “As all widowed women who did not get married again and who did not have a son, her mood changed at the moment she got home, her embarrassment on the road had gone away.”<sup>319</sup>

As the story goes, it becomes clearer for the reader that village life is difficult for widowed peasant women who lacked a man and his labor both in the house and on the land:

...You brought joy to our home since this morning. –Her voice was trembling- It is bad not to have a man at home, son... I cried when I heard you were singing on the roof. –She wiped her tears away with her headscarf- It is bad not to have a man at home... I just had a look at foddors... Live long... It has been twenty years since her father joined the army. Cemile was too young when her deceased father was gone... I had put forty banknotes in his pocket... Some said they killed him on the road to take his money... Some said he was hit by a bomb (canon ball) while sitting in a mosque. Death is the order of God... Only if I could have received a piece of paper, or organized a prayer (memorial?) after him, I would not be in so much pain. I could not receive any news about him being martyred either, what do you say?<sup>320</sup>

In these passages, and also in the whole story, the dominant image about war widows is that, they have to carry a big burden due to the absence of their husbands. They have to work both on the lands and in their homes themselves since there is no man around to accompany them. Not only physically, but also emotionally it is difficult for them to bear the pain of the death of their husbands. Thus, they are depicted as poor, miserable and fragile women who are by definition in need of any help that could be offered. However, these poor miserable widowed women were thought as being “open” to sexual intercourse, as mentioned in the story. At night, when everyone goes to their beds, the driver, thinks

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<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>320</sup> “...Bugün sabahtan beri evimizi şenlendirdin. –Sesi titriyordu- Erkeksizlik kötü oğul... Sen damda türkü söylerken, ben ağladım. –Yemenisinin ucuyla gözlerini kuruladı- Erkeksizlik bir kötü... Yemliklere baktım da... Ömrüne bereket. Şunun babası askere gideli yirmi yıl oldu. Rahmetli giderken Cemile şuncacıktı... Koynuna kırk bangnot koymuştum. Kimi, “Parasına tamah yolda kestiler.” dedi. Kimi, “Camide otururken top gelmiş.” dedi. Ölüm Allahın emri... El kadar bir kâğıdı gelseydi, imam okutsaydım, hiç yanmazdım. Şehit haberi de gelmedi, ne dersin?” Kemal Tahir, 195.

that the widowed woman can pay a visit to his room, since she has been a widow for a long time.<sup>321</sup>

Similar to the story told in *Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları*, the driver is portrayed as a man who takes advantage of widowed women. He thinks of marrying the young widow to spend the winter in their home and leaving them after winter. However, at the end, he decides not to deceive these two widowed poor women and leaves after staying with them for just one night.

In another story, a soldier is hit by the enemy. Although he makes an attempt to follow the enemy despite his wound, he is unable to move and thus lies (falls?) on the ground. He knows that he is about to die and remembers his mother and lover, and wishes to see them in his dream.<sup>322</sup> This is one of the cliché scenes portraying the moment of a soldier's dying on the battle field, where he remembers two beloved women of his life: his mother and his lover. Here, being a mother and a lover are two legitimate positions of motherhood, who emotionally support soldiers at the front. In this text, however, this cliché continues with another sentence which presents an immoral position of womanhood, that is widowhood. After dreaming about his mother and lover, the soldier looks at the sun and describes the sun as "a sinful widow who puts on a red bathrobe." Thus, it is possible to trace in these two consecutive sentences that different meanings were attached to motherhood and widowhood as moral and immoral, legitimate and illegitimate positions of womanhood.

In the stories or novels, widowed women are referred as "the widow" or "poor widow." "Poor widow" represents the unfortunate position of widowed women and demands a feeling of pity from the audience. In the novel *Kan ve İman* this stress is obvious when the writer refers to the same woman in different parts of the book. The writer tells the story of a widowed woman whose son does not return from the front

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<sup>321</sup> "Kız bunca zaman dul oturmuş. Kocakarıları uyutur da bir bahaneyle içeri girer belki..." Kemal Tahir, 192.

<sup>322</sup> "Düşmanı kovalamak, onlarla denizde bile kavga etmek için kollarında kuvvet, ve vücudunda kudret bulamadı... Oraya, çakıl taşlarının üzerine yattı. Ölmeden düşünmek, şehit olmadan evvel anasının, yavuklusunun hayalini görmek istedi... Fersiz gözlerini karşıki kıyıda kırmızı bir bornoza günahkar dul bir kadın gibi sarılan güneşe dikti..." Fazıl Turgut, Donanma, no: 92/44-93/45, 23 Ns.1331 / 6 My. 1915, in *Birinci Dünya Savaşı Hikayeleri*, İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007, p. 292-294.

although the war is over and soldiers are coming back to their homes. Although there is no formal information about his death, people think that he has already died on the front. The woman sees a dream and tells about this dream to *imam*, thinking that the dream can reveal the mystery behind her son's disappearance.

The local *imam* interprets the dream as the liberation of Muslim lands from infidels. In the passage, where the writer reports *imam*'s interpretation of the dream, he describes the woman as "old Turkish mother" (*ih̄tiyar Türk anası*). The epic language of the passage necessitates a character which would represent the strength and purity of Turkish community, which was represented by a Turkish mother. The religious old Turkish mother is considered as a blessed character who was honored to receive a divine sign promising a glorious future of the Islamic world. The war, which was an attempt by the infidels to destroy the greatest Islamic state, was going to be brought to an end by the men of God. The naïve faithful Turkish mother was described as the messenger of a divine message.<sup>323</sup>

In the same story, on the other hand, just a few pages later, the same woman is referred to as "the poor widow" (*zavallı dul*) in order to dramatically underline her pain because of her lost son. Even if it is not legally approved, the whole neighborhood believes that he is dead. However neighbors of "the poor widow" are confused about giving their condolences. They rather wait for her pain to fade away before they visit her.<sup>324</sup> This passage is quite significant in representing how "motherhood" and "widowhood" imply different perceptions of womanhood, especially during the war. The writer describes the

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<sup>323</sup> "Bu işte bir işaret-i ilahiye vardı. Akşam kahvedeki mübahaset aklına geldi. Bu saf mutekit ihtiyar Türk anasını âlem-i manâda istibşâr ettiği vaad-i halâs âlem-i İslam için büyük bir fal-i hayr idi... En büyük İslâm devletini kasıp kavurmak için erbâb-ı küfrün tutuşturduğu nâire-i harbi, Ehlullahdan biri çıkıp söndürecek, hak yolunda gidenleri kurtaracaktı." R. Ercüment Ekrem Talu, "Kan ve İman", *İleri*, 10 Teşrin-i Evvel 1338-10 Kanun-ı Sani 1339 (October 10, 1922) in *Kan ve İman*, Kültür Bakanlığı 1988, p.7.

<sup>324</sup> "Mahallede vakar ve haysiyeti, metin ahlâkı, anasına karşı itâat ve hürmeti dolayısıyla, herkesin muhabbet ve teveccühünü kazanmış, dâima nümune-i imtisal olmak üzere gösterilmiş olan Sadık'ın avdet etmeyişini onun şehadetine hamleden halk da gidip boşuna Şanzîmet Hanım'ın derdini tazelemekten çekiniyor, taziye için yarasının zamanla unutulmasını bekliyordu. Mamafih, merhum İmam Aşir Efendi'nin karısı Sadverk Hanım zavallı dul ile aralarındaki kırkbeş senelik hukuka bîanen daha fazla intizarın ayıp olacağını düşünerek bir sabah gelini Hediye ile birlikte ziyarete gitti." Talu, 10.

same character with two different titles in two different scenes. As discussed above, the woman is referred to as “a naïve, religious, old Turkish mother” when she is depicted as the messenger of a holy message promising the liberation of Muslim people. In the second scene on the other hand, where the writer stresses her loneliness, the pain and suffering she had been living through, along with her neighbors’ insensitivity to her situation, he wants the reader pity on a poor widow, rather than a Turkish mother. Mothers, despite all the sorrow they endured during the war, were the figures whose strength and courage were admired and appreciated. Widows, on the other hand, were miserable, unfortunate, lonely women far away from being the heroines of the nation.

There are also poems published during WWI directly with the title of “The Widow” (*Dul*)<sup>325</sup>. One of these poems was written by Salih Zeki and published in the journal *Türk Yurdu*. In this poem, the poet depicts the widow as a beauty in sorrow; which is consistent with the cliché about widows who suffer from loneliness and are hopelessly open to new relations. She has lost her interest in life; she is like a shadow deprived of her senses. She has not only lost the joy of life and is unable to recognize beauties around her but also cannot empathize with empathy for those in sadness. She is tired of her suffering and lost in her sorrow. “The melancholic widow” attracts the poet (the man). There is no direct reference to the war. The only reference is the line where the poet stresses the widow’s indifference even towards those orphaned children waiting for their mothers who will never come. Her apathy is legitimized by her melancholy; her own sorrow that diminishes her strength. This narrative differs from the discourse traced in this chapter so far in the examples of literary works, where women are expected to be strong and warrior-like in order to compete with the harsh conditions of war. In these works, women are called to

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<sup>325</sup> *DUL*

*Ey hicranı dinmez güzel  
Ah ey unutulmaz emel!  
Sen her seher derelerden  
Boşluklara akıp giden  
Yeşil suları unuttun  
Yazık gönlünü uyuttun*

*Ne anasız yavruların  
Yolları dinleyişleri  
Ne gurupta kumruların  
Sevdayı inleyişleri  
Hiç seni titretmez oldu  
Bahçende son gül de soldu*

*Son çağında sevdasıyla  
Yorgun turna edasıyla  
Bozulmuş bağlarda hayran  
Hicran türküsü okuyan  
Dayanılmaz bir güzelsin  
Solup ayrılan...*

Moda September 21, 1332. Salih Zeki in *Türk Yurdu*, year:5, no:135, 24 Mayıs 1335 (May 24, 1919) in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şevkatli (ed.) vol. 6, Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 2000, p.98.

become activists at the home front by suppressing their own suffering. It is this seemingly contradictory discourses that differentiates the different identities of woman. Nationalist discourse invites mothers not widows to be the leading figures of the home front. Mothers are represented as strong national figures to be the heroines at the home front. Widows, on the other hand, are depicted as women, who need to be protected not only by their neighbors, but also by the state. Interestingly enough, as the example in *Kan ve İman* shows, a woman can be a mother and a widow at the same time.

Ömer Seyfettin's poem "The Widow" (*Dul*), similarly, stresses the loneliness and fragility of a widow, who is a peasant woman.<sup>326</sup> The house of the widow is depicted as a ruined empty home which seems to be disappointed by the neighbors. The widow living in the house is a young woman, whose captain husband died a year ago. She does not have any children. The joy of the young couple which filled the house was replaced by the sorrow of the young widow, who, after her husband's loss, turned into a skinny and fragile shadow. Her husband is portrayed both as her master and slave. In this poem, the widowed woman is depicted as a desperate figure living in an empty and ruined home she is

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<sup>326</sup> *DUL*

*Gece yine geçmeyecek bir keder  
Gibi indi köyümüzün üstüne!  
Ses sadâ yok... daldım işte komşumun  
Bir yıkılmış boş yuvaya benzeyen,  
Bana karşı dargın duran evine.  
Şimdi orda can çekişen bir mumun  
Dalgasında matemini gizleyen  
Bir kadın var: Genç, çocuksuz bir anne...  
Gece yine geçmeyecek bir keder  
Gibi indi köyümüzün üstüne!  
Bir yıl evvel aydınlanan perdeye  
Aksederdi şen bir çiftin gölgesi,  
Şimdi lakin bir gölgedir görünen,  
İnce, narin bir gölgedir! Nereye  
Gitti onun eşi, hakim kölesi?  
Biliyorum; yüzbaşıydı o giden...  
Gece yine geçmeyecek bir keder  
Gibi indi köyümüzün üstüne!*

*Ömer Seyfettin*

*Türk Kadını*, 1 Ağustos 1334 (August 1, 1918), no:6, p.149.

identified with despair. Thus, the image of the widowed woman is no way comparable to the image of as Turkish Muslim mothers, whose courage, strength, and ability to cope with their pain make them the heroines of war.

Mehmed Emin's *Dua*<sup>327</sup> presents a sharp duality between widowhood and motherhood as different status of womanhood. Unlike the examples above, in *Dua*, country (*vatan*) is identified with these two different positions to describe two different contexts. In his lines, Mehmed Emin describes the country as a "queen" (*melike*) and a "sacred woman," who is the mother of glorious prophets and rulers. The sacred mother was once so powerful that her sons built up golden cities and numerous temples. However, at the moment, she falls sick, her power fades away, and she feels pain as if she is losing her sons. In the following lines, the intensity of pain and suffering that the country has been enduring

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<sup>327</sup> DUA

(....)

*Unuttun mu bu kimdir? Şarkın büyük melikesi,  
Turlar gibi güneşten tacı olan asil alın,  
Peygamberler, hakanlar yetiştiren aziz kadın!  
Bir zamanlar gökleri doldurmuştu onun sesi,  
Sana altın şehirler yükseltmişti çocukları,  
Bezemişti binlerce mabetlerle ufukları...  
Fakat şimdi o kadar düşkündür ki sanki hasta,  
Çehresinde tutulmuş aylar gibi solgunluk var,  
Şehzadeler kaybeden sultan gibi mahzunluk var.*

.....

*Artık yeter Allahım yeter bu kan tufanları!...  
Bezdik artık dul sesi, yetim sesi dinlemekten,  
Harabeler, mezarlar üstlerinde inlemekten.*

.....

*Bak Allah'ım her yerde benim gibi yüz şair var,  
Hepsinin de gözünde dul bakışlı birer vatan,  
Dudakları üstünde kırık kanat birer figan.  
Benim gibi hepsi de matemleri çalıyorlar,  
Benim gibi mucize bekliyorlar göklerinden,  
Benim gibi adalet istiyorlar hepsi senden.*

*Mehmed Emin*

*Türk Yurdu*, year:7 no:158, 15 Haziran 1334 (June 15, 1918), pp.189-194.

is emphasized. In these lines, the country, which was defined as a mother earlier, is now referred to as a widow. Widowed woman with her pain, sorrow, and melancholy is a more powerful image to portray the situation of the country. Now the country is filled with the cries of widows, now the country carries the look of a widowed woman.

### 4.3. Widowed Women in the State Documents

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that women were considered to be the representatives of these families and they signed the complaint telegrams on behalf of soldiers' families. I argued that, it was women who raised the complaints and problems of the family, in other words, women raised their own problems under the title of soldiers' families. However, when a problem about a widow woman was raised, the person who signed the letter or telegram was usually a man who was either a headman of a village or a civil servant. Names of widow women were not mentioned. The category of widow women were anonymous and their problems were usually expressed by men.

In a telegram dated 1917 and sent by Dursun, the village headman of Bukine, a village of Atina (Trabzon *Vilayeti*) complained about the tithe rate that the peasants had to pay.<sup>328</sup> As was written by Dursun, the village had been subjected to occupation and raid by the enemy forces during the war and almost all men were drafted to the army. Thus, it was only women who were left behind to work the land. In addition to their financial loss during the occupation, they were also suffering from the absence of work force since men were fighting at the front. In the telegram, the word "women" is used to explain the situation that women were left alone as the sole agricultural laborers, whereas the expression "widows and orphans" was used to underline the suffering and misery of the village population.

A telegram was sent from Gülnar, a district of İçel, dated April 29, 1915 signed by "İsmail on behalf of *rençber*" to the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>329</sup> The issue that was raised in the telegram was state's seizing of animals belonging to the peasants as transportation vehicles. İsmail, representing the *rençber*, requested that widow women, soldier's families

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<sup>328</sup> DH.İ.UM 20-18 12/001 1336 S 16

<sup>329</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK. 76/25 1333 C 14

and *reñbers* be exempted from the practice and keep “one donkey.” The Ministry sent a copy of the telegram to the local governor of İcel and ordered the necessary action to be taken. In this telegram, “widow women” constitutes one of the three categories together with soldier’s families and *reñbers*. This is different than the way they have usually been referred to in official documents, i.e. in relation to orphan children. As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, soldier’s families as a category constituted of peasant women, who, as laborers, had to substitute for their men in the fields. Widow women, here, were referred to as a social category that the state had to, in today’s terms, imply the policy of “positive discrimination”.

In state archives, almost all information on immigrant widow women are in ciphered telegrams. They demand or present information especially on the number of immigrant widow women in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state aimed to gather information on the population of widows and orphans—mostly immigrant women and children—and the information circulated among state institutions, usually between the Ministry of the Interior and the local governments, through ciphered telegrams.

Dating back to the second half of the eighteenth century, together with the loss of territory, Ottoman Empire also faced the problem of Muslim immigrants that the state had to resettle within its borders. These Muslim immigrants were settled in the Ottoman lands to increase agricultural labor force and also (starting with the Hamidian period) the number of Muslim population compared to that of non-Muslim.<sup>330</sup> Besides, Union and Progress used Muslim refugees to force the non-Muslim population leave their homelands. This policy was clearer in the case of terrorizing the Greek population of Western Anatolia. Especially the Muslim refugees who had suffered from the Balkan wars and the brutal war conditions were in a position to attack the non-Muslim population of Anatolia.<sup>331</sup>

As a result of CUP’s policy against Armenians during the war, the population that was left behind after deportations and massacres was a small but tangible number of women and children. In a telegram written by Talat Paşa to the governor of Ma’muretü’l-aziz, Talat Paşa asked what happened to the women of Armenians who were deported:

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<sup>330</sup> Dündar, 45.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-210.

“*Teb’id olunan Ermenilerin kadınlarına ne olmuştur?*”<sup>332</sup> According to Dündar, this question represents the new phase about the issue of Armenian population in relation to the population policies of the Ottoman state during World War I. However, remaining Armenian population of Anatolia could not be analyzed only with reference to population policies but should also be considered and analyzed with reference to the gender policies of the state. As immanent to the question, Armenian as an ethnic identity is defined as male and Armenians are considered to be men. Armenian women, left in the Ottoman land, were considered to be the part of the Armenian population that could be or forced to be “assimilated”.<sup>333</sup>

These women were distributed to the Muslim villages where there were no Armenians or non-Muslims. This process of distribution was implemented through the tie of marriage. As written in the telegrams sent by İAMM to local governors, it was “appropriate” or “necessary” that these Armenian young women or widows got married with Muslim men.<sup>334</sup>

An ordinance sent to all provinces of Anatolia in April 20, 1916 about Armenians who were alone and without guardians “*kimsesiz ve velisiz*” saying that families, including soldier’s families who did not have a head of the family, meaning young girls, women and children were to be distributed to villages and towns where there were no Armenians, so that they could get accommodated with local customs, “*adapt- mahalliye ile istinasları*”. In the ordinance there was also an order that young and widow women should get married.<sup>335</sup> Although Armenian women, compared to Armenian men, were considered easier to assimilate by way of marriage and conversion to Islam, they still were “the hostile” and “uncanny” citizens. Thus, those state officials, who were married to Armenian

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<sup>332</sup> DH.ŞFR.54.432 (July 14, 1915) cited in Dündar, 304.

<sup>333</sup> Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, “A Climate for Abduction, A Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and after the Armenian Genocide,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 3, 2013, pp. 522-553.

<sup>334</sup> DH.ŞFR 54A.238 (August 3, 1915), telegram from İAMM to Sivas; DH.ŞFR 55.92 (August 18, 1915); DH.ŞFR 63.60, from Kastamonu to İAMM; DH.ŞFR. 59.150 (December 29, 1915) from İAMM to Niğde cited in Dündar, 304.

<sup>335</sup> DH.ŞFR. 63.142 (April 30, 1916)

women were not allowed to travel without official permission. Later, this rule was applied only to Istanbul.<sup>336</sup>

In southern parts of the empire, deported Armenian women and young girls were usually distributed among Arab villages. However, these villages were not to be the villages of Aleppo and Deir-el Zor.<sup>337</sup>

In a ciphered telegram from Aleppo dated September 25, 1915 informed the Ministry of the Interior that due to the limited means of transportation, the process of deportation (*sevkiyat*) was stopped.<sup>338</sup> Thus those who were not deported yet were put in the process of deportation and those who were already deported and on the roads to their destination were widows and orphans.

Again in another ciphered telegram sent from Syria to the Ministry of the Interior dated November 18, 1915, information on the number and the condition of widow women and orphans that were to be sent from Urfa to Damascus were exchanged.<sup>339</sup>

In a ciphered telegram sent to the province of Ankara on May 30, 1916 detailed information is presented on how to treat Armenian orphans and widows.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> DH.ŞFR. 61.23 (February 16, 1916); DH.ŞFR. 82.87; DH.ŞFR 88.49 (June 4, 1918)

<sup>337</sup> DH.ŞFR. 54A.325 (August 9, 1915) and DH.ŞFR 58.164 (November 24, 1915)

<sup>338</sup> DH.ŞFR. 490/110 1331 E 12

<sup>339</sup> DH.ŞFR. 498/10 1331 Ts 05

<sup>340</sup> “...Erkekleri sevk edilip veyâhûd askerde olup da kimsesiz ve velîsiz kalan âileler Ermeni ve ecnebî bulunmayan kurâ ve kasabâta müteferrikan tevzî’ ve muhâcirîn tahsîsâtından iâşeleri te’min edilerek âdât-ı mahalliyye ile istînaslarına, Genç ve dul kadınların tezvîclerine, Oniki yaşına kadar olan çocukların mahallî darü’l-eytâm ve öksüz yurdlarına tevzî’ine, Dârü’l-eytâmın mevcûdu kifâyet etmediği taktîrde sâhib-i hal Müslümanlar nezdine verilerek âdâb-ı mahalliyye ile terbiye ve temsillerine, Bunları kabûl ve terbiye edecek sâhib-i hal Müslümanlar bulunmadığı taktîrde muhâcirîn tahsîsâtından otuz kuruş i’âşe masrafı verilmek şartıyla köylülere tevzî’ine gayret edilmesi ve suver-i sâlîfe dahilinde vâki’ olacak icrâ’ât ve teşebbüsâtın aded ve erkâma müstenid olarak peyderpey ma’lûmat i’tâsı.” BOA, DH.ŞFR., Belge No: 64/162 in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler, 1915-1920*, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995, p.139.

The majority of information provided in these correspondences among state institutions include the numbers of widows and the process of their settlement. In a few telegrams, on the other hand, some other information can be traced. A ciphered telegram sent from Deir el Zor on November 21, 1915, reads that widow women among the deportees in Zor were inquiring about the destiny of their husbands, whether they were dead or alive. Unfortunately, I could not locate any response to this telegram at BOA.<sup>341</sup>

The data on widow women's number and their points of settlement was gathered from various parts of the empire. Except for some cases that specifically mention that these women are Armenians, there is no information provided on the ethnicity/nationality of these widow women. Women and children whose nationality was not mentioned in telegrams as well were most probably Armenians subject to forced deportation to the south, whose husbands or fathers—that is, “their men”—had already been killed before or during the deportation.

In the following lines, I present some of these ciphered telegrams through which the Ottoman state collected information on widowed women. In a ciphered telegram from Syria, the governor informs the Ministry of the Interior that among the deportees there were five thousand orphans—three thousand boys and two thousand girls— and one thousand and five hundred widows.<sup>342</sup>

In another telegram from Beirut<sup>343</sup>, Ministry of the Interior was informed that there were neither any deportee or immigrant (*muhacir* and *mülteci*) families there nor any widows or orphans among the ones sent from Damascus.

In a ciphered telegram from Zor dated January 17, 1917, the number of widows and orphans were reported to the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>344</sup>

The Ottoman State collected statistical information about widowed women and orphans during the war. The correspondence between state institutions, namely between

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<sup>341</sup> DH.ŞFR. 498 47 1331 Ts 08

<sup>342</sup> DH.ŞFR. 538 17 1332 Ts 19

<sup>343</sup> DH.ŞFR. 539 55 1332 Ts 22

<sup>344</sup> DH.ŞFR 543 59 1332 Ks 04

Ministry of the Interior and the local governments, highlights the state's efforts to know the exact number of widowed women (and in most cases, that of orphans) and where they were settled.

Similar telegrams presenting data on the number of widows and orphans among the *muhacir* and *mülteci* were sent to the Ministry of the Interior from various cities and towns. These cities include Kayseri<sup>345</sup>, Kastamonu<sup>346</sup>, Aleppo<sup>347</sup>, Karesi<sup>348</sup>, Rumkale (Aleppo)<sup>349</sup>, Niğde<sup>350</sup>, Sivas<sup>351</sup>, Kütahya<sup>352</sup>, Bitlis<sup>353</sup>, Aydın<sup>354</sup>, Ankara<sup>355</sup>, Eskişehir<sup>356</sup>, Edirne<sup>357</sup>.

In an ordinance sent on November 29, 1916, to various provinces (Edirne, Erzurum, Adana, Ankara, Aydın, Bitlis, Bağdat, Beyrut, Halep, Hüdavendigâr, Diyarbakır, Suriye, Sivas, Trabzon, Konya, Kastamonu, Musul, Van, Urfa, İzmit, Bolu, Canik, Karesi,

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<sup>345</sup> DH.ŞFR. 539 108 1332 Ts 27

<sup>346</sup> DH.ŞFR. 540 13 1332 Ts 29

<sup>347</sup> DH.ŞFR. 540 23 1332 Ts 30

<sup>348</sup> DH.ŞFR. 540 45 1332 Ke 01

<sup>349</sup> DH.ŞFR. 540 67 1332 Ke 04

<sup>350</sup> DH.ŞFR. 540 112 1332 Ke 07

<sup>351</sup> DH.ŞFR. 541 12 1332 Ke 09

<sup>352</sup> DH.ŞFR 541 31 1332 Ke 12

<sup>353</sup> DH.ŞFR. 541 79 1332 Ke 15

<sup>354</sup> DH.ŞFR 542 18 1332 Ke 21

<sup>355</sup> DH.ŞFR 543 22 1332 Ke 31. Apart from the other telegrams, this telegram also presented the number of men among the *mülteci* population in Ankara.

<sup>356</sup> DH.ŞFR 543 58 1332 Ks 04

<sup>357</sup> DH.ŞFR 543 61 1332 Ks 04

İçel, Kütahya, Eskişehir, Niğde), the Ministry asked to be informed about the number of orphans according to their gender and widows “immediately” after an inquiry.<sup>358</sup>

In a telegram sent from Diyarbakır to the Ministry of the Interior on November 1, 1917, the local governor requested the Ministry of the Interior to send in information on the homeless widowed Armenian women in the region.<sup>359</sup> As described in the telegram, these Armenian widows used to live among the Bedouin tribes. Escaping from these tribes, they returned to Diyarbakır. They were “wondering around” since they had lost their home and family. On November 15, 1917, *Kalem-i Mahsusa* sent a telegram to Diyarbakır province stating that those widowed Armenian women were allowed to temporarily stay in the province.<sup>360</sup>

#### 4.4. Philanthropic Institutions for Widowed Women

Philanthropic war time activities in the Ottoman Empire during World War I have been the focus of various studies.<sup>361</sup> Almost all of these activities were run by women for

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<sup>358</sup> DH.ŞFR. 70 138 1335 S 03

<sup>359</sup> DH.ŞFR, 567/102/1

*Dahiliye Nezaretine*

*Vaktiyle urban nezdinde kalarak bu kere firar edüb ötede beride dolaşmakda olan dul ermeni kadınları hakkında ne suretle muamele yapılmak lazım geldiği Resulayn kaymakamlığının iş'arına atfen Mardin mutasarrıflığından bildirilmekte olduğundan olacak muamelenin irade buyrulması.*

*4 Teşrin-i evvel 1332*

*Vali vekili*

*Bedreddin*

<sup>360</sup> DH.ŞFR. 80 168 1335 Z 28: “Bahsolunan dul Ermeni kadınların şimdilik orada kalmalarına müsaade edilmesi.”

<sup>361</sup> For a detailed analysis of philanthropic activities in the Ottoman Empire in the Hamidian Period see Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşrutiyet, 1876-1914*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2013. For women's philanthropic activities see Nicole Van Os, *Feminism, Philanthropy, and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University, 2013.

women and children. These activities were already on the agenda of the women's movement in the Ottoman Empire. They were declared and promoted in the women's journals.<sup>362</sup>

However, these activities had already been ethnicized and nationalized even before the war. Ottoman State had sponsored and promoted the philanthropic activities organized by Muslim (Turkish) women for Muslim (Turkish) communities. Such strict division had also been a criticism raised by non-Muslim, especially Armenian women who had faced the most destructive face of the war. Kohar Mazlımıyan writes an article in 1920 in *Hay Gin* (Armenian Woman), an Armenian women's biweekly, where she points to the inequality between Muslim Turkish and Christian women in organizing philanthropic activities. According to Mazlımıyan, Turkish women are protected by Unionists, thus are not afraid of anything, including their religious authorities.<sup>363</sup> They are active in every kind of philanthropic activities, organize events to raise money for their organizations. They walk into the streets early in the mornings with a happy face and force people to give money for financing the national movement. Non-Muslim people also help them. However they are surprised, since non-Muslims are not allowed to collect money even in small amounts, while Turkish women are on streets every day. When these women's

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<sup>362</sup> *Faaliyet Başlıyor* "Bu defa dahi mesmuatımıza nazaran yeni bir cemiyet teşekkül ediyor, bunun gayeleri gayet mühim olduğu söyleniyor. Bu cemiyet evvel emirde nisvanımıza bir kıyafet-i milliye-i hariciye icat edecek, bir cihetten dahi işçilik hayatını uyandırıp kadınları, bî-çare, dul kalanları, yetişmekte olan kızları himaye ederek sefaletlerinin tahfifine gayret eyleyecek, diğer cihetten dahi mektepler açarak, gazeteler, risaleler neşrederek, konferanslar vererek seviye-i irfanın yükseltmeye çalışacaktır." *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 54, 27 Mayıs 1329 (June 9, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 34.

<sup>363</sup> *Hay Gin* is an Armenian women's journal published between 1919 and 1933 by Hayganuş Mark. The journal focuses on the issues like feminism, women's movement, feminist movements in the West, women's activities in the Ottoman Empire and in the Republican period. *Hay Gin* is mainly an intellectual arena for Armenian women where they can share their ideas and demands on various issues. However, even if it is limited, the journal also served as channel through which Armenian women get into contact with Turkish/Muslim. For further information, see: Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal, *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar*, İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2006; Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, *Improvising Turkishness: Being Armenian in Post-Ottoman Istanbul, 1918-1933*. PhD dissertation, New York University, 2010.

organizations organize events to distribute supplies to soldier's families, it is always a Turkish widow or Turkish poor people who gets the supply. Christians, on the other hand, get a small amount, with insults. They never think that the husbands of those poor Greek or Armenian women die in the front, build roads, suffer from the heat under the summer sun or freeze in the winter. More than that, the question is whether these philanthropist women ever consider that it is also among their duties to help Armenian orphans.<sup>364</sup>

As Mazlımyan's article and arguments present, philanthropic activities were politicized through wartime power relations and hierarchies. State sponsored philanthropic activities of Turkish Muslim women created discomfort among non-Muslim population on the ground that these activities targeted specifically Muslim population and more than that non-Muslim women's philanthropic activities were limited to a certain extend by the state.

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<sup>364</sup> “(...) Üst veya orta sınıftan Türk kadınlar, İttihatçıların vahşi yönetiminin belli bir amaçla kendilerine vermiş olduğu o izinlerden yararlanarak herşeyin içine attılar kendilerini. Onlar ülkenin tam olarak şımarmış unsurunu temsil ediyorlardı. Kimseden çekinmezlerdi; ne Şeyhülislam'ın tehditlerine ne de kendi dinlerinin mubah saymadığı şeylere kulak asarlardı. (Kendi anlattıkları şekliyle) Avrupalı olan ne varsa koşulsuz kucakladılar. Her türlü hayırsever iş içinde faallerdi, geceler düzenleyip hayır amaçlı kokartlar satıyorlardı. İstanbul'un her tarafında görülürdü bu Türk kadınlarından. Sabahın erken saatlerinden başlayarak, yüzlerinde memnun bir gülümsemeye gezinip yoldan geçenleri milli müdafaaya hizmet etmek üzere bu kokartlardan satın almaya zorlardı. Gayrimüslim toplum da yardım ederdi; tabii ki şaşırarak: Onlara bir kumbara bile dolaştırmak yasakken diğerleri her gün para topluyordu.

Kadın örgütleri asker ailelerine verilecek erzakın dağıtım işini üstlendiklerinde bu yardımdan ilk olarak yararlanan mutlaka ve kayıtsız olarak Türk dulu veya fakiri olurdu. Hıristiyan ise her daim bir çeşit hakaretlerle alırdı kendi ufacak payını. Karşılardaki zavallı Ermeni veya Rum kadının kocasının savaş meydanında kanını verdiğini veya hendekler kazdığını, yollar yaptığını, yazın sıcaktan eridiğini, kışın korkunç soğuktan donduğunu hiç düşünmezlerdi.

(...)Acaba savaş zamanında hayırsever amaçlar uğruna çalışmış olan o kadınlar (Ermeni) yetimlere yardım etmek konusunda da kendilerine görev düşmekte olduğunu hiç düşündüler mi? (...)”Kohar Mazlımyan, “Türk Kadını Savaş Yıllarında Ne Yaptı,” *Hay Gin*, year: 1, no: 14, 16 May 1920, trans. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, in *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, no: 2, February 2007.

#### 4.5. *Dulhane* and *Dârussınaa*: Creating Jobs for Widows

In the state archives, widowed women were mentioned with reference to the institutions such as *Dulhane* and *Dârussınaa*. These philanthropic institutions did not only provide a shelter for this homeless widows—usually immigrants—but also “educated” them to serve in upper class houses as servants.

Before World War I, widow women among Balkan refugees were sent to *Darılaceze*. A document dated August 17, 1913 reads that, special sections in *Darılaceze* were allocated to the training of immigrant widow women as servants. Through state institutions these women were sent to household for work. The idea was to put an end to their misery and poverty. This way the wealthy houses of İstanbul would find servants for their needs.<sup>365</sup> In a document dated July 14, 1915, it was written that after the death of a soldier serving in the labor battalion, his wife, who had no relatives, was sent by the commander of the troop to a *dulhane* in Osmaniye.<sup>366</sup>

The same policy of “employing” widowed women in upper class houses as servants continued after World War I. In a telegram sent to the local governments of Trabzon, Kastamonu, Hüdavendigâr, Samsun, Karesi, İzmit on September 8, 1919, *Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi* stated that the state founded *dulhane(s)* for women, who were widowed during the war, and were in need of shelter. In these institutions they will also be able to develop useful skills. Population in İstanbul, on the hand, needed help in their domestic works. State could work as an agent to bring together these two parties, so that both sides could benefit. With reference to this intent, Ministry of the Interior requested the number of immigrant widowed and desolate women. The number of women and girls were inquired, in order to see whether they matched the number of women needed in İstanbul households.<sup>367</sup>

As the above mentioned documents demonstrate, there were also local initiatives that attempted to establish philanthropic institutions, especially for women. These local

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<sup>365</sup> DH.İD 161-1 6 1331 N 14

<sup>366</sup> DH.EUM.VRK. 22/71 1333 Ra 2 / 14

<sup>367</sup> DH. ŞFR 103/77 1337 Z 12

processes had to be regulated in coordination with central state institutions. The Ministry of the Interior put an effort to manage and “centralize” war time philanthropic activities of local civil servants or notables. In an ordinance sent to *Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdiriyeti Umumiyesi Memurin Şubesi* on December 25, 1916, by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry required information on *darüleytams*, *dulhanes* and *tedavihanes*: where and when they were established, who the civil servants working in these institutions were and about the amount of wages.<sup>368</sup> Another ordinance asking for similar information was sent on February 2, 1917. Through this ordinance, Interior Ministry requested data on the number of civil servants and employees and the amount of their wages) working at *Darüleytams*, *Dulhanes* and *Tedavihanes*.<sup>369</sup>

Again, in a telegram sent from Nusretiye, Urfa to the Ministry of the Interior on November 19, 1917, fund was requested for the *Darülişe* that was built for alone widow women and orphans<sup>370</sup>

It is interesting to note that, even in these official documents, the language that describes the situation of widows or orphans is far from a formal one, but rather one that emphasizes their suffering and poverty. A similar language was used in this telegram stating that these women and children were in misery, *sefalet*. This language proved to be influential for the governor ordered the “immediate release of the payment.”

There were also initiatives before World War I, especially after and during Balkan Wars aiming to create jobs for widowed women. Such attempts or donations to promote those attempts were also declared in *Kadınlar Dünyası*.<sup>371</sup> During WWI as well, women

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<sup>368</sup> DH.İ.UM.EK. 104 106 1335 S 29

<sup>369</sup> DH.MB.HPS.M.. 27 12 1335 R 09

<sup>370</sup> DH. ŞFR. 559 117 1333 T 19

<sup>371</sup> “Bakınız harbin bidayetinde Fransa sefiri Mösyö Pompar cenaplarının refika-i muhteremeleri Madam Pompar’ın muhacirîn ve muhtacîne gösterdikleri muaveneti unutmayan ve ebediyen unutmayacak olan Osmanlılar bu defa Tayms gazetesinden İngiltere sefiri cenaplarının zevce-i muhteremeleri Leydi Lauter’in taht-ı riyasetlerinde bulunan iane komisyonunun faaliyet ve şefkati mikdarını dahi öğrendi.... Bugün bu cemiyetin kasasında mevcut olduğu zannolunan yedi bin İngiliz lirası ile de Leydi Lauter Bebek’te, Eyüp’te, Üsküdar’da el işçiliğine mahsus imalathâneler açılmasını, bu imalathânelerde şüheda asakirin dul, yetim kalan ailelerine iş verilerek tehvin ve temin-i

who had lost their husbands had to work in order to earn their and their children's living. One of the major concerns of the state was the increased number of prostitutes during the war due to the worsening economic conditions. Yavuz Selim Karakışla, in his research on the Society for the Employment of Women argues that the motive behind the mobilization of women to work under the roof of the Society was not the need for labor that was created by the absence of men. The basic intention was "the emergence of numerous Muslim widows in Ottoman society."<sup>372</sup> This concern was implicit in the first regulations of the Society for the Employment of Women (*Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti*): "The aim of this society is to find employment for women and to protect them by teaching them to earn a respectable living through their own labor."<sup>373</sup>

Society's campaign to marry women workers was also another attempt to keep women away from prostitution. Moreover, since there was not a demand for female labor in the market and because the basic motivation of the Society was to provide a "moral" space for women to earn their living, arranging marriages might have seemed to be a more efficient and long term (hopefully life-long) solution to keep women away from the immorality of streets and the difficult conditions of work life. State's support to the war widows was temporary. Thus marriage and the formation of a family was promoted for them.<sup>374</sup>

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*ihtiyaç ve maiyetlerine bakılmasını tasavvur ediyorlar imiş.*" "Leydi Lauther'e Şükran-ı Azim," *Kadınlar Dünyası*, vol: 32, 5 Mayıs 1329 (May 18, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 322.

<sup>372</sup> Karakışla, 167.

<sup>373</sup> Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women, 1916-1923*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Center, 2005, p.167.

<sup>374</sup> "Şimdiye kadar kadınlarımızın faaliyet-i iktisadiyeye iştirakleri ve kendi maiyetlerini kendi alınteriyle kazanabilmeleri hususunda çok nafi hizmetlerde bulunmuş olan cemiyet-i mezkure bu defa pek mühim bir "içtimai ıslah" adımı atmıştır. Derc edeceğimiz 6 maddelik kararnamesinden anlaşılacağı veçhile, cemiyetin kendisiyle alakadar bütün işçilerin evlenmeye mecbur tutulmaları ve evlendikleri takdirde cemiyetçe her türlü teshilat gösterilmesi taht-ı karara alınmıştır. Bu kararname, cemiyetin daire-i nüfus ve salahiyeti nispetinde –ki bu şâyân-ı ihmal değildir- içtimai bir tesir gösterebilecek mahiyettedir. Memleketin nüfus ve ahlak-ı umumiye meseleleriyle de cidden alakadar olan mezkur

It is possible to trace similar stories in the biographies or memoirs of women who experienced WWI. For example, in a biographical book written about an upper-middle class Ottoman woman who lost all her class privileges during WWI, Şevkiye Hanım, ended up working for the Society as a widowed woman. The biography of Şevkiye Hanım presents the portray of a “war widow” who lost his husband at Gallipoli during the World War I. She was an upper class Muslim woman living in Istanbul. She was impoverished during the war, after losing her husband. Facing poverty, she had to leave her upper class life and started to work at the Military Sewing House (*Sultan Ahmed Elbise Ambarı*).<sup>375</sup>

A similar discourse can be traced in an announcement that appeared in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. The journal announces the foundation of a new society to produce “national clothes” designed for women, which are simple, comfortable, and suitable for their public activities. The society is going to hire poor widowed women along with young women as workers.<sup>376</sup>

Renowned nationalist writer Mehmed Emin’s poem dedicated to Sewing Society of Turkish Women (*Türk Kadınlar Biçki Yurdu’na*) with the title “Sew My Pin!” (*Ey İğnem Dik!*) illustrates well the way women’s, mostly widow women’s war time labor was nationalized.<sup>377</sup> In this long poem of, Mehmed Emin promotes the idea that “Turkish

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*kararnameyi aynen derc ediyoruz.” Türk Yurdu, year:6, no:150, 20 Kanunievvel 1333 (December 20, 1917), pp. 307-308.*

<sup>375</sup> İrfan Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, London : Eland ; New York : Hippocrene Books, 1988.

<sup>376</sup> “Bu defa dahi mesmuatımıza nazaran yeni bir cemiyet teşekkül ediyor, bunun gayeleri gayet mühim olduğu söyleniyor. Bu cemiyet evvel emirde nisvanımıza bir kıyafet-i millie-i hariciye icat edecek, bir cihetten dahi işçilik hayatını uyandırıp kadınları, bî-çare, dul kalanları, yetişmekte olan kızları himaye ederek sefaletlerinin tahfifine gayret eyleyecek, diğer cihetten dahi mektepler açarak, gazeteler, risaleler neşrederek, konferanslar vererek seviye-i irfanın yükseltmeye çalışacaktır.” “Faaliyet Başlıyor,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no: 54, 23 Mayıs 1329 (June 5, 1913) in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (eds.), Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 34.

<sup>377</sup> *Ey İğnem Dik!*

(*Türk Kadınlar Biçki Yurdu’na*)

history” is a history of glories won by the efforts of both men and women. In Mehmed Emin’s poem. Equality means completing each other, that is, the gender division of labor between two sexes. Man is iron and woman is fire. She warms man up like the sun. A country without women is deprived of the feelings of revenge and hatred (which is an idea discussed in Chapter I) and destined to die. The poem is written as if it is told by from the voice of a woman who wishes the glory of her country. Her contribution to this glory would be the use of her power and labor to sew clothes for the soldiers in the front. The power of pin is equal to the power of sword, they both shine. Serving the soldier in the front is a sacred duty. Women make clothes to cover the bodies of young Turkish heroes.

Workplaces for women were opened not only in Istanbul but also in different parts of Anatolia during the war. Although state had promoted these establishments, it was not only the state but also local notables that initiated the opening of workplaces for women. In 1915, the local government of Çankırı informed the Ministry of the Interior that with the

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*İlk nineler ecdadla bir Tanrıya tapmışlar;  
İlk alevli ocağı,  
İlk hakanlar tahtının kurulduğu otağı,  
Erleriyle birlikte ter dökerek yapmışlar.  
Eğer erkek demirse kadın dahi ateştir;  
Onu aşkla, ümiyle ısıtıcı güneştir.  
Kadınlarsız memleket öceden, kinden mahrumdur;  
Düşmanların önünde ölümlere mahkumdur.  
Ben doğduğum vatana sonsuz yıllar dilerim;  
İsterim ki hayata açılan gözlerim  
Ay yıldızlı bayrağın  
Nurlarının altında saadetle kapansın;  
Şu mübarek toprağın  
Her çocuğu Turan’ın ninnisiyle sallansın.  
Bunun için bende de iş görecektir kuvvet var,  
Kılıçların yanında iğneler de parıldar.  
Ey iğnem dik! Askere  
Giyecekler yetişir;  
Sınırdaki erlere  
Hizmet aziz bir iştir.  
Ey iğnem, dik! Elimde teyellenen şu gömlek  
Bir kahraman genç Türk’ün vücudunu örtecek.*

....

*Mehmed Emin*

*Türk Yurdu*, year:4, no:76, 20 Kanunisanı 1330 (February 2, 1915) in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Şefkatli (ed.), Ankara: Tutubay Yayınları, 2000, pp. 45-47.

initiation of the local notables, they would start to build a primary school for the orphans along with a *dariüssana* they had already built for widows to be employed and earn their living. Çankırı *mutasarrıflığı* wrote a long piece to explain the aims of these attempts. The basic motive mentioned was to be in the service of the Ottoman Army. In *Dariüssana* widow women were going to produce socks and undershirts for the soldiers. The official opening of *dariüssana* was organized on the same day the letter was sent. It was a big and spectacular event. Ministry of the Interior sent an acknowledgement as a response.

Although widowed women were encouraged to work in public jobs as workers or in the private sphere as servants, there were also widows who relied on their salaries they receive through their husbands or sons. During the war, the amount of those salaries or irregularities in the payments became an issue to be handled. In a telegram sent from Erzurum on April 29, 1918, the local governor of Erzurum asked the Ministry of the Interior for the payment of wages to state officers, retired people, widows and orphans.<sup>378</sup> Since Erzurum had been under occupation during the war, these people were devoid of their wages. The local governor, mentioning both the hard conditions under which these people survived during the occupation and the poverty they faced after the occupation. He asked for the payment of the accumulated payments of these Ottoman citizens. As a response, Ministry of the Interior, referring to the related law, declared for the payment of wages not for all the period of occupation but for a couple of months. It was strictly stated in the telegram that the state would prioritize those who were in extreme poverty.

A similar issue was raised in another file dated June 18, 1918.<sup>379</sup> As a response to a complaint telegram written by civil servants, Ministry of the Interior ordered the payment of an amount equal to the three months' salary in total.

Widows, together with other segments of population “in need” were also the target of donations and aids organized by civil initiatives. Correspondence between state institutions document the record state kept of these relief activities and the process of their distribution. From documents kept in the state archives we can trace that widows and orphans of the martyred soldiers were sent funds by a certain Kahveci Mustafa Efendi and Hasan Efendi; the Muslim community of Kavala; and the consulates of Ioannina, Sophia,

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<sup>378</sup> DH.İ.UM 20-18 12/042 1336 B 18.

<sup>379</sup> DH.İ.UM 20-18 12/069 1336 N 09.

Plovdiv, Leipzig, and Hamburg. These donations were made in 1915.<sup>380</sup> In 1916, the consulate of Kavala made a donation.<sup>381</sup> In the same year, Ferhad and Süleyman brothers, local notables of Tuzla, made donations.<sup>382</sup> The consulate of Washington sent funds for the widows and orphans of the martyrs in 1917.<sup>383</sup>

Besides these donations coming from abroad, fund raising activities were organized with the representatives of foreign countries. In 1918, an application was made to the Foreign Ministry to get permission for an event to be organized in Beyoğlu, under the patronage of German ambassador for the widows and orphans of the martyrs who died when the ship they were serving in, that was Midilli, sank.

#### 4.6. Conclusion

The ambiguous position of widowhood, compared to motherhood, is reflected in the literary work of the period. As could be followed from the articles in the periodicals and in literature, widows were portrayed as poor, fragile, lonely and desperate women compared to mothers who were strong and self-sacrificial. Widows were represented as victims of the war, while mothers were represented as the heroines of the war.

In state documents, “widowed” refers to a position in which death of the husband makes woman neither single nor married. Widowed women still had legal rights as wives whose husbands were dead, and were considered to be single to get married again. There was also a strict division between widowed woman with children who were able to maintain their living and those “poor” widowed women who were “alone” and needed the support of the state or philanthropic institutions to survive. The second group is usually pronounced with orphans. Especially during war periods “widows and orphans” is considered as a single category representing the needy population as the target of state

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<sup>380</sup> HR.SYS. 2175 2 1915 11 24.

<sup>381</sup> HR.SYS. 2175 4 1916 02 18.

<sup>382</sup> HR.SYS. 2426 20 1916 09 20.

<sup>383</sup> HR.SYS. 2175 7 1917 01 25.

intervention and philanthropic activities. During World War I, as manifested in these documents, poor widow women, who lost their husbands during the war, were mentioned together with orphans. They were not identified as “women and children” but rather “widows and orphans.” Reference to familial ties and position was central, even when those families were destroyed during the war.

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I analyzed the relationship between the Ottoman women and the state during the World War I. On the one hand, I examined the categories within which the Ottoman state positioned women and related to them, on the other, I discussed the ways in which women used these categories to voice out their demands, problems, and complaints. In doing this, I aimed to grasp the way women presented themselves to the state from subject positions that fit into or disrupted these imaginary categorizations. I, thus, studied the way gender was instrumentalized by the state as a tool of governmentality and regulation within the context of war.

Ottoman women's relation with the Ottoman State in terms of citizenship practices is a complex and complicated process. On the one hand, women's practices as citizens under the conditions of WWI reflect the hegemonic perspectives on women and womanhood of the period. On the other hand, conditions of war reveal the existing tensions while opening up new possibilities of relationship between Ottoman women and the state. Hence the war not only strengthened the ongoing ideological propaganda on gender roles, encouraging women to become the "ideal" citizens, fulfilling their duties as mothers of "the nation" but also rendered the gap between the "ideal" and "real" women citizens visible.

Before and during WWI when Ottoman women were invited to the public space as citizens, they were promoted to practice citizenship as "mothers of the nation". "Ideal" women were the ones who would not only be the mothers in their families in the private sphere but also mothers of the nation who would manifest themselves in public sphere as servants of the nation. Petitions written by women during WWI highlight that, the

experiences of Ottoman women during the war had the capacity to challenge the idea of ideal motherhood which was constituted at discursive level.

Muslim (Turkish) women's rights activists of the period also utilized the discourse which supported women's participation in the public sphere as "mothers of the nation". Although there were exceptional cases, with reference to the journal of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, it is possible to argue that Muslim (Turkish) woman's rights activists also legitimized women's political activism through motherhood and developed their political arguments through a national and patriotic language promoting women to be mothers of the nation. To a certain extent, this political perspective aimed at increasing the power of women in the social and political arena as citizens.

In the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women as mothers were expected to be active in three main domains: Firstly, they were given the duty to construct and preserve the memory of the nation. They were the ones to remember the "enemy", its brutality and pain they caused. They had the responsibility to transmit this memory on to the younger generations. Thus, women were to be the ones to produce the feeling of revenge. They would be the activists of emotions which would facilitate the building/shaping of national identity.

Besides, *Kadınlar Dünyası* also promoted the idea that mothers of the nation would be political activists who would adopt both the motherhood and public political identity simultaneously. It was possible to locate calls to upper class urban women to leave their interest in "wealth" behind and concentrate in taking care of the victims of war. Thirdly, women were encouraged and asked to lead the construction of "the new family." In the journal, although destruction and despair was stressed, everyday concerns and the imagination of a future found their place, as well. In this imagination of future, the debates around the "new family" were central. The new, civilized, and national family was imagined to be constructed by mothers. Mothers were invited to the public space to form the ideological foundation of this family, first, by educating themselves with a certain necessary background formation and then by mobilizing this formation to become the mothers of this new family.

Citizenship practices of Ottoman women, on the other hand, constituted a ground to observe whether the discourses on "ideal woman" and "ideal mother" had their reflections in the experience of Ottoman women from different classes and ethno-religious

communities in their relation with the state. Petitions written by Ottoman women during WWI were rich sources to analyze the citizenship practices of Ottoman women during the war. Ottoman women with different ethnic, religious and class identities wrote petitions to the state stressing various issues. These issues included financial issues, complaints about military officers, civil servants and local notables, forced deportation, applications for conversion and applications to become Ottoman subjects, war prisoners and also other issues. Muslim women, Greek women, Armenian women and Jewish women gave petitions to the state raising demands and request sometimes on different, sometimes on similar issues. In terms of social strata, mostly middle class and lower class women wrote petitions and all most all of the petitions stressed the poverty and hunger their families suffered from because of the war. All of these women identified themselves as “mothers”, “wives”, “sisters” or “daughters”. Among these titles, the most commonly used was that of “motherhood”. Within the scope of this dissertation, it is possible to argue that, women mostly got in contact with the state as mothers.

Petitions written by women during WWI are rich sources of data reflecting the experiences of women as citizens/subjects of the state in a period of crisis. Given the scarcity of written material by women, especially women from lower classes, petitions are critical sources for women’s history. These petitions involve individual stories of women through which the researcher could hear the “voice” of Ottoman women from various social strata.

Petitions are legal documents written in a certain legal form, mostly by petition-writers/*arzuhalcis*. *Arzuhalcis* are the mediators between women and the state who turned individual stories/experiences into legal documents. Despite the mediators, the *arzuhalcis*, it is still possible to reach and catch individual experiences of Ottoman women of different identities. Studying petitions in the Ottoman context gives the opportunity to have access to not only individual stories, complaints, demands and requests of women but also to the responses given by the Ottoman state to those demands. Responses of the state provide us with clues about the gendered (and also ethnicized) policies of the Ottoman state. These petitions, together with the responses given by the state, open paths to study citizenship and subjecthood during the war. They also give clues about the self-perception of Ottoman women vis-à-vis the state. Given that it was usually mothers who wrote these petitions, the

narratives in these papers demonstrate how women used motherhood to legitimize their demands, complaints and requests.

Among these petitions, huge number of petitions were written by Muslim women who mostly complained about poverty and hunger. They demanded the means that would help them to recover from the financial disaster they were living in. Women, mostly mothers, tried to convince the state about the difficulty of living under war conditions, facing hunger and poverty and asked for financial support in various ways. Besides, Muslim women also wrote petitions to complain about the unjust acts of either local notables or civil servants or military officers who were making life more difficult for them during the war. There were also a group of petitions written by Muslim women to get in contact with their relatives, mostly their sons, who were kept as war prisoners. These women either inquired whether their relatives were alive or not or demanded mediation to send them money. In most of these petitions, Muslim women spoke from the subject position of a citizen who is supposed to be under the protection of the state.

Another significant number of petitions were written by Armenian women, who wrote to save their family members, mostly their sons, from forced deportation. In their petitions they emphasized that their relatives, mostly sons, were innocent and loyal Ottomans and thus they deserved to be treated accordingly. They wrote that, it was unjust to deport their family members given that they were not criminals, on the contrary they were the members of communities loyal to the state. In terms of citizenship practice, petitions of Armenian women were different from other groups of petitions written, especially those of Muslim women, in their repeated effort to prove their loyalty to the state. These petitions also provide us with clues about the heterogeneity within the Ottoman Armenian population as well as the various positions that were regarded as 'favorable' by the state. In most of these petitions Armenian women requested that their family members be exempted from deportation; that is they struggled to bring their families together by following legal procedures. Most of these petitions were written from Istanbul, however there were also petitions or telegrams written by Armenians from different regions of the Empire, such as Aleppo. Besides these issues, there were also petitions by Armenian women who applied the state in order to convert to Islam. Armenian women wrote their petitions mostly from the subject position of a mother. In those petitions, Armenian

mothers attempted to persuade the state that their children were loyal Ottoman citizens and never involved in politics. The major themes common in almost all petitions of Armenian mothers are the innocence of their children, and their loyalty to the country and the state, as well as to the ideal of Ottomanism. Armenian women/mothers wrote from a subject position of citizenship, regarding themselves as citizens of the Ottoman state. It is critical to note that, despite the conditions of genocide in the lands of the Ottoman Empire, some Armenians still made an effort to apply the state as citizens, asking for justice. Through the petitions Armenian women reminded the state that they were Ottomans, and thus they had to be treated as equal citizens of the empire.

Women also sent telegrams and petitions to the state on behalf of “soldiers’ families”. Almost all of these telegrams were sent from rural areas, villages outside of Istanbul. They render especially the economic problems that peasant women endured during the war visible. Most of the women were peasant women whose sons or husbands were in the front. These women tried to survive under hunger and poverty in their villages. They were complaining either about the bullying activities of military officers or tax rates or asking for financial support. These telegrams sent by women in the name of soldiers’ families carry mostly five or more women’s signatures from a single village. These were the villages mostly populated by women given that men had left their homes to fight in the front. The point that the men of their families were gone to sacrifice themselves for the homeland was also stressed in the petitions in order to legitimize their demands and remind the state that it was under state’s responsibility to protect them and their families as soldiers’ families. Problems such as the unjust collection of taxes, the maladministration of local authorities and extreme poverty are voiced out in these telegrams. While expressing their demands for protection by the state, these women emphasize the fact that the men of their families are gone to sacrifice themselves for the homeland. The correspondences among state institutions prove that state institutions and authorities acted with the knowledge that soldiers’ families are one of the main resources of military and economic power. Thus the demands of these mothers were considered with special attention as much as the economic conditions allowed. Soldiers’ families were not a homogeneous category either. Among these families, there were also Armenian families who were deported from their villages, towns or cities. Armenian women wrote as representatives of “soldiers’

families” and asked the state to be exempt from deportation, since as a soldier’s family, they had the “legal right” of exemption.

Besides petitions, documents kept in the Ottoman archive also provide us with clues about state’s efforts to collect statistical data and information on the population, especially women. During the war, state institutions collected data on widowed women. These poor and destitute women constituted a tangible population among Muslim refugees who had to leave their lands due to war. Through *Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi* the Ottoman state collected data on the number and situation of widowed women and their children in each city. Among these widowed women the state inquired about, were Armenian women widowed during the war and genocide, too. Muslim widowed women were provided with shelter and “protection” in Darülaceze or in *Dulhanes*. State institutions sought employment opportunities for these Muslim women. Correspondences made through Interior Ministry prove that women were trained as helps in *Dulhanes*, which were founded specifically for widowed women, and from where widowed women were sent to serve in upper class households of Istanbul. *Darussınaa* as well worked to create jobs for women. Among petition-givers were widowed women who did not fall into the category of “*kimsesiz*” (destitute) that is, they had no children or relatives. These women were living in poverty and petitioned the state to find a solution to their underprivileged economic conditions. Among these were mostly women from soldiers’ families. Mothers and widows are connected as they are both related to the institution of “family.” While motherhood is a category that the state “recognizes” as legitimate, widowhood is a category that is deprived of a male protector and in certain cases, children. Women who fall into this category are, in the eyes of the Ottoman state, both in need of protection and have the potential to become illegitimate by becoming prostitutes.

This ambiguous position often finds space in literary works on the war years. Widows are the victims of both poverty and desolation. Because of this position they are in a vulnerable situation against any harm that will come from men. They can at the same time seduce and lead men to astray. I argue that the state’s efforts to gather information on widowed women, to find them jobs and shelter should be considered as an effort to keep them under control and within the boundaries of the family as a legitimate institution.

During the war women had diverse experiences, which cannot be confined into the categories of “mothers,” “sisters,” “daughters,” “widows”. However, this study examined and questioned the categories through which the Ottoman state related to its female citizens. It analyzed the “legitimate” categories of womanhood and argued that motherhood, together with other familial positions, was the most appropriate and legitimate category to address the state as women. Although all categories of womanhood were subject to extraordinary experiences during the war, despite all the differences among mothers, the category of motherhood was in a constitutive position.

Through petitions, women asked the state to respond to their request by paying special attention to the fact that they were members of families, specifically mothers. It is crucial to note that the category of motherhood has never been homogenous. The differences between women shaped their practices as mothers and the state’s response to mothers is also determined by differences among women. During the war, ethnic, religious, and class differences between mothers defined the way state responded to their demands.

In the hegemonic ideological level, before and during WWI, women were called to join the public space as “mothers of the nation”. “Mothers of the nation” were “ideal” women who would serve for the good of the country and the nation. This call was also made by Muslim (Turkish) women’s rights activists of the period in a way to strengthen women in the public sphere as citizens. Petition writing, which was practice of citizenship, was also widely used by Ottoman women. Focusing on the petitions written by women during WWI highlights the gap between “ideal” women/mothers and “real” women/mothers in terms of citizenship practices among a heterogeneous population of women in a period of crisis under the conditions of WWI.

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معرفی

مهنر ساری حضرت نظامی

۱۰۰

معروف مبارک لریه

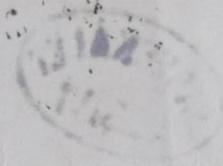
مخدوم ابراهیم وظیفه عدلی ایضا اتمک اور زہ اور سز پاپر اور اولیٰ یفندن و کذیل ۱۷ یا سئذہ کی کریمی صولا ہلویہ ارج و بیجا ہج  
 محتاج معاونت فاکہ فرندن محمد سفارتجہ معاسہ تخصیص استقامتہ راز روز جبرہ جدیدی موسسہ ساکنہ اور یا بقہ سنج بلز قصبہ طیبہ  
 اسجنیک اوعی مستاج ابراهیم والدہ سی فاطمہ امضایہ و بیروب مطروفنا روزجہ قلمک معانفہ سئذہ اولسان ۸ لریہ اولیٰ یا مخفہ استعام  
 لغا تقسیم قلمنہ اولیٰ یفندن فرجورہ اید کریمی سنک اور سز یا سفارتخانہ سی طرفندن تأییدہ اعاسی اسپانک استلمای بیورکی بئذہ اروزرمان

بیلوقی

حضرت ولی الامر کد۔ ۱۷ لریہ اولیٰ



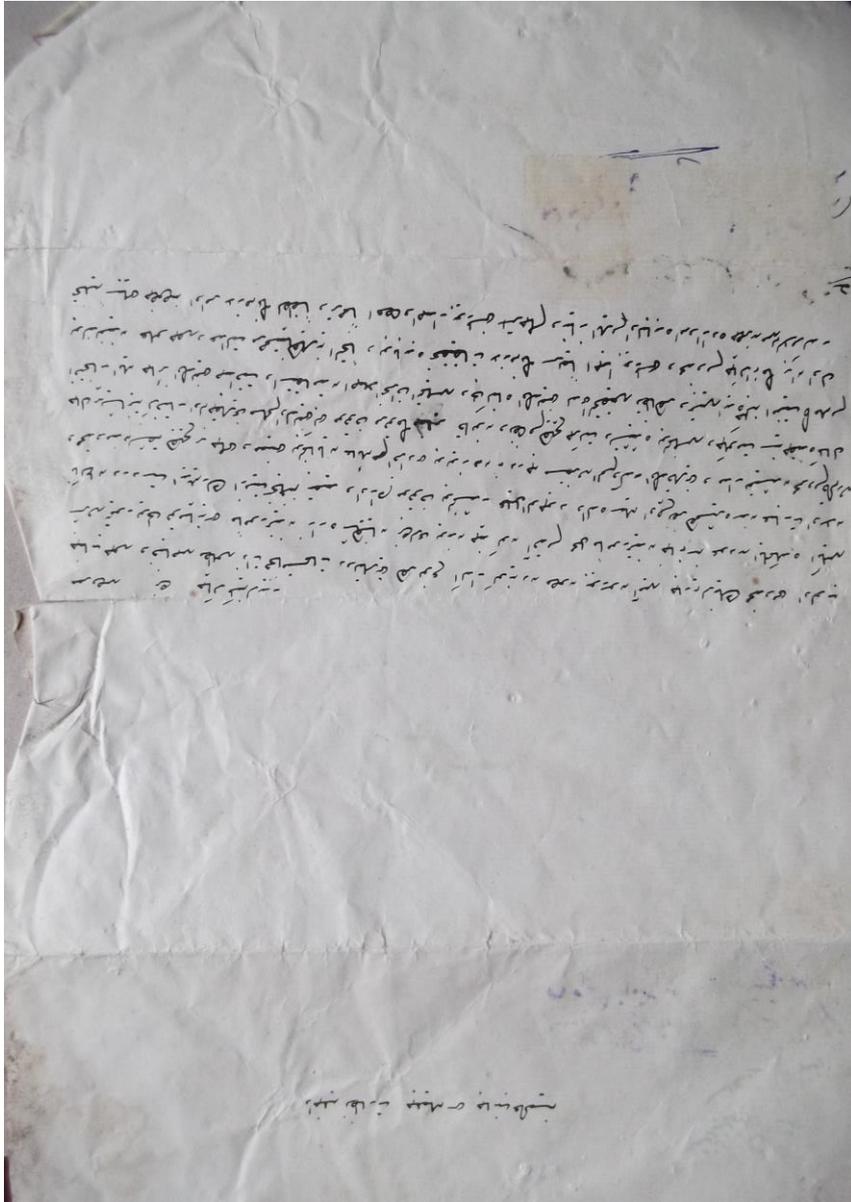
راحد نقد به عید ساجات



مدرسه عالی ریاست  
 مؤید نقد مجموع اولیو سیمون کورنیه مخدوم دستانه واحد اقدینت می مذکورہ عید ساجات برود عالی ریاست مخدوم  
 ایضاً معائن سجدیہ قدم المقدمہ ایضاً برودہ امینہ عیوب بدینہ اعلیٰ استاجولہ کلہ کلندہ و عفو اولیو سیمون  
 جملہ معائنہ مخدوم اولیو سیمون مقدمہ اجتراد ایدلی . حال بودہ اعلیٰ عفو اولیو سیمون دائرہ برامندام  
 اولیو سیمون سجدیہ قدم رہ عودتہ دائرہ برامندام بودندندہ بودبایدہ عالی ریاست قطعہ و ساج بر حجاب اولیو سیمون  
 بایدہ ایجاب ایضاً اولیو سیمون بیخ اور وفایہ عودتہ مخدوم اولیو سیمون







DH.EUM.VRK 15/50 1333 L 08







راهنمای تفکر در جلیلهای سینه

مردودیه حیات لرزه

در تمام اوردن گوید و مقیم میباید چنانچه آیهی نبی لری بوند نه بری بویه ماه مقدم و مقرر به جلیله در دستا بدید بران قنیه تبعید الیه رسده  
 مومنان در سعادت و تولد عیسه و مدینه مدینه و دوز و حکومت سینه مفسر هر کتابت هجریه و مقاله به مقیده بر موقوف اینجی بوانتونه غزنی  
 اراکانه تحریریه سنده اولوب بکونه فریجه بر کویله سینه می بود اولوب و علی بن عثمانی در جلیله برورده تبعه صادق دره بولرینه حاله اولاد و عیالنه به بعد بر جلیله  
 سوره و غزالی معلوم و مسلم لانام اولاد به سعادت جلیله لرجه هیچ بروردهم تجوز بویوم به غیبی سیدیه بولرینه لطف و درمزه علی اصول عقصقات  
 در عقصقات حقیقه عادلانه اهل سینه نبیایه به جمله معصومینه بنا و موهی ایزد سعادت جلیله غرض بولرینه مکلفنده او را عیله نظر تمسک بر بولرینه تبذیر  
 بولرینه صورتیه معذوریه هار بانه به خاتم و لیکن کمال سوزنده نیازه و ترجمه ایدیم اول سینه امر و زمانه هر چه به لای اولاد رس

استاد  
 در تمام اوردن گوید و مقیم میباید چنانچه آیهی نبی لری بوند نه بری بویه ماه مقدم و مقرر به جلیله در دستا بدید بران قنیه تبعید الیه رسده  
 مومنان در سعادت و تولد عیسه و مدینه مدینه و دوز و حکومت سینه مفسر هر کتابت هجریه و مقاله به مقیده بر موقوف اینجی بوانتونه غزنی  
 اراکانه تحریریه سنده اولوب بکونه فریجه بر کویله سینه می بود اولوب و علی بن عثمانی در جلیله بروردهم تبعه صادق دره بولرینه حاله اولاد و عیالنه به بعد بر جلیله  
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داخله نفاذ جلد سنه

مردوم جابانه اسم اولدرکه  
 جابانه پر و تیره عاقله کتانه اسم اصل در سعاده الهالسنه اولوب بورنه خنت سنه مقدم قولری معلولله  
 اقله ارزه اطه بانارینه قزیمته اتمه واحتمار پررم باپانه آیسوزم طرفسان داعیلرله اسیر فراسه والدهم مایه  
 رنه ابل و لهاقا نصد نام ایی گهیره م جابانه تقصیبا محل مذکور کلمه و لها کتوز اتی ماوررنه ایما مشقه حکومت  
 سیرجه کوریمون لردم سنی محلی ارینی کتله نکل دیار آرضه نفلی تقدرا المحکمه عاقله جابانه وضه اطه باناری عدیله  
 پانه مقلد سوه اولدوره کوریم کونا لکیر شهر نه کسه سزیک آجیقلی بوجاله موجود تیرینی سور و کلمه کده درین  
 استانبول ارمنیریک تدبیر مذکور به برکنه علاقسی اظمانه دعائنه اب اسوه آجه نکل بر لکله اعتبارله  
 های تقیه قلمه جابانه اردی صنف درطه بر لکله برابر بمیشتری کصافه سامتی جابانه محتاج اولدن وسه وقت  
 و موجودیت پیشانی اکتا بر لکله فعالیت سیکیم غیر مساعد اولدوغی و لکله قتل بر فدان بر لکله  
 حیاتی نریک ملک و لری آفوسه شفقده دعای واجبه محرمه عافیت خدیوینا لکیری و شان و شوکتی ملک و دولتی  
 صبر و تحفه ماعده علیه آصفه اگر سیریک را لکان بیولمه بانه اوزنا - لفته مه اولدوغی



محمد باشاره  
 بدوی تازه علی خانقه و شطی بی خانقه  
 مستقیم وزیر و آاقسی طرفسان

۵.  
داغدی تقیه علیله

مده صده جا به لریده  
ایینه مقدم زوجه عانوه کربا خود بانه خولدی طره اوبهار فطنه بطار کرمیائده در دست دیو تحقیقات کمانه  
خونیه سو ایدیمدی خالک زوجه فرودنه دیری اسانجده ناصی واستقامت زنده چایسته وچ بوینه  
برک اولسوه برقره خولک بید اولور عادی بر جمید اولسوه کیمیاسته بوجره زوجه کوز لرینه عومه اولور فخرت  
دیوفا اتصاح ایینه جا به لریدک هو کونا واسطه میشته موصع والقی فخر اولور عانله اولور دوجا اولور فخرت  
دیریشا به خالده با فخرت وچ برجم و فخرت اولور فخرت الیه طره یا فطنه خونیه بکونه بیسه اولور  
زوجه اسانجده خودنه سفه بوردله همدنله دوجا اولور فخرت فخرت خودنوه فخرت ایینه عومه اولور فخرت  
ایرم اولور فخرت فخرت مهله اولور

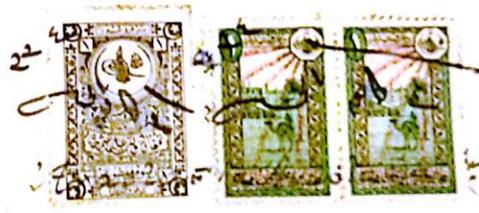


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دولت نظارت جدیدی چاپ شد

دولت افخم خفزی

زویم قولری بنیم کونیه برن سو خنده ...  
 ختایه ده آقا خنده بکنده اولوب کدوسلک کدیه قدر شو اولوب کور کدی کی ارباب ناهن اولکل عله و شفق و حرکت محمد و صحابه اولونین  
 بیه قنیه و علم ویر ابارینه زهی و باجم استور و زینه کالونه بکلی بکری النجی جبارینه کون عت اوج زده کونده مرقوم در دست ابره  
 و ضابطه بر مالک ختایه خارجه طرد و تبعید بیزمانی اشعار اینیم بنا بیز مرقوم کدیه حدیج بر خبات و مجرای حکوم اولونین کی ذکا کدوی  
 نایکی زده کونده نیامده در . جبار بری درت ندر چو خیم ابر اورد زده کادم لفظا شومال اشعار مرقوم زویم قولری خجال خنده  
 اشخا اولون طرفک زهی کجه اشوا اشوا ای جبار ای ملک لازم حازه امر و مؤخر بویکی نه زده جلیله اعضا برنده بنار و سهم ابرم  
 اولیاده امر و زده ختمت کد لاله کدر

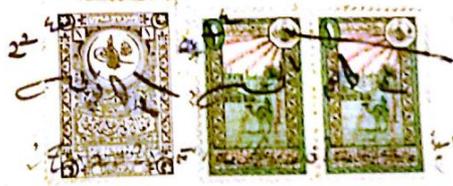


بنیم کونیه سافون سو خنده فاک نایا جاره کده  
 ۱۰۰ دولت خا، ده کده خجال و بیکر اولیاده

دولت نظارت جدیدی جانب است

دولت اقصی خمری

توضیح قولی سیم کوبیده بر نه سو فقهه ... نودولت جانب ده تقیم بودانی نهال اخلاصه نهال ولد دیگری او نور سینه در نه و محالک  
ختمی ده آقا نه ایتمده اولوب کدوسک کدیه قدر شو احوط کدوسکی کی اربانه ناهه اولی علمه و شقیق و حرکت محمد و محمد حمانه اولی  
بسه ختیق و عام ویر ابانیه دمی و یا بجم استور و و زینه تا اولی نهال بکرمی الخی حیا سینه کوی سخته اوج زده کزنده مقوم در دسته ایله  
و ضابطه محالک ختمی خارجه طرد و تبعید بیزجهکی استمار ایتم . بنامه مقوم کدیه سینه بر جهانب و مجرای حکوم اولی کی زما کدوس  
نویک زده سینه نیامده در . چاره بری در نه قدر چو خمدیم بر او زده عالم لفظا شو مال شمه بر نه توضیح قولی نهال ختمه  
استاد اولون طرف نهی شمه استوار شوای چاره باه مالک لازم حاکمه امر و مؤخر بولری نهی نه جمله اعضا بر نه بنا و ستم ایتم  
اولی سینه امر و زده ختم نه ایتم



سیم کوبیده ساقول سو فقهی فاکم تا یا ساجاره نه  
نودولت جانب ده تقیم نهال و دیگر انطیاسیه





او محمد اردوی بود خوانده محمد و کلبه پناه جعفر ترمذی جعفری است

مدرسه حیدرآباد  
هفتاد و یک روز در سال گذشته در بولونیه بمکه اهل ترمذی است  
فوسلوسکی است در بولونیه در وقت شماره نیک او نیز بولونیه  
معاونه صحیفه و کلمه آثار فضل اذره و سعادت کلمه معتبره  
رحمت علی بن محمد کلام اصنام



سرایان اسلامیه  
اقدم ترمذی  
و القاری

زان سنی خوانده ای در وقت مورده

سقف  
مکتوبی کرمه . . . . .

