

THE RUSSIAN ADMINISTRATION OF THE OCCUPIED OTTOMAN TERRITORIES
DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR: 1915-1917

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the process of the establishment of the Russian Administration in the occupied territories of the Ottoman Empire, in the course of the First World War. This thesis is divided into 5 chapters. Following the first chapter, which describes the background of the military occupation of the Ottoman territories by the Russian Army, the second chapter analyses the formation of the temporary Russian administration. Relying on archival documents, contemporary newspapers, and diaries of the Russian officials in charge, this chapter traces the projects for the establishment of the Russian political, judicial, and financial systems, and for the colonization of the occupied territories. Chapter three focuses on the activities of philanthropic societies from the Russian Empire in the occupied regions. In the fourth chapter, the emphasis is given to the various scientific explorations conducted by Russian scientists in the occupied areas. Finally, the fifth chapter is devoted for the conclusion, where, the process of the formation of the Russian administration in the occupied Ottoman territories is interpreted in line with the peculiar Russian colonial process of *osvoenie*.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Birinci Dünya Harbi esnasında Rus Ordusu tarafından işgal edilen Osmanlı topraklarında tesis olunan geçici Rus idaresinin faaliyetleri incelenmiştir. 5 bölümden müteşekkil tezin ilk bölümünde doğu ve kuzey doğu Anadolu'nun askerî işgal safhası izâh edildikten sonra, ikinci bölümde Geçici Rus İdaresi'nin siyasî, adlî ve ekonomik sistemlerinin planları ve uygulamaları ile işgal edilen bölgelerde yürütülmesi düşünülen sömürge projeleri ve inşa faaliyetleri incelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölümde savaş esnasında mağdur olan bölge halkına yönelik Rus İmparatorluğu sivil yardım kuruluşlarının yardım organizasyonları üzerinde durulmuştur. Dördüncü bölüm ise, Rus işgali süresince bölgede yapılan bilimsel çalışmalara ayrılmıştır. Tüm bu faaliyetler çerçevesinde, varılan sonuç, beşinci bölümde tartışılmıtır.

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The research is mainly carried out at the Russian archives in St. Petersburg. I thank the Russian State History Archive for allowing me to access their material during my period of research in St. Petersburg. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Mark Kramarowski, from the State Museum of Hermitage, St. Petersburg, who facilitated my access to the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and introduced me to the Russian academic circles. Without his personal ties and influence I would never have had the chance to analyze the precious documents pertaining to the scientific explorations of Russian scholars in Turkey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	3
CHAPTER II: RUSSIAN COLONIAL ACTIVITIES	9
2.1. Administration of the Occupied Regions	9
2.1.1 Early Regulations	9
2.1.2 The 18 June 1916 Imperial Decree on the Administration of the Occupied Regions	11
2.1.3 The Military Governor-General of the Occupied Regions of Turkey	16
2.1.4 The Military Governors of the <i>Oblasts</i> and the <i>Nachalniks</i> of the <i>Okrugs</i> and <i>Uchastkas</i> .	17
2.1.5 The judicial and police system	23
2.1.6 Institutionalization of the financial system in occupied regions	25
2.1.7 The system of taxation	30
2.2 Colonization Projects and the Exploitation of the Natural Resources of the Occupied Regions.	32
2.2.1 Colonization Projects	32
2.2.2 The Exploration and the Exploitation of the Natural Resources and the Construction of Railroads and Ports	43
Concluding Remarks	47

CHAPTER III: THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS	49
3.1. Supply and Medical Assistance Problems of the Army and the Response of the Society	49
3.1.1 The All-Russian Unions of Towns and <i>Zemstvos</i> and the Caucasian Front	51
3.1.2 The Muslim Charitable Society of Baku (<i>Bakû Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi</i>)	53
3.2 Activities of the Relief Organizations in the Occupied Regions of Turkey	
3.2.1 The region of Van	56
3.2.2 The Region of Bitlis and Muş	64
3.2.3 The Region of Erzurum	66
3.2.4 The region of Trabzon	72
Concluding Remarks	83
CHAPTER IV: ACADEMIC STUDIES	86
4.1 Archaeological Expeditions to Eastern Anatolia	88
4.1.1 The First Expedition of Ter-Avetisyan	90
4.1.2 Archaeological and Ethnographical Expeditions to the region of Van	92
4.1.3 The Second Expedition of Ter-Avetisyan	95
4.1.4 The Expedition of Okunev	98
4.1.5 The Expedition of Takaishvili	101
4.2 Archaeological Expeditions to the Southern Coasts of the Black Sea	104
4.2.1 The First Uspenskii Expedition to Trabzon (summer 1916)	105
4.2.2 The Second Uspenskii Expedition to Trabzon	111

4.3 An Unsuccessful Attempt for a General Expedition in Eastern and Northeastern Anatolia	116
Concluding Remarks	118
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Being on rival camps, the Ottoman and the Russian empires confronted one another at the Caucasian Front during the First World War. The Third and later the Second Turkish armies were severely defeated by the Russian Caucasian Army from the very beginning of the war and Turkey lost important territories to the victorious side. In the aftermath of successful military campaigns against Turkey on the Caucasian Front, the Russian armies occupied many cities of the eastern and northeastern Anatolia, such as Van, Bitlis, Muş, Erzurum, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Bayburt and Trabzon by December 1916, and these cities, except Bitlis and Muş, remained under Russian occupation until spring 1918.

Apart from the official Russian (Soviet) and Turkish (Republican) histories of the war, which comprehensively analyze the military campaigns at the Caucasian Front, historians focused especially on the controversial issue of the Armenian problem of the First World War years, including the period of Russian occupation. However, these years witnessed neglected but important events, which are still to a significant extent unknown. The Russian military and governmental authorities implemented a policy of annexation of the occupied regions, many philanthropic societies from the Russian Empire organized humanitarian aid, and an incredible number of Russian scientists conducted various scientific explorations in the region.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to produce a historical narrative of the Russian attempts to construct the Temporary Administration of the Occupied Territories of Turkey, as well as the philanthropic and academic activities of the

Russian civilian organizations, after the successful military advance of the Russian army at the Caucasian Front between 1915-1917.

The thesis is divided into 5 chapters. After the first chapter for introduction and background, the second chapter explores projects of the political, judicial and economic administration of the occupied regions and the colonization and exploitation efforts. This chapter mainly relies upon Russian archival documents. The colonization projects were traced in the documents of the Ministry of Agriculture at the Russian State Historical Archives in St. Petersburg. The same institution has the collections of the Council of Ministers, the ministries of Finance, and Industry and Trade. All these collections include substantial information on various aspects of the Russian colonial administration in occupied regions of Turkey.

By focusing on the relief operations of the popular Russian philanthropic societies among the Muslim and Christian refugees in the occupied regions, the study seeks to describe these efforts in the third chapter. Publications of the Russian popular organizations, which are held in St. Petersburg at the National Library, and at the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, provided abundant material on the activities and the structure of the relief organizations in occupied regions.

Following the two major chapters, the fourth chapter evaluates the works of the Russian scientists, especially archaeologists, in eastern and northeastern Anatolia. The St. Petersburg filial of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences has valuable collections of the Russian academicians who had conducted intensive studies in occupied areas. The documents from this archive, alongside the publications of the Russian Academy of Sciences located in the Library of the

Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, and the visual documents preserved at the Photo Archive of the Institute of the History for Material Culture constitute the data for the fourth chapter of this study. In addition to the Russian archival materials, *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, the Russian newspaper published in Trabzon during the occupation period, and the memoirs of the Russian officials in charge of different posts in the occupied regions, provided firsthand information about the Russian activities of the time. After all, I tried to resume and conclude with analyses in the fifth chapter.

Throughout the study, the titles of the sources, and names in Slavic languages are transliterated according to the modified Library of Congress transliteration system. In the period covered by this study, the Julian calendar was in use in the Russian Empire. The dates in the Julian calendar, in 20th century, were 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the Western world. With regard to the dates used in the body of the text, I opted to convert all according to the Gregorian calendar, whereas in the footnotes I gave the dates of the newspapers as they were published, that is according to the Julian calendar.

1.2 Background: The Caucasian Front

The Ottoman Empire assumed a neutral position in the first months of the First World War, which had broken out on 29 July 1914. However, under strong German influence, the Ottoman government signed a secret treaty on August 2 committing Turkey to the German side if Germany should have to take Austria-Hungary's side against Russia. However, prudent politicians tried to avoid entry to the war, and it was after the controversial event of the purchase of two German battle

cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau*, when Turkey was dragged into the war. The *Goeben* led the Turkish fleet across the Black Sea to bombard Odessa and other Russian ports with a secret order from Enver Pasha, the War Minister on October 29-30. Russia declared war against Turkey on November 1 by an imperial decree, in which Nicholas II condemned the assault of Turkey and appraised the Russian armies before which stood the fulfillment “Russia’s historic mission on the shores of the Black Sea.”¹

Russian and Ottoman (Turkish) forces confronted each other at the “Caucasian Front” comprising two battlegrounds: Eastern Anatolia in the west, Iranian Azerbaijan in the east.² State borders between Turkey and Russia had been delimited by the Treaty of Berlin, in 1878. The Treaty of Berlin had confirmed the territorial gains of Russia stipulated in the Treaty of San Stefano (Yeşilköy), concerning Batum, Kars, Ardahan, Artvin, Oltu, whereas the Eleşkirt valley and Bayezid were reinstated to Turkey.³

The Russian Army crossed the border and initiated an advance from Sarıkamış toward Erzurum in November 1914 just to be checked by the Ottoman forces in December. In return, the Turkish 3rd Army, under Enver Pasha, launched a major offensive against the Kars-Ardahan position⁴. The offensive ended up with a catastrophic defeat at Sarıkamış in January 1915. The exceptionally harsh winter

¹ *Vtoraya Otechestvennaya Voina: Po razskazam eya geroyev*, (Petrograd: Izdanie sostoyaschogo pod Vysochaishim Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Gosudarya Imperatora pokrovitel'stvom Skobelevskogo Komiteta, 1916), p.108

² The engagements on the Azerbaijan battlegrounds are not mentioned in this study since they were fought outside the territory of Turkey.

³ Anita L. P. Burdett ed., *Caucasian Boundaries: Documents and Maps 1802-1946*, (Slough:Archive Editions, 1996), p.292-293

⁴ *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Türk Kafkas Cephesi 3. Ordu Harekatı*, Vol.2, book 1,(Ankara: Genel Kurmay Basımevi, 1993), p.383-384

circumstances devastated the ill-supplied and ill-led Turkish armies much more than the Russian Army (the Turkish 3rd Army was reduced in one month from 118,660 to 12,400 men, whereas the actual combat casualties were only 30,000).⁵ As a result, the Turkish side lost its offensive capability.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Russian army achieved a considerable success on this front in the first months of the war, its situation on the main, (i.e., German) front was desperate. On the last days of 1914 the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich applied to the British Admiralty with a request to undertake a diversive operation against the Turks, and to compel them to withdraw a part of their troops from the Caucasian front.⁶ Allured by the opportunities of knocking out an ally of Germany, and providing a stable route of supply for their Russian ally, the combined French and British fleets commenced an attack on the Dardanelles in February 1915. The naval attack and the subsequent land offensives throughout 1915 all failed, and the peninsula of Gelibolu had been evacuated by the allied troops between December 1915-January 1916.

Although the Gelibolu campaign relieved some of the pressure off the Caucasian front, German armies penetrated more than two hundred miles into the Russian lines within two weeks with their offensive in May 1915 and triggered the collapse of the entire Russian Southern Front. The German and Austrian formations advanced northward and captured Warsaw in August 1915. In September, Germans attacked Courland towards Riga. As the entire Russian front line fell apart, the Russian strongholds of Novogeorgievsk Brest-Litovsk both fell to the Germans.

⁵ Köprülülü Şerif (İlden), *Sarıkaş*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İşbankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001); Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sarıkaş Dramı*, (İstanbul: Kastaş, 1997)

Shortly after this, the Russian Tsar Nicholas II intervened and assumed personal command of the army, a decision that would have grave consequences. The Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, the former Commander in Chief, was appointed to the command of the Caucasian Army.

During 1915, the Turkish Army stood in the defensive position, and the Russian Army did not undertake a decisive offensive other than the occupation of the Van region in August 1915, by the active participation of special Armenian regiments in the Imperial Army and the Armenian population of the region. The Grand Duke and General Nikolai Nikolayevich Yudenich, the victor of Sarıkamış,⁷ started a major assault along the Caucasian Front in January 1916 before the Turkish General Staff could deploy the experienced troops from the Gelibolu Front. The Turkish high command was not expecting a new winter campaign after the lessons of 1914-1915 winter, however, the Russian Army took Erzurum, the most important fortified position of the Turkish defense on February 16, and later in 1916 occupied Trabzon on April 18, Erzincan on August 2, exhausting the combat capacity of the Turkish Third Army, commanded then by Vehib Pasha. The Turkish Second Army (transferred from the Gelibolu Front) in the same month launched a flanking offensive on the Bingöl-Kiğı-Oğnot positions. Although the 16th army corps of the Second Army occupied Bitlis and Muş, later in August the Russians retook Muş and countered the Kiğı-Oğnot offensive of the Second Army of Ahmet İzzet Pasha. This offensive was to be the last important Turkish attack on the Allies.⁸ As the military

⁶ Robert Rhodes James, *Grand Strategy: Gallipoli*, (London: Papermac, 1989), p.17

⁷ A. V. Shishov, *Polkovodtsi Kavkazskikh Voin*, (Moskva: Tsentrpoligraf, 2001), pp.493-550

⁸ Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, (Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 2001), p.133

representative of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Turkey, Lieutenant Field-Marshal Joseph Pomiankowski stated “it may be considered that both Turkish Armies (the Third and Second) were, by the end of the winter [1916], in such a state that they would not have been able to resist any serious Russian attack. Fortunately for the Turks, on 9 March, the Revolution broke out in St. Petersburg and soon disorganized the Russian Caucasian Army and rendered its offensive action impossible.”⁹ The new position at the Caucasian Front was stabilized to Russia's great advantage in the autumn, and was thereafter affected less by Russo-Turkish warfare than by the consequences of the revolution in Russia. The new front line between the Russian and Turkish armies traced to the west of Trabzon, passing from Tirebolu and turned south to Kelkit-Gümüşhane-Erzincan. This line continued to the southeast along the left side of the Oğnotçay valley and to the Boğlan Pass and till the August offense of the Second Turkish Army comprised Bitlis and Muş alongside Van.¹⁰

The territorial advance of the Russian armies in the northeastern parts of Anatolia opened up Allied negotiations on the partition of Turkey during the war years. The Allies concurred in with Russian demands concerning Istanbul in March 1915;¹¹ and in a series of secret agreements, the future of the Anatolian and Middle Eastern provinces of Turkey was predetermined.¹² The occupied territories at the Caucasian front were promised to Russia in order to secure its consent to the Sykes-Picot agreement on the future territorial gains of France and Britain in the Middle

⁹ Joseph Pomiankowski, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Çöküşü 1914-1918 I. Dünya Savaşı*, tr. Kemal Turan, (İstanbul: Kayhan Yayınları, 1990), p.242

¹⁰ W. E. D. Allen, Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*, (Cambridge: the University Press, 1953), p.440

¹¹ Valentin Alekseevich Emets, *Ocherki Vneshnei Politiki Rossii 1914-1915*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), p.147

East. According to this agreement Russia was to obtain “the regions of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis up to a definite point on the coast of the Black Sea to the west of Trabzon.”¹³ Thus, the Russian Empire consolidated its war gains at the Caucasian Front while fighting to its end at the German Front.

¹² Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History 1913-1923*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1931), p. 137

¹³ Evgenii Aleksandrovich Adamov ed., *Razdel Aziatskoi Turtsii. Po sekretnym dokumentam byvshego ministerstva inostrannykh del*, (Moscow: Litizdat NKID, 1924), p.185; “Razdel Turtsii”, *Cbornik Sekretnykh Dokumentov iz Arkhiva Byvshogo Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, no.1, (Moscow: Tipografiya Komissariata po Inostrannym Delam, 1917), p.56

2. CHAPTER 2: RUSSIAN COLONIAL ACTIVITIES

2.1 Administration of the Occupied Regions

2.1.1 Early Regulations

The acquisition of a wide and significant territory at the Caucasian Front became an indemnification to the Russian imperial government for the heavy defeats at the German Front. The area of the eastern, and northeastern Anatolia had been a subject of secret agreements among the Entente Powers, and was granted to Russia for future colonization. However, after the acquisition of a vast territory with a desperate population, Russian administration met considerable difficulties. Among them were the reestablishment of order, relief for the refugees, revitalization of the economy, as the main problems.

The administration of the occupied regions, in the first months of the occupation, was undertaken by separate Russian military units and commanders in accordance with the 11th article of “Regulations about the field management of the army during war time”, which stated that the occupied region of the enemy would either be incorporated to the closest military district or there would be formed a separate military governor-generalship of these regions. In line with the military law, special institutions were to be founded for the civil administration of the occupied regions.¹ The functions of the administrators of these military districts were vast and vague. The preparations for the supply of the army, the general reestablishment of the daily civil life and order in the region, the handling of the problems related with the evacuation of the wounded and sick, the management of all military and civil

¹ A.Yu. Bakhturina, *Politika Rossiiskoi Imperii v Vostochnoi Galitsii v godi Pervoi Mirovoi Voini*, (Moscow:AIRO-XX, 2000), p.71

institutions in the region were all listed as issues to be coped with without further clarification. The Regulations assumed that similar functions would be assigned to the governors-general. The account on the hierarchy and submission of the civil and military officials was only mentioned in Article 14 as “all the civilian administrators in the theater of the military actions, submit to the senior commander of the respective military district or to the military governor-general.”² In the occupied regions, separate military-administrative units were formed, such as the districts of Eleşkirt, Bayezîd, Diyadin, according to this regulation.³

Later in 1915, The General Staff of the Caucasian Army promulgated a report to commanders on 6 December 1915 explaining the temporary administrative structure to be established in the occupied regions of Turkey. The region was divided into districts (*okrug*), the management of which was assigned to the officers dispatched by the order of the commander of the army. The delimitation of the borders of the *okrugs* were to be decided according to the administrative necessities and in line with the former delimitation during Ottoman rule, or depending upon the geographic or ethnographic requirements, in conformity with the instructions of the governor-general. The *okrugs* would then be divided into trade or administrative centers with appropriate special administrations similar to the village communities. At the head of each center or village community would be a responsible person among the native population, who would either be appointed by the commander of

² For a detailed account on the *Polozhenie o polevom upravlenii voisk v voennoe vremya*, see R. Sh. Ganelin, M. F. Florinskii, *Rossiiskaya gosudarstvennost' i pervaya mirovaya voina*, (Moscow: N.p., 1997), pp.11-13

³ S. M. Akopyan, *Zapadnaya Armeniya v Planakh Imperialisticheskikh Derzhav v Period Pervoi Mirovoi Voiny*, (Erevan: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk Armyanskoi SSR), 1967, p. 171

the *okrug* or be elected by the local people with the approval of the commander of the *okrug*.

The functions of the commander of an *okrug* were defined as military, administrative, and political tasks. The military functions included cooperation with the army for the supply of fodder and food, providing accommodation and labor for the construction of roads. The commander of the *okrug* had the right to resort to arms in order to maintain order and at his disposal would be 100 armed men.

From the administrative aspect, the commander of an *okrug* was primarily responsible for the maintenance of order. Other administrative responsibilities included the supervision over all kinds of confiscation and the relations of the army with the population. Besides, he would appoint or dismiss civil servants. In his relations with the population, the commander had the powers of a governor-general. He had the right to arrest, to hand over the suspects to court. For the political functions of the commander of an *okrug*, it was written in the report that the commander was charged with implementing all the instructions given by the General Staff or by his seniors⁴.

2.1.2 The 18 June 1916 Imperial Decree on the Administration of the Occupied Regions

The report on the administration of the occupied regions prepared by the General Staff of the Caucasian Army in 1915 was temporary and would stay intact until Petrograd proclaimed special regulations for the establishment of the Russian rule in the conquered territories. In early 1915, General Aleksei Nikolayevich Kuropatkin from the Russian General Staff, and the State Council, prepared a project

for the annexation and administration of the occupied territories. Kuropatkin envisaged two governor-generalships, namely those of Erzurum and Sivas, in the occupied regions of Turkey. The governor-generalship of Erzurum would include Erzurum, Harput, Bitlis, Van, Diyarbekir (Diyarbakır) and Trabzon (excluding the *sancak* of Canik), whereas the governor-generalship of Sivas would consist of Sivas, Kastamonu *vilayets* and of the *sancak* of Canik. According to Kuropatkin, the administration of the occupied regions would be based on the Russian project of the Armenian reforms of 1914, which had envisaged the formation of an inspector-generalship in the six *vilâyets* of eastern Anatolia.⁵

Finally, an Imperial decree on 18 June 1916, concerning ‘The Rules for the Temporary Administration of Areas of Turkey Occupied in Accordance with the Law of War’, established the military Governor-Generalship of the occupied territories of Turkey, for the purpose of the unification, surveillance and guidance of the military institutions in the region, and the establishment of the Russian administration.⁶ Although the project of Kuropatkin was not applied, the Military Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions of Turkey roughly corresponded to the boundaries of the prospective Erzurum Governor-Generalship of the project. The borders of the Military Governor-Generalship were determined in the north as the

⁴ A. O. Arutyunyan, *Kavkazskii Front 1914-1917*, (Erevan: Izdatel'stvo Aiestan, 1971), pp.356-357

⁵ **The Armenian Reforms of 1912-1914:** As a result of long negotiations among the Great Powers, a compulsory plan for reformatations in Eastern Anatolia was dictated to the Ottoman Government and an agreement between Russian and Ottoman governments was signed in February 1914. Upon this agreement two administrative units in the six provinces of eastern Anatolia, and Trabzon were formed. Each unit would be ruled by a European inspector-general, who would be appointed with the consent of the Great Powers. See: Roderic H. Davison, “The Armenian Crisis (1912-1914)”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 53, Issue 3, (April, 1948), pp.481-505

⁶ “Prikaz Nachalnika Shtaba Verhovnogo Glavnokomanduyuschogo, 5 iunya 1916 No: 739: Pri sem obyavlyaetsya vremennoe polozhenie ob upravlenii oblastiymi Turtsii, zanyatimi po pravu voiny”. [from here on: *Prikaz* No.739] p.2, Russian State History Archive (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvenno-*

previous Turkish-Russian state borders, in the east according to the previous Turkish-Iranian state borders. The Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army, the Viceroy (*Namestnik*) at the Caucasus, Nikolai Nikolayevich, issued a special order describing the western and southern border line, which would follow the borders of the fortified region of Trabzon-the mountain of Sürmene- the village of Koğans, the passes of Cevizdere and Kalyangedik, the mountain of Bingöl, the villages of Kop and Adilcevazkale, the northern and eastern shores of lake Van till the mouth of Hoşabsu river, and from there through Koturçay till the Turkish-Iranian border.⁷

The Military Governor-Generalship consisted of the General Staff, Chancellery, military-sanitary administration, technical department, department of taxation, and the department of control, and was headquartered in Tiflis. The Military Governor-Generalship was to be transferred to the occupied regions. Erzurum and Trabzon were offered to host the residence of the Military Governor-Generalship. However, in the face of difficulties of communication and transport, and due to the special legal status of Trabzon as a fortified region headed by a major general,⁸ prevented the realization of these proposals, and the Military Governor-generalship stayed in Tiflis throughout the occupation period.⁹ The territory of the Military Governor-Generalship would be divided into regions (*oblast*) and districts

Istoricheskii Arkhiv, St. Petersburg. Hereafter cited as *RGIA*), Fond 1284, opis 47, delo 165, lists. 3-21 reverse.

⁷ Akopyan, *ibid*, p.171

⁸ Trabzon region was the westernmost position on the Russian-Turkish frontline, so it was designed as a fortified region separate from the Military Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions of Turkey and its administration was bestowed on a major general. However, the *nachalnik* of the fortified region was appointed by the Military Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey. (For detailed information on the administration of Trabzon see the fourth chapter of this study.)

⁹ *RGIA* Fond 560 opis 28 delo 518 lists 20-20 reverse.

(*okrugs*). The administration of these units was entrusted to the military governors of the *oblasts* and to the chiefs (*nachalnik*) of the *okrugs*.¹⁰

It was stated in *Prikaz* No. 739 that, the borders and the number of the *oblasts* and the *okrugs*, would be determined corresponding to the previous administrative delimitation of the region, as far as possible. Depending on the progress of the military operations and on the consideration of administrative convenience, the Military Governor-General had the right to alter the borders of the *oblasts* and the *okrugs*, and to establish new ones. Initially, there were 8 *okrugs* in the occupied region. By 1917, however, the number reached to 29: Rize, Atina, Humurgan, Melo, Karakilise, Bayezîd, Van, Tortum, Diyadin, Eleşkirt, Erzurum, Hasankale, Horasan, İd, Bergri, Aşkale, Mamahatun, Bayburt, Massad, Saray, İspir, Tercan, Verhnearaks (Upperaras), Hınıs, Dutah, Malazgirt, Erciş, Başkale, and Hoşab. In the cities, depending on the decision of the Military Governor-General, municipal police administration might be established.

The posts of the Military Governor-General, his assistants, governors of the *oblasts*, their assistants, and the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs* would be entrusted exclusively to military officials, whereas for all other posts, military and civilian officials might be deputized.¹¹ The responsibilities of the appointed officials were described briefly in the article 8 of *Prikaz* No.739. The main tasks would be “to reestablish and uphold law and order, to protect life, honor, property, religious-civil liberties of the inhabitants, to consider all nationalities equal before the Russian government, and to guarantee these inhabitants the possibility of free and tranquil

¹⁰ *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 17 November 1917, p.4

¹¹ *Prikaz* No.739, p.2

labor, on the condition that they submit *in toto* to the suzerainty of Russia”¹², and fulfill the obligations demanded by the Russian military and administrative authorities.¹³ At the same time, the officials should observe the proper evolution of civil and administrative life in the region, with the concern for the utilization of the facilities in the region in the interest of the army. The language of communication between Russian institutions and local institutions and personalities in the occupied regions would be Russian. However, under special conditions the governor-general might permit for simultaneous translation into local language. In order to establish the best system in the region, and to sustain the development of the prosperity of the native population, the Russian administration was obliged to elucidate and study the national, economic and social peculiarities comprehensively, and formulate all measures necessary to reach the stipulated aims.

Other articles in the first section of *Prikaz* no. 739, were on the issues of tax, property and existing organizations. With Article 9; the functions of the existent social self-governance and charity organizations were guaranteed, though they were subject to the necessary changes or restrictions in their structure and activities by the Military Governor-General. According to the Article 11, all types of taxes and fees would be levied on the basis to be laid by the Military Governor-General with the confirmation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army. In Article 12, it was stated that all the real estate belonging to the Turkish treasury would be regarded as the possession of the Russian treasury in accordance with the law of war booties. Although the property rights on real estates, which had been abandoned by the

¹² Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Allies and Armenia 1915-1918”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.3, no.1, (1968), 163-164

subjects of the adversary, would be preserved, these estates might be utilized for the need of the army or the treasury on orders of the Military Governor-General.¹⁴

2.1.3 The Military Governor-General of the Occupied Regions of Turkey

The rights and obligations of the Military Governor-General were described in *Prikaz* no 739. The Military Governor-General would be appointed by the order of the Emperor according to the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army. The Military Governor-General would submit to the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian army and perform as the highest organ of authority over the officials and institutions fulfilling the tasks listed above. All military and administrative institutions and military units were subordinate to the Military Governor-General except for those, which directly submitted to the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army. Lieutenant General Nikolai Nikolayevich Peshkov was appointed as the first Military Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey. Later he was replaced by Lieutenant General Dryagin and the last military governor-general of the Russian imperial administration was the Major General Romanovskii-Romanko.¹⁵

The Military Governor-General enjoyed very broad set of powers under special wartime conditions. Legally, he was equated to the governor-generals of the Russian Empire. He had the power to arrest, bring to court and exile Russian subjects or the subjects of hostile governments, and to intervene in the process of the local judiciary system. The appointment and the dismissal of officials, the conduct of investigation in any place, the permission and banning of all social organizations and

¹³ *Prikaz* No.739, p.3

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.3

educational institutions, the confiscation of mobile and immobile property, the suspension or the permission of publications in the Governor-Generalship and the allowance of the distribution of other publications from outside the region, were the other articles in the list stipulating the rights of the temporary Military Governor-General.¹⁶

2.1.4 The Military Governors of the *Oblasts* and the *Nachalniks* of the *Okrugs* and *Uchastkas*.

Under the Military Governor-General functioned the military governors of the *oblasts*, who were chosen by the Commander-in-Chief among the candidates presented by the Military Governor-General, and were appointed by Imperial order. They would directly submit to the Military Governor-General and the *nachalniks*, in turn, would be subordinated to them. The military governors also had a broad range of powers, which allowed them to arrest and jail anyone endangering order, to conduct investigation anywhere, to prohibit or to allow all kinds of meetings, gatherings and conferences of the local organizations, to issue permits for the entry to and exit from their regions, to decide on the opening or closure of press, libraries, or reading rooms, to issue permissions to obtain and carry weapons as the chief of security organization of the *oblasts*. The supervision over the collection of taxes, fulfillment of public duties of the local population and activities of charity organizations were assigned to the military governors, who would brief the Military Governor-General about all the measures, implementations, orders and the

¹⁵ Arutyunyan, *Kavkazskii Front*, p.360

¹⁶ *Prikaz* no.739, pp.5-6

requirements to fulfill the assigned tasks, in a period of time to be determined by the Governor-General.¹⁷

The subsequent post was the post of the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs*. They were appointed by the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army on the proposal of the Military Governor-General and submitted to the military governors of the *oblasts*. The *nachalniks* were in direct contact with the local self-administration units, and would regulate their functions, besides the fulfillment of all requirements of the army and the maintenance of order in the *okrugs*. They had the right to intervene in, to delay, to nullify or to confirm the results of the elections of the local administration bodies. These administrations were elected according to the ethnic structure of the *okrug*. For example, in Erzurum, the local administration consisted mainly of Muslims¹⁸ whereas in Trabzon the city administration consisted of Christians.¹⁹

Prikaz No.739 stated that the *nachalnik* should travel in the *okrug* as much as possible, visit all social and administrative institutions, listen to and decide according to the complaints of the population. As the head of the police system in the *okrug*, *nachalniks* may take every measure to ensure the preservation of order. The permissions for travel between the *okrugs* in an *oblast*, for any social activity including entertainment, were all issued by the *nachalniks*. The *nachalniks* might summon general conferences to solve problems concerning taxes, education, agriculture, postal services, and transportation routes, under his presidency with the

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp.8-10

¹⁸ Enver Konukçu, *Selçuklu'dan Cumhuriyet'e Erzurum*, 1992, p.386

participation of the members of the administrative institutions of the *okrug* and of the related personalities with only consultative vote. The *nachalniks* were responsible for the search and preservation of the official documents from the Ottoman period (*defter*, *tapu* and others). In accordance with Articles 12 and 13 of *Prikaz* No: 739, the *nachalniks* would sort out all mobile and immobile properties left by the Turkish administrative or military institutions and would take them under control, awaiting for corresponding orders from the military governors.²⁰

Appointment of the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs* took some time however urgent the business, and the *nachalniks* were appointed only at the beginning of 1917, and many of who were unable to assume their posts.²¹

<u>Name of the <i>okrug</i></u>	<u>Name of the <i>nachalnik</i></u>	<u>Name of the <i>okrug</i></u>	<u>Name of the <i>nachalnik</i></u>
Rize	Colonel Rosnovskii	Homurgyan [Hamur]	Colonel Progul'bitskii
Melos [Milo] (Çoruh)	Captain Matiyasevich	Karakilise (Karaköse)	Major (of Cossack regiment) Fisenko
Atina (Pazar)	Captain Gavilev	Beyazid	
Van	Comissar-engineer Ambartsumyan	Tortum	Golokolosov
Diyadin	Ensign Boguslovskii	Eleşkirt	
Erzurum	Lieutenant-colonel Vasilev	Hasankale	Comissar Speranskii
Horasan		Id [İd-Narman]	Major General Maklinskii
Bergrii [Bergici]	General-major Nadezhin	Aşkale	Major (of Cossack regiment) Golyakhovskii
Mamahatun	Lieutenant-colonel (of civil service) Djebenadze	Bayburt	Captain Lopukhin
Massad [Masad]	Colonel Flarenskii	Saray [Mahmudiye]	Colonel Kravets
İspir		Tercan	Colonel Aksenov
UpperAras		Hınıs	Colonel Aksenov
Dutah		Erciş	Captain Protopov

¹⁹ “V Trapezund (Nasha Beseda),” *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 25 June 1916, p.2; In November 1916, 2 Muslim members were added to the city administration of Trabzon, upon the orders of the commander of the fortified region. “Khronika”, *Trapezondskii Voyennii Listok*, 8 November 1916, p.2

²⁰ *Prikaz* No: 739, pp.11-14

²¹ Arutyunyan, *ibid.*, pp. 359-360

For the purpose of conciliation between the administrative authorities and the population, and for the convenience of management, the *okrugs* were divided into *uchastkas*, which were headed by the *nachalniks* of *uchastkas*. The number and the borders of the *uchastkas* were to be determined by the Military Governor-General on reports of military governors of the *oblasts*, who were in charge of the appointment of the *nachalniks* to *uchastkas*.²² These *nachalniks*, who would be subordinate to the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs*, were responsible for the maintenance of order in an *uchastka*, had the right to supervise over the activities and the elections of the elders of the village communities and administrations. *Prikaz* No.739 obliged the *nachalnik* of an *uchastka* to observe strictly the conformity of the election results with the ethnic structure of the villages. The rights and responsibilities of the *nachalniks* of *uchastkas* were restricted in the observation of the social and economic life and order, and in case of any violation of order, they had to inform the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs*.²³

The lowest level of administration consisted of village communities and rural districts. A village community was composed of all permanent residents or property owners registered in a village. A village community might be formed in one village or among a group of scantily populated adjacent villages. The rural districts were formed of communities of one or more densely populated villages. The administrative body of a village community included the village council, the village court, the village head and his deputies, the rural police (*sotskie* or *desyatskie*

²² *Prikaz* No.739 p.14

²³ *ibid.*, p.15

depending upon the amount of population) and a rural clerk.²⁴ The village heads and deputies were elected in compliance with the ethnic composition of the villages.²⁵

Meanwhile in Petrograd, the popular unrest soon evolved into an outright revolution. On 28 February 1917, the High Command of the Russian Army, fearing a violent revolution, suggested that Nicholas II abdicate in favor of a more popular member of the royal family. Attempts were made to persuade Grand Duke Michael Aleksandrovich to accept the throne. Nevertheless, he refused and on March 1, 1917, the Tsar abdicated, leaving the Provisional Government in control of the country. This radical change in the governance of the country could not help but critically affect the structure of the administration in the occupied territories.

The Provisional Government abolished the Military Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions of Turkey alongside with the other governors-generalship of the Empire, except that of Finland.²⁶ In a telegram dated May 1, 1917, *Knyaz L'vov* (the chairman of the Provisional Government) stated that, the civil administration of the occupied regions of Turkey was separated from the administration of the Caucasian districts and from the military administration of the Caucasian Front and would directly submit to the Provisional Government. The authority and powers of the Military Governor-General of the occupied areas of Turkey defined in *Prikaz no.739*

²⁴ *Prikaz no.739*, pp.16-17

²⁵ "The Russians were careful about the compliance of the village administrations with the ethnic structure of the villages. In the Apso (Suçatı) village Arnavut Nuri Efendi, and Hakim Ali Hacısalihoğlu were elected to the village administration, as was the case in other villages." İhsan Topaloğlu, *Rus İşgalinde Rize*, (Trabzon: Karadeniz Yazarlar Birliği, 1997), p.34-37

²⁶ A. G. Trifonov, B. V. Mozhuev, "The Governor-Generalship in the Russian System of Territorial Administration", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol.39, no.4, (July-August 2001), p.85

were transferred to ‘the General Commissar of the Turkish Armenia’ appointed by the Provisional Government.²⁷

In accordance with the new body of political surveillance, the commissariats, after the last military Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey, Romanovskii-Romanko, Ivanitskii functioned between May 2 and May 25, as the “Commissar of the Provisional Government for the Military Administration of The Regions of Turkey, occupied under law of and from May 25, A. P. Averyanov used the title of the “General-Commissar of Turkish Armenia and similar regions of Turkey occupied under law of war. The titles of the lower posts were also changed and the heads of the *oblasts okrugs* and *uchastkas* were entitled as the commissars of their respective units.²⁸

²⁷ Arutyunyan, *ibid.*, pp.370-371

²⁸ Akopyan, *ibid.*, p.191

2.1.5 The judicial and police system

The structure of the judicial system of the occupied Turkish territories and the sphere of activities of its various parts were also determined by *Prikaz* no.739 The Military Governor-General and the heads of the *oblasts* and *okrugs* started to implement the articles of *Prikaz* No.739, as they assumed their posts. For example, on 29 January 1917, the *nachalnik* of the fortified region of Trabzon ratified 'The provisions on the judicial system in the fortified region of Trabzon' based on the related articles of *Prikaz* no.739. On 17 February, the inhabitants of the city were called to elect the heads of the courts and the judges, and on the next day, the main building of the Trabzon court was opened. The three-level system of public courts, that is the rural public courts (*sel'skii narodniy sud*), public courts of the districts (*okrujniy narodniy sud*), and the general public court (*generalniy narodniy sud*), structured by *Prikaz* No.739, was put into practice.²⁹

The rural public courts formed the first level in the structure of the judicial system. The second level was the public court of the districts and the third was the general public court in the capital cities of the *oblasts*. Rural public courts consisted of rural judges and of a *kadi*, elected by the judges, for the settlement of cases according to the shari'a. The public courts of the districts, being the courts of appeal for several civil and criminal cases settled unfinished by the rural courts would conclude these cases. At the same time, these courts would act as the courts of origination for the serious cases, which were out of the competence of the rural public courts. A public court of district would function under the presidency of an assistant of the *nachalnik* of an *okrug*, and was composed of deputies, delegates, a

kadi (for cases related to the shari'a), and a secretary. General public courts would be the courts of appeal for cases considered at public courts of the districts, and the court of origination for more serious cases. The general public courts would operate under the presidency of the military governor of the *oblasts* or his assistant, and consisted of the delegates, the *kadi*, and a secretary. The decisions and the sentences of the general public courts could not be appealed or protested. All the civil and criminal cases considered at the public courts would be settled according to local traditional law unless the local traditional law proved to be competent. Otherwise the decisions and sentences would be based on the corresponding articles of the Russian law. All cases relating to marriage, heritage and other conflicts between spouses, parents and children of Muslim origin, would be settled according to the shari'a by public courts.³⁰

An effective judicial system necessitated the establishment of an internal security system for the occupied regions. According to *Prikaz* No.739, the military governors of the *oblasts* and the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs* were defined as the highest police authority in their respective localities. For the reinforcement of the staff of the police system, the Viceroy at the Caucasus appealed to the Minister of Internal Affairs in April 1916, before the Tsar approved *Prikaz* no.739. On his request, the Minister of Internal Affairs provided a detachment of 300 policemen, (who were in charge in the occupied regions of Galicia, and then were under the command of the army in the result of the Russian withdrawal from the region in 1915), to the

²⁹ "Iz gazet: Sud v Trapezund", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 25 February 1917, p.2

³⁰ *Prikaz* No.739, pp. 17-19

occupied regions.³¹ This number was insufficient for the requirements of the conditions in the occupied territories, so that, the newly appointed Military Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey, Lieutenant-General N.N. Peshkov, asked the dispatch of 5000 policemen from the Ministry the Internal Affairs.³² The request of the Military Governor-General could not be carried out due to aggravating social unrest in Russia proper, and due to the lack of sufficient number of policemen.³³ In November 1916, the Viceroy at the Caucasus applied to the Council of Ministers (*Sovet Ministrov*) with the request of the dispatch of at least 2000 policemen to the occupied regions of Turkey.³⁴ Following the correspondence between Minister of the Internal Affairs and Prime Minister Aleksandr Fyodorovich Trepov in December 1916, it was apparent that the demand of the Viceroy was also turned down.³⁵ Although the number of security personnel rose to 3000 in August 1917, the Commissar General of Turkish Armenia and other regions of Turkey, Major-General A. P. Averyanov, was complaining about the lack of the necessary number of policemen to maintain order in the region of his responsibility.³⁶

2.1.6 Institutionalization of the financial system in occupied regions

Economic life in occupied territories had flourished during the establishment of the new administrative system, and with the return of a significant amount of population to the. During the ensuing months of the occupation, many stores of the local population and new ones founded by Russian subjects were opened in city

³¹ *RGIA* F.1276, o.12, d.1558, l.8 reverse; *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 17 July 1916, p.3

³² *RGIA* F.1276, o.12, d.1558, l.9

³³ *RGIA* F.1276, o.12, d.1558, l.9

³⁴ *RGIA* F.1276, o.12, d.1558, l.1

³⁵ *RGIA* F.1276, o.12, d.1558, ll.12, 12 reverse, 13, 13 reverse.

³⁶ Arutyunyan, *ibid.*, p.372

centers.³⁷ However, since the region was isolated from Turkey due to war and from Russia, because of the problems of transportation, there was a severe lack of necessary goods in the cities. Prices of goods that were found were three-four fold of the prices in Russia.³⁸ The immense number of the refugees exasperated the situation. Adding to all, the existing customs system presented an insurmountable obstacle for the importation of commodity from Russia. According to wartime prohibitions, exportation of many goods was forbidden to the land of adversary states.³⁹ Since the region was not defined as an integral part of the Russian Empire, but as an occupied region of the adversary by law of war, the definition of the current legal status was quite complicated.

Secondly, a reliable customs control on the transfer of commodities was impossible because of the absence of customs security on the border between Russian territory and the occupied regions, and also between the occupied regions and the Turkish territory. The destination of exports could not be determined, as to whether they were destined to the occupied territories or to Turkish territories. In that case, the Ministry of Finance proposed that exportation to the occupied territories should be defined as exportation to a foreign country, and should be subject to permission in each separate case.

The permission procedures were taking so much time however urgent the business, and were badly affecting the goods, especially foodstuffs, and worsening the conditions of life for the civilian population and also for the Russian military

³⁷ *Tiflisskii Listok*, 18 November 1916, p.3

³⁸ “V Trapezunde”, *Tiflisskii Listok*, 28 July 1916, p.3

³⁹ *RGIA* F.23, o.8, d.170, l.33 reverse

units.⁴⁰ Then, the military authorities tried to alleviate the situation by sending goods from Russian ports, such as Odessa and Batum, which were the main supply points. However, the legal situation of the Trabzon port set an obstacle for exports. The military authorities recognized Trabzon as a part of the Russian Empire, whereas the customs department of the Ministry of Finance announced it as a foreign port. Under pressure from the military authorities, the Department of Customs Duty of the Ministry of Finance gave its consent for duty free transport of commodities for the population and the soldiers on the basis that the provisions sent by military authorities should be allowed without objection under the war conditions. However, the Department of Customs Duty reinstated that, in other cases the port of Trabzon would be recognized as a foreign port.⁴¹ Following this resolution many traders applied to the customs offices and got permission to carry food provisions for the starving population of Asia Minor under Russian occupation.⁴²

The final resolution of the Department of Customs Duty was explained in the Circular No.435, which was disseminated on 24 June 1916 to all customs offices on the Black Sea and the Azov coasts and on the previous state borders with Turkey. It was stated that the exportation of prohibited goods necessitated special permission, all other commodities would be exported according to the present regulations and the exported goods could only be distributed in the occupied territories. The authorities to issue the permission were the military authorities, the governorship of the place of

⁴⁰ S. R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya Epopeya*, (Berlin: Sibirskoe Knigoizdatel'stvo, 1922), p.140

⁴¹ *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.22-22 reverse

⁴² *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.26

origination and the representative of the Special Council on the Matters of Provision (*Osoboe soveshchanie po prodovol'stvennomu delu*).⁴³

The regulations of the circular could not help but complicate the problem in the face of the prevalent conditions. On 5 July 1916, Batum customs office petitioned the Department of Customs Duty, claiming that the condition of special permission for each case of exportation could not be applied in the face of a very dense and varied traffic of transportation, in which many military and private ships and small naval vehicles of the local population took part.⁴⁴ Had the procedures of permission been applied, they would create problems and complaints. On 11 July, the Batum office of the All Russian Union of Towns⁴⁵ appealed to the Department of Customs Duty complaining about the impediments stemming from the regulations and applications of the Batum customs office.⁴⁶

Revising the petitions of the Batum customs office, the Batum office of the All-Russian Union of Towns and private traders, the Department of Customs Duty decided to consult the Chancellery of the Viceroy on the fulfillment of the establishment of a new order for the transportation of goods. The Department informed the Chancellery about their decision to give permission for the exportation of all goods under the responsibility of the military authorities till the ultimate installation of a customs system.⁴⁷ The Chancellery of the Viceroyalty in response, declared its approval of the procedures defined in Circular No.435. However, the

⁴³ *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.27-27 reverse

⁴⁴ *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.28-29 reverse

⁴⁵ The All-Russian Union of Towns was a popular organization participating in the efforts for alleviating the supply problem of the army, and organizing relief for the refugees, and the native population of the occupied areas. (For a detailed account see the second chapter of this study).

⁴⁶ *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.38-38 reverse

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

Ministry of Finance amended the procedures and informed the Caucasian Tax Inspector that, the right of giving permission for the exported goods belongs to the General Chief of Supply of the Caucasian Army in agreement with the Representative of the Special Council on Matters of Provision in the Caucasus.⁴⁸ Thus, the long procedures required for permission were reduced to a significant extent.

Another side of the problem was related with the imported goods from the occupied regions. The then present customs regulations forbade all imports from adversary states. On June 13 1916, the Ministry of Finance informed the Ministry of Industry about the rules concerning the importation of goods from the newly conquered Turkish ports. The regulations would be parallel to those applied in the transportation of goods from the occupied Austro-Hungarian territories. The Viceroy at the Caucasus gave his consent for the application of these rules, which defined imports from the occupied territories as Turkish commodity due to taxation.⁴⁹

After the establishment of the administration of the occupied regions the matter was set forth again. The Military Governor-General N. N. Peshkov complained to the Viceroy about the taxation of imports. According to Peshkov, the people of Lazistan were in need of governmental support for survival although they had great stocks of nuts and oranges. Had the tariffs on their products were annulled they might provide for their living. Besides this economic necessity, the taxation of

⁴⁸ *RGIA* F.21, o.1, d.285, ll.102-102 reverse

⁴⁹ *RGIA* F.23, o.8, d.170, l.33-33 reverse

the commodities originating from the occupied territories was impractical for the only customs office in the region was in Batum.⁵⁰

Depending on the report of the Military Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey and on the permission of the Viceroy,⁵¹ the Ministry of Finance declared in a resolution on 25 December that, the goods from the occupied territories of Turkey would be exempted from taxes and tariffs exclusively at the customs offices of the Caucasian theater of war. In case that the goods were transported through other customs offices of the Russian Empire, they would be subject to previous taxes and tariffs.⁵²

2.1.7 The system of taxation

The procedures for export and import were thus temporarily formulated to be in effect till the official annexation of the region. The regulations largely depended on the imminent wartime necessities and reflected the controversial approaches of the military and governmental authorities. Another financial institutionalization in the occupied Turkish territories was the installation of the taxation system, the structure of which was also defined in *Prikaz No.739*.⁵³

Under the Military Governor-Generalship, the Temporary Administration of Taxation was established for the management of the state and territorial taxes and duties. A representative of the Ministry of Finance would be in charge of the Administration in accordance with the approval of the Military Governor-General and was to be appointed by an Imperial decree. The head of the department was

⁵⁰ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, l.174 reverse

⁵¹ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, l.172

⁵² *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, l.175

⁵³ *Prikaz No.739*, p.19-22

empowered to observe the regular collection of state and local taxes, and revenues from the municipalities; to conduct bookkeeping and reporting on the state and local taxes, and to collect statistical information on the matters related to the subjects under the management of the administration. The taxes to be collected from the local population would be the taxes determined by the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army and the taxes of the Ottoman period, which were reinstated by the confirmation of the Commander-in-Chief or the Military Governor-General.

The Administration of Taxation would employ financial inspectors in the districts, who were assigned to register trade and industrial institutions, to observe regular collection of all taxes, to keep the accounts of the capital holdings and the activities of tax collection of the municipal administrations, to study the economic aspects of the districts. The head of the tax administration, his assistants and the financial inspectors in the districts had the power to inspect all trade and industrial institutions.

The Ministry of Finance contemplated to gather a special commission for the preparation of the taxation system for the occupied regions and decided to appoint Protasyev as the head of the temporary taxation administration. However, when the Minister of Finance, Petr L'vovich Bark informed the Military Governor-General N. N. Peshkov, on 25 July 1916, about the appointment of Protasyev, who was acquainted with the peculiarities of the Caucasian region as the representative of the ministry, the Military Governor-General did not acquiesce. Moreover, according to a ciphered report of Protasyev,⁵⁴ the Chancellery of the Viceroyalty did not approve the establishment of a special commission, sharing the suspicion of the Military

Governor-General, that an independent commission would undermine the authority of the Military Governor-Generalship. The Viceroyalty and the Military Governor-General preferred to delay the matter till the end of the war. Although the Minister of Finance shared the ideas of Protasyev, he informed the latter that it was inevitable to comply with the will of the Military Governor-General in wartime conditions.⁵⁵

2.2 Colonization Projects and the Exploitation of the Natural Resources of the Occupied Regions.

2.2.1 Colonization Projects

Even before the establishment of the Russian administration of the occupied regions, colonization and exploitation of the lands in these regions were discussed and planned by the Russian state departments. Depending on the immediate food requirements of the marching army temporary precautions were taken, and with the establishment of the administrative system, the Military Governor-Generalship engaged in the colonization and exploitation activities, which were already commenced.

One of the first political figures interested in the future of the occupied regions was the Minister of Agriculture (*Zemledelie*). In 1915 and 1916 he wrote to the Foreign Minister about the plans of the Ministry of Agriculture on the exploitation of the occupied regions of Turkey and Iran in a letter dated 13 March 1915. He divided the whole region into four zones, two in Turkey and two in Iran (only the Turkish zones are cited here):

⁵⁴ *RGIA* F.560, o.28, d.518, ll. 20-20 reverse

⁵⁵ *RGIA* F.560, o.28, d.518, l 23

Black Sea Coast: The region from Batum to Trabzon seemed to be the prolongation of the Batum Riviera but with a milder climate. Orange, lemon, tobacco, and nuts are produced, [it is] rich in forests, especially suitable for summer resorts, resting areas and tea plantation.

Headwaters of Aras and Euphrates: this region consisted of the Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis *vilayets*. The mountainous region was rich in mineral resources and suitable for the settlement of Russian colonizers. The important part of the region seemed to be the headwaters of Aras for this region comprised the main supply of water for the Eastern Caucasus.⁵⁶

On 25 March 1916 the Minister of Agriculture again addressed to the Foreign Minister with the request to urgently commence the studies on the questions connected to the exploitation of the occupied areas. According to the Minister of Agriculture, it became urgent to discuss “the actual agricultural problems in the occupied regions of Turkish Armenia”, after the occupation of Erzurum and Bitlis *vilayets* by the Caucasian Army. In order to facilitate the solution of the problem, the minister offered the help of his ministerial staff about the necessary acts for the exploitation of the acquired fields in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁷

In his telegram on 19 March 1916, the Minister of Agriculture addressed the Viceroy of the Caucasus, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, and proposed the

⁵⁶ E. A Adamov, *Razdel Aziatskoi Turtsii po sekretnym dokumentam byvshevo Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del.*, Moskva, 1924, “Prilojenie 3. Pismo Krivosheina Sazanovu ot 28 Fevralya 1915 g. Za No:132”, p. 360

appointment of an experienced officer from the Colonization Department for the purpose of the ultimate incorporation of conquered territories. His nominee for the investigation of colonization in the region was the deputy for the Chief of the Central Administration of Colonization, Kamer-junker A. A. Tatishchev, who “successfully organized the colonization programs in the Far East and Turkestan”.⁵⁸

In the same telegraph, the Minister of Agriculture warned the Viceroy of the immediate danger of speculative acquisitions of land and pointed that after a fair distribution of land to the native population, there would still be a significant amount of territory appropriate for the settlement of the Russian colonizers, especially of the participants of the current war. On 23 March 1916, the Viceroy replied to the Minister of Agriculture that he outlawed all illegal acquisitions of land in occupied regions and had no objections to the suggested name for the research aimed at colonization programs, which he found suitable in a time when he had already planned the prospective regulations for the civil administration of occupied regions.⁵⁹

The Chief of the Colonization Department, Gennadii Feodorovich Chirkin also gave his consent for the nomination of A. A. Tatishchev with a minor reservation. He advised that Tatishchev should be sent as a representative of the Russian Red Cross instead of as an official from the Colonization Department in order not to invoke any disturbance among the native population.⁶⁰

Thus, A. A. Tatishchev was appointed with the task of investigating the conditions of colonization in conquered regions of Turkey. He prepared a program

⁵⁷ Arutyunyan, *ibid.*, p.341

⁵⁸ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305 ll.3 reverse-4

⁵⁹ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, l.9 reverse

⁶⁰ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305 l. 11

for the investigation in which professor Vasilii Vasil'evich Sapozhnikov⁶¹ would organize a three month survey, which would be supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and would be realized under the permission of Military Governor-General Peshkov, in the region encompassing “Sarıkamış, Köprüköy, Erzurum, Hınıs, Malazgirt, Muş, Eleşkirt, Bayezid, Van, and if possible, the coastal region of the Black Sea.” It was aimed with this expedition to prepare minor scale military-topographic maps of the region instead of the major scale Turkish maps⁶², to indicate the arable and pasture lands and meadows on these maps, to clarify the names and ethnic structure of the villages, number of houses and land per house in those villages depending on the researches and on the testimony of the native population, to investigate the system of land tenure, conditions of the irrigation and productivity of the soil through interviews with the local population.⁶³

Before the realization of this program, Tatishchev conducted an expeditionary trip and on 22 May 1916, sent a report to the Viceroy, summarizing the results of his own trip in occupied territories.⁶⁴ Dividing the region into two separate parts as *vilayets* of Turkish Armenia and Kurdistan, and Lazistan, Tatishchev underscored the necessity of the prevention of illegal acquisition of free-lands, which had belonged to the native population before the war, and to which Russian settlers might be directed. He proposed the authorization of several officials experienced in agriculture to determine and figure out the arable and pasture lands,

⁶¹ **Sapozhnikov, Vasilii Vasilevich** (1861-1924) professor of the university of Tomsk, conducted geographic expeditions in the Altai region, was the Minister of Education in the government of Admiral Kolchak in 1918.

⁶² Kâzım Karabekir mentions the detailed maps they found when they retook Sarıkamış, in comparison with the inaccurate and major scale Turkish maps. K. Karabekir, *Birinci Dünya Harbini Nasıl İdare Ettik? Sarıkamış, Kars ve Ötesi*, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), p. 86

⁶³ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll.38-39

and meadows, and their percentages. According to Tatishchev, before the inception of the Russian settlement, the older legal system of land tenure should be clarified, although he envisaged that the prospective Russian application of the system of land distribution should be different from the previous Ottoman one.

Further, Tatishchev emphasized the possibility of appropriation of Kurdish lands, since the Kurds behaved inimically against the Russian Army. The Armenian landownership was also subject to alterations due to the fact that significant amount of the Armenian population had suffered during the war, either had fled, been deported from the region or been killed. Therefore, the land that had belonged to them was exposed to the future arrangements of the Russian state. Another aspect of the problem was the settlement of the Russian population among the natives. Since this might arise friction among respective groups, Tatishchev suggested the establishment of a new system in which different groups would be settled separately. Adding to all, many refugees did not possess legal documents of ownership, so it was not possible to allocate land according to legal documents. The only way to solve the problem favorably for the Russian settlers and the native population was to delimitate allocations into economically meaningful borders and into amounts satisfactory for the requirements of the population.

For Tatishchev *Prikaz* No.121 of the Caucasian Viceroyalty, which gave the right to rent the land without right to ownership, was an appropriate one in view of the resettlement of the refugees. Since the majority of those refugees could not declare documents of landownership, in order not to complicate the food and fodder supply problem of the army, the land should be rented according to *Prikaz* No.121.

⁶⁴ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll.41-45 reverse

He pointed out that, the social and governmental philanthropic organizations should interview the refugees about their places of original residence, and the police should provide them with documents indicating those places, in order to facilitate the resettlement.

According to Tatishchev the problems of agriculture in Lazistan were different. Since the people from the eastern part of the region had fled or had been annihilated, the land was free. However, in the western region, starting from Rize, people had remained in their places and it was hard to find free land. Moreover, most of the population, according to the *nachalnik* of Rize, possessed legal documents. In this part of the region, land allocation might be based on those documents, but in the eastern part a special official from the Ministry of Agriculture should be authorized for clarification of the problem.

As Tatishchev mentioned in his report, upon the authorization of the Ministry of Agriculture, N. A. Lenskii from the University of Petrograd, prepared a special study on the legal status of land ownership in Turkish Armenia.⁶⁵ Lenskii defined the historical process of the formation and the legal foundations of the Ottoman practice for the land allocation and tenure before he briefly explained the categories of land in the Empire.⁶⁶ Concerning the Eastern parts of the Empire, which were then under Russian occupation, Lenskii stressed the semi-feudal status of these regions, in which, Kurdish *agas* were oppressing Armenian villagers, a firm rule of law over landownership was nonexistent, and the attitude of the Ottoman officials against the non-Muslim villagers and the landowners were arbitrary and negative. In the light of

⁶⁵ N. A. Lenskii, *O pravovom položenii zemlevladieniya v Turetskoi Armenii*, (Petrograd: N.p., 1916)

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp.3-12

all, he described the situation as a “judicial chaos in which legal documents were either non-existent or counterfeit, so it was nearly impossible to find out the real owners of the lands.”⁶⁷

Lenskii came to a conclusion that, for the sake of the practical policy, the only way for the solution would be to ignore the previous Ottoman practice of regulations on land, at least as far as the country rural landownership was concerned. In case that the conquered territory would be incorporated into the Russian Empire, Russian authorities should not be obliged to preserve the previous rights of the population on land for such legal rights were nearly nonexistent.⁶⁸ Following the prospective Russian allocation of land there would be free Armenian lands, which should be enlisted into the State Fund of Lands, not into the properties of the Armenian Church, since the Russian armies fought for the survival of the Armenians and not for the establishment of an Armenian territory. Nevertheless, the Armenian population would gain the long-awaited peaceful conditions by the firm recognition of the property rights of the population and with the termination of the dependency on the will of the feudal *agas*.⁶⁹

The report of Tatishchev to the Viceroy was discussed at a special meeting, which convened on 30 May 1916, in Tiflis.⁷⁰ In the meeting, which was headed by the assistant of the Viceroy on civilian matters Lieutenant General *Knyaz* B. N. Orlov, Lieutenant General N. N. Peshkov (later the Military Governor-General of the occupied regions), the Chief of the Field Staff of the Caucasian Army Major General

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.21

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.22

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.23

⁷⁰ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll.119-121

Bolhovitonov, and the chief of the refugees management, Major General V. M. Tamamshev took part.

The participants of the meeting consented for the appointment of a special official from the Ministry of Agriculture to Lazistan, and on the extension of the implementation of *Prikaz* no.121, and decided to publish it in an appeal to the population in Armenian and Turkish. The project of a detailed survey to clarify all agricultural problems of the region was found immature and impracticable in the chaotic conditions of the ongoing war. Nevertheless, it was decided to organize a general survey, which might serve as a starting point for detailed explorations for the future to be conducted after military-administrative authority was firmly established.

Upon the resolutions of the Tiflis meeting, a general survey instead of the detailed expedition proposed by Tatishchev was conducted under Professor Sapozhnikov with the participation of the botanist Shishkin and geologist S. I. Turemnov. The survey started at the end in July 1916, and continued till August.⁷¹ The scientists mainly studied the climatic and soil conditions of the region and the character of the population. In the report of the survey, the settlement of a significant amount of Russian colonizers was suggested in order both to utilize the wealth of the region intensively, and to introduce the conciliatory influence of the Russian peasants in the cruel friction between the Armenian and Kurdish population of the region.⁷²

Another decision of the Tiflis meeting for the appointment of a special official of the Ministry of Agriculture with a mission for the exploration on the

⁷¹ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, l.146

⁷² *RGIA* F. 391, o.6, d.305, l.150 reverse

territory of Lazistan, was carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and on 13 October 1916, the Military Governor-General of the occupied territories, was informed about the appointment of the agronomist P. P. Nikolenko, and the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in the Caucasus, K. I. Shashkovskii, asked the Military Governor-General for cooperation and assistance from the local administrations.⁷³

However, the response of the Military Governor-General was not in line with the expectations of the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture. In the present conditions, Lieutenant General Peshkov found a study aimed at the identification of “free-lands” premature and early. First, he asserted that it was not clear yet which kind of land would be defined as “free”; second, since the administrative organization was not completed in the region, the security and assistance for transportation of the researchers could not be granted. Furthermore, Peshkov emphasized that the officials of the ministry could only work according to the programs prepared by the Military Governor-General, and in those places where the Military Governor-General allowed them. Peshkov added that the problem of “free lands” could not be solved earlier than 2-3 years, at least a few months after the signature of the peace treaty. According to Peshkov, even the preliminary studies with the purpose of the clarification of the “free-lands problem” were arousing unrest among the population, especially among the Armenians. Thus, the Military Governor-General proposed that, P. P. Nikolenko, who was at that time in Tiflis,

⁷³ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll.161-162

should not commence his studies and should be under the disposal of the Governor-General.⁷⁴

The Ministry of Agriculture did not reject the proposal of the Governor-General, however, Tatishchev requested from Nikolenko a number of tasks to be fulfilled besides the works assigned by Military Governor-General. Tatishchev demanded from Nikolenko to discover the scale of the land usage by the native population before the war, and variation of land ownership of different families, local peculiarities of the land reserve, relations between villagers and landowners, rights of the Armenian monasteries, relations between the Kurds and the Armenians, opinion of the population about the future economic structure after the incorporation of the territory to the [Russian] Empire, the preferred type of local agriculture and the quantity of the land, necessary for a family of a Russian farmer, depending on the local conditions.⁷⁵

From an interview with the Military Governor-General, published on 24 November 1916 in *Novoe Vremya*, we might deduce that the Military Governor-General was preserving his reservation about the early settlement projects, even about the return of the refugees. He declares that all should wait till the end of war and till the accomplishment of the administrative organization. Military Governor-General's words also inform us that the Tatishchev report and the resolutions of the Tiflis meeting were implemented to a certain extent, i.e. the list of the Armenian and non-Armenian villages were being prepared, and charity and relief organizations

⁷⁴ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll. 163-163 reverse

⁷⁵ *RGIA* F.391, o.6, d.305, ll. 165 reverse-166

were instructed to interview the refugees about their places of original residence.⁷⁶ Besides in the fortified region of Trabzon, a statistical survey on the ethnic structure, land tenure and livestock of the villages was conducted and published by the acting *nachalnik* of Trabzon, S. R. Mintslov.⁷⁷

The colonization efforts were also discussed at the State Duma, and were reflected in the newspapers of Petrograd, and Tiflis.⁷⁸ According to the *Rech'*, the main cadres of the future settlement would be the unarmed worker *druzhins*⁷⁹ consisting of 1000 workers, which started to be formed in the autumn of 1915. No Armenians or Georgians were admitted to the *druzhins*, the main tasks of which were to prepare the allocation of land, and to produce food and fodder for the Caucasian Army and worked under agricultural specialists. *Rech'* referred to two projects for the settlement of Russian colonizers in the occupied regions. The first one featured the dispatch of the *druzhin* families, whereas the second proposed the settlement of Cossacks from the Northern Caucasus. *Kavkazskoe Slovo* interpreted these, as projects for the establishment of a buffer zone of Russians between the Turkish and Russian Armenian regions.⁸⁰ The first issue of *Kavkazskoe Khozyaystvo*, the publication of the Imperial Caucasian Society of Agriculture, contained an article on the agricultural prospective of the Pasinler and Erzurum valleys.⁸¹

⁷⁶ *Novoe Vremya*, 24 November 1916, p.2

⁷⁷ S. R. Mintslov, *Statisticheskie Ocherki Trapezundskogo Ukreplennogo Raiona*, (Trabzon, N.p. 1916)

⁷⁸ "Kolonizatsia Turetskoi Armenii," *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 10 August 1916 p.3

⁷⁹ *Druzhins*: The Special units of army charged with the duty of producing necessary food and fodder.

⁸⁰ "Kolonizatsia Turetskoi Armenii," *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 10 August 1916 p.3.

2.2.2 The Exploration and the Exploitation of the Natural Resources and the Construction of Railroads and Ports

As early as December 1914, the Ministry of Trade and Industry appointed a geologist engineer to the General Staff of the Caucasian Army in order to conduct research on the natural resources of the region of military operations. The engineer dealt with research and mining of the coal reserves at the village of Kükürtlü (near Aşkale). Since the reserves proved beneficial, a special brigade of workers of 40 men were sent in August 1916, and afterwards 1200 more men were transferred from Alexandropol on the orders of the Chief of the Supply Management of the Caucasian Army. Notwithstanding the stimulating results, the work was not continued in the following months after the mine was left under the control of the Military Governor-Generalship. The output decreased drastically, and the Military Governor-Generalship could not manage the transportation of the extracted coal.⁸² In the Erzurum region, throughout the years 1916-1917, explorations for other coalmines were conducted, and in the Erzurum, Mamahatun, and Hasankale districts salt reserves were exploited.⁸³

In the first months of 1916, with the initiatives of the Director of the Engineering Works 10 engineer *druzhins* explored oil in the region of the villages of Kontranlı, Hüseyin Ağa, and Madrah, and reached at 7 *sazhen*⁸⁴ light oil reserves of 20 *poods* a day.⁸⁵ However, according to the strategic decisions of the

⁸¹ V. Vartanyants, "Kratkaya kharakteristika selskogo khozyaystva Pasinskoi i Erzerumskoi dolin", *Kavkazskoe Khozyaystvo*, 1916, No.1-2, pp.24-25

⁸² "Neispol'zovannaya bogatstva", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 May 1917, p.2

⁸³ Akopyan, *ibid*, p.187

⁸⁴ 1 sajen=2,13 meters.

⁸⁵ 1 pood=16,38 kilograms.

administration, the *druzhins* were dispatched to another region and work was ceased.⁸⁶

Another exploration for oil was conducted in the Himis region. In February 1917, the engineer of the corps in that region, applied to the engineering department of the *Zemgor*.⁸⁷ The staff, which had discovered the oil reserves in the HüseyinAğa and Madrah region, worked in Himis and found substantial reserves. However, the facilities of the corps did not suffice to accomplish the research and the exploitation of the reserves, so the results were reported to the Military Governor-Generalship. Although the Military Governor-General Romanovskii-Romanko gave instructions for immediate continuation of the research and exploitation efforts, the reorganization of the Military Governor-Generalship after the February revolution impeded efforts.⁸⁸

In spite of the fact that the occupied regions were rich in natural reserves, the ambiguity in the status of ownership and the transportation problems hindered the exploitation of these resources. The transportation problem proved a critical obstacle also for the supply of the army. Hence, the Russian administrations of the region before and after the establishment of the Military Governor-Generalship, dealt with the construction of roads in the region. The existing chaussees and roads were enlarged and repaired⁸⁹, and many new roads were built. The main road until the occupation was the Erzurum-Trabzon road, which had been built by a French

⁸⁶ “Neispol’zovannaya bogatstva”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 May 1917, p.2

⁸⁷ **Zemgor**: A special union established in 1915 by the cooperation of the All-Russian Unions of Towns and *Zemstvos* to alleviate the supply crisis of the army during the First World War. It played an important role in the production and delivery of especially crucial medical supplies to the army

⁸⁸ “Neispol’zovannaya bogatstva”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 May 1917, p.2

⁸⁹ “Zigana-Foli”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 13 August 1916, p.2

corporation, connecting Köprüköy, Hasankale, Erzurum and turning from Aşkale towards Bayburt and ending at Trabzon. Utilizing this chaussee, the Russian administration constructed Iğdır-Taşlıçay-Karakilise-Zeydekyan-Meçitli, Zeydekyan-Köprüköy-Meçitli, Meçitli-Hınıskale-Sevaki, Karakilise-Malazgirt-Ahlat, Oltu-Tortum-Bayburt network and a road connecting Van to this network.⁹⁰ In the capital cities such as Trabzon and Gümüşhane broader roads (which are still in use) were constructed and in the construction of these local population were employed.⁹¹

For the construction of railways, separate administrations were founded. The Administration for the Construction of the Military Railroad of Erzurum⁹², completed the construction of Sarıkamış-Erzurum narrow gauge railway of 165 km, and the 25 km of the route from Erzurum to Mamahatun until September 1917. The alteration of the narrow gauge with a wide gauge was approved by the chief of supply management of the Caucasian army, General of infantry, N.N Yanushkevich, at the meeting of the Caucasian Department of the Russian Geographical Society.⁹³ The project included the constructions of the Erzurum-Başköy and Köprüköy-Hınıskale-Sevaki branch lines, but the projects were not fulfilled due to the withdrawal of the Russian Army in 1918. Another railway constructed in Eastern Anatolia was the Şahtahtı-Karakilise railroad connecting the valley of Ararat to the valley of Eleşkirt. From this line, the Beyazıt-Arnis (Arın) (160 km) (on lake Van)

⁹⁰ Akopyan, *ibid.*, p.189

⁹¹ Sabri Özcan San, *Gümüşhane'nin Ruslar Tarafından İşgali*, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993) p.35; Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.36

⁹² "Iz Upravlenii Rabot po Postroike Erzurumskoi Voennoi Dorogi", *Golos Kavkaza*, 7 November 1916, p.1

⁹³ "V geograficheskome obshestve", *Tiflisski Listok*, 19 October 1916, p.3

branch line was built and was extended till Sofalı (40 km.) however the branch line of Karakilise-Malazgirt-Ahlat could not be accomplished.⁹⁴

In the fortified region of Trabzon, the Administration for the Construction of Military Railways of the Trabzon Region⁹⁵ completed the construction of the Trabzon-Gümüşhane line of 150 km, which was planned to pass through Erzincan and to connect with the Erzurum narrow gauge in the Mamahatun region.⁹⁶ The main line of Batum-Trabzon was projected for the connection of the Black Sea coasts with the Russian Empire, and a separate administration for the construction works was established. The turbulent year 1917 also hindered the construction of this railway. A special inspector from Special Transcaucasian Committee (OZAKOM) was appointed to liquidate the Administration of the Batum-Trabzon railway and to distribute materials and labor among the construction administrations of Black Sea railway, military railroads of the Trabzon region and the coastal highway of Batum-Trabzon.⁹⁷

The Turkish forces, advancing after the Erzincan Truce of December 1917, acquired an enormous number of rolling stock, but could not operate them, due to the lack of personnel and materials.⁹⁸ Other than the railways, the Russian administration improved the water route facilities. Since the Black Sea coasts were not connected by land route to the empire, starting from the very first day of the occupation, the construction of ports at the Black Sea coasts had commenced. Initially simple docks

⁹⁴ Akopyan, *ibid.*, p. 189

⁹⁵ The State Archives of the Russian Navy (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota*, St.Petersburg) (Hereafter cited as *RGAVM*), F.1269, o.1, d.39, ll.1-105

⁹⁶ Akopyan, *ibid.*, p. 189

⁹⁷ *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 1 June 1917, p.3

⁹⁸ Tuncay Ögün, *Kafkas Cephesi'nin I. Dünya Savaşındaki Lojistik Desteği*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999), p.269

were built in Trabzon, Rize and Polathane (Akçaabat) in 1916, and were improved throughout the occupation.⁹⁹ In addition to such activities on the Black Sea littoral, the transportation possibilities across Lake Van were also utilized and the coastal towns of Arnis (Arın), Van, Ahlat and Tatvan were equipped with docks.¹⁰⁰

Concluding Remarks

Following the first news of victory at the Caucasian Front against the Turkish armies, the Russian Government and the Russian High Command projected a series of measures for the organization of the administrative and economic life in the conquered areas. The Rules for the temporary Russian administration entailed the preservation of the previous territorial delimitations while appointing Russian military officials as the highest authorities. Yet municipal and rural administrations remained solidly native. There were hardly any attempts at cultural assimilation, the Russian administration did not ban the local languages, and the Shari'a courts continued to exist. Nevertheless, projects for the settlement of the Russian population as the mainstay of Russian domination were contemplated. This semi-autonomous form of control, respecting the geographic, ethnic, and cultural peculiarities, was the dominant pattern of the Russian colonial rule.

The first measures were taken in order to reestablish order and security of the population, to guarantee the security of the rear of the army, to mobilize the economic resources of the region in line with the interests of the army. Since all the political, economic and administrative regulations in the occupied regions were first

⁹⁹ *RGIA* F.95, o.1, d. 2027-2030

¹⁰⁰ N. G Korsun, *Pervaya Mirovaya Voina na Kavkazskom Fronte*, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1946), pp.86-87.

of all implemented in the interests of the war conduct, the conflicts between the civilian and military authorities were settled to the benefit of the military authorities.

The legal status of the occupied regions remained a problem between the Russian civilian and military authorities throughout the occupation. The military authorities intended to recognize the region as an annexed part of the Russian Empire, whereas the governmental departments insisted on the status of “the occupied territories by law of war”. A declaration by the Military Commander of the Fortified Region of Trabzon, Major General Schwartz, about the equality of the people before Russian law in a Russian territory referring to the occupied regions invoked a diplomatic conflict between the Foreign Ministry and the military administration of Trabzon.¹⁰¹

Whatever the legal status of the occupied regions was, many projects were started to be implemented for the establishment of a Russian administration; i.e., the colonization and exploitation of the resources of the region, and construction of transportation routes. On the one hand, the establishment of the administration, which was carried out by the Military Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions, progressed sluggishly and the delay in the appointment of the *nachalniks* of the *okrugs* and the *uchastkas*, deteriorated the conditions of life in the occupied regions.

¹⁰² On the other hand, the projects for colonization, and construction, could not be accomplished due to ineffective bureaucracy, unfavorable war conditions and most of all due to the detrimental effects of the 1917 Russian revolutions on all parts of the Russian Empire.

¹⁰¹ Mintslov, *ibid.*, p.89

¹⁰² *ibid.*, p.94

3. CHAPTER 3: THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. Supply and Medical Assistance Problems of the Army and Society

While the administration of the occupied regions was being formed according to *Prikaz* no.739 dated 18 June 1916, some parts of the region had been for more than a year under the Russian occupation. The military units in the region handled the maintenance of order in the region, until the Military Governor-Generalship initiated the establishment of the central system for the occupied territories after 18 June 1916. However, during this time, the population of the region and the refugees returning from different places were totally devastated due to the conditions of war and were in need of every kind of help. The military authorities at the Caucasian Front were not able to meet the requirements of the devastated population. Even the army itself was facing difficulties of supply in the form of medico-sanitary aid and nourishment due to the peculiar transportation problems of the Caucasian Front and due to the general inadequacies to which the Russian Army was exposed.

The World War came out to be more devastating and longer than expected for all belligerents as well as for the Russian Empire. One of the main inadequacies of the Russian Army was related to the care of the casualties. The War Ministry was in charge of the evacuation and healing of the wounded and sick soldiers according to prewar plans. Adding to the prospective measures of the ministry, the Russian Red Cross (RRC) would assist in the organization and equipment of the hospitals.¹ However, with the outbreak of the war it became apparent that the plans were not

¹ A. B. Astashov, "Soyuzy Zemstv i Gorodov i Pomosh' Ranennym v Pervuyu Mirovuyu Voinu", *Otechestvennaya Istoriya*, no.6, (1992), p.170

efficient. The number of the casualties was much higher than expected, and the facilities of the War Ministry and the RRC were insufficient.²

The insufficiency of the War Ministry and the RRC to undertake the medico-sanitary assistance to the army urged not only the General Staff (*Stavka*), but also the leaders of the society to look for remedies for the situation. “In July 1914, Duma members established a Provisional Committee for the Relief of Wounded and Sick Soldiers (under the leadership of [the chairman of the Duma] M. V. Rodzianko).”³ With patriotic motives and with similar objectives, the urban and rural councils founded the All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos* and the All-Russian Union of Towns also as war broke out.⁴ In August 1914, Rodzianko applied to the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, (later the Viceroy at the Caucasus, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army) through a letter in which he expressed the concern and readiness of the society in the aid for the wounded soldiers. The reply of the Grand Duke was not in favor of cooperation of the army with the society⁵, but the deteriorating situation compelled the military leaders to realize that it would be unable to fulfill the task without the assistance of the civic organizations.

The civic organizations, which *Stavka* then appealed to, were the Union of Towns and *Zemstvos*. The Unions were allowed to work as Red Cross organizations carrying the Red Cross insignia on their garments, equipments and on their official

² *ibid.*

³ M. D. Steinberg, V. M. Khrustalev, *The fall of the Romanovs: Political dreams and personal struggles in a time of revolution*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p.43

⁴ V. M. Shevyrin, *Zemskii i Gorodskoi Soyuzy 1914-1917: Analiticheskii obzor*, Moscow: Institut nauchnoi informatsii po obshchestvennym naukam (INION RAN), 2000, p.58

⁵ A. B. Astashov, “Soyuzy Zemstv i Gorodov”, p.171

documents, on the condition that the Unions would confine their activities for “the relief of the sick and the wounded soldiers during the present war”.⁶ However, the course of the war necessitated help of the Unions in many other areas. The supply of the army with munitions and equipment, and the care for the refugees, would be the new and vast areas of the help demanded by the military authorities with ever increasing frequency.⁷ Furthermore, the different peculiarities of the fronts required the participation of several other civic organizations in the relief efforts for the local population.

3.1.1 The All-Russian Unions of Towns and *Zemstvos* and the Caucasian Front

The first idea of the formation of the All-Russian Union of Towns dated back to 1905. Although the mayors of the cities convened conferences aimed at uniting their activities, the then prevalent legal system of the empire hindered the formation of such supra-organizational bodies. It was the war conditions, which facilitated the formation of the “All-Russian” type of organizations. The All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos* was formed in Moscow on July, 30 1914 at the congress of the authorized provincial *zemstvos*, and Union of towns came into being as a result of an agreement of 37 provincial towns and nine towns of districts, on August 8-9, 1914.⁸ The expenditures of the Union of *Zemstvos* and Union of Towns were mainly sponsored by governmental grants,⁹ and also by dues of the local organizations of the unions

⁶ N. J. Astrov, *The Municipal Government and The All-Russian Union of Towns*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 172

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 174

⁸ *ibid.*, p.183

⁹ *Pravila Predostovleniya Garantii Gosudarstvennogo Kaznacheistva*, (Moscow: N.p., 1917)

and by donations. The organizations rapidly attracted the participation of many Russian towns and districts.

Meanwhile, the towns of the Caucasus established an independent Union of Towns of the Caucasus, at a conference convened in Tiflis, on 12-14 September 1914.¹⁰ However, with the outbreak of war at the Caucasian Front, its independence from the All-Russian Union of Towns impeded the organization of the relief efforts, so at another conference on 3 November 1914, the Caucasian Union of Towns became a special department of the All-Russian Union of Towns.¹¹

At the conference, which took place on September 12-14, 1914, the activities of the Caucasian Union of Towns and the Union of *Zemstvos* had been divided according to regions. According to this division, the activities of the Union of *Zemstvos* would be concentrated in the northern Caucasus whereas the Caucasian Union of Towns would organize relief efforts in the southern Caucasus. The occupied Ottoman territories were also included into the realm of the activities of the Caucasian Union of Towns with the deepening of the front beyond the Russian-Turkish state borders.¹² Since the whole organization was a response to the necessities of war, this division of the regions did not prevent the overlap of functions and activities of the two unions. The activities of the Unions at the Caucasian Front became so vital in a very short time that, the percentage of the Union hospitals constituted %71 of all at the Caucasian Front.¹³

¹⁰ *Kratkii Otchet o Deyatelnosti Kavkazskogo Otdela Vserossiiskogo Soyuza Gorodov pomoshi bol'nym i ranennym voenam s momenta vzniknoveniya po 1-e fevralya 1915*, Tiflis, 1915, p.1

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 11

¹² "Deyatel'nost' Kavkazskogo Otdela Soyuza Gorodov", *Izvestiya Vserossiiskogo Soyuza Gorodov*, 1916, No:23, p.166-167

¹³ Astashov, *ibid.*, p.171

3.1.2 The Muslim Charitable Society of Baku (*Bakû Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*)

Although the Caucasian Department of the All-Russian Union of Towns dealt with the relief organizations for the refugees and the peaceful population in the occupied regions, the activities of the Unions were mainly directed to the needs of the Christian, that is the Armenian population. The essence of this fact was mainly a consequence of the ethnic structure of the organization. Most of the officials of the Unions were of Armenian origin. The majority of the Muslims of the occupied regions had fled following the withdrawal of the Ottoman Army. However, a significant number stayed put, especially in the villages. The main social organization from the Russian Empire, which functioned in the occupied regions for the Muslim population was the *Bakû Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (The Muslim Charitable Society of Baku). (Hereafter the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye*). The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* was established during the turbulent times of 1905 by the Azerbaijani business elite, and the Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov confirmed the establishment of a Muslim charitable society on 10 October 1905.¹⁴ The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* aimed at alleviating the desperate living conditions of the Muslims, suffering in the Armeno-Azerbaijani Turkish struggles.

The founding aim of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* was to help the miserable people of the Caucasian region and its activities were in line with this objective until the First World War. However, the world war brought even worse conditions for the Caucasian population especially for the part at the border of the Russian Empire with

¹⁴ Betül Aslan, *Kardeş Kömeği (Yardımlı) ve Bakû Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2000), p.54

Turkey, as well as for the Muslim population in the occupied regions of Turkey. The dire situation of the Muslim population at the Russian side of the border, who were frequently being accused of collaborating with the enemy, and the lamentable destiny of the population in the occupied regions found reflection in the pages of the Azerbaijani Turkish press and soon the refugees themselves appeared in Gence, Baku, and Tiflis.¹⁵ Region-wide fund-raising activities were organized, and the responsive public donated food, clothing, and every kind of personal wealth including the family heirlooms, and wedding presents. The public sensitivity, outpouring of the newspaper and journal articles, speeches and sermons, attempts of the prominent figures of the Azerbaijani Turkish elite, and especially of the Duma member Muhammed Yusuf Caferov, who was as a member of the ad hoc committee of the Duma for field hospitals¹⁶, urged the State Duma to grant governmental protection and a special credit for the Muslim refugees.¹⁷

The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* took official permission to function as a relief organization in the occupied territories in January 1915. Thereafter it decided to organize a special system of relief for the Muslims in the occupied regions, and appointed Dr. Hüsrev Paşa Bey Sultanov as its authorized representative.¹⁸ The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* chose Kars as the center of the relief organizations for the regions of Kars and Batum, and for the districts of Tortum, Erzurum, Hınıs, Muş, Bayezid, and Diyadin.¹⁹ The center of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* in Baku, the Ismailiye building,²⁰

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.79-80

¹⁶ Fuat Akhundov, "Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan Leaders (1918-1920) Mammad-Yusif Jafarov - Head of Parliament (1885-1938)", *Azerbaijan International*, (Spring 1998), pp.31-32

¹⁷ B. Aslan, *ibid.*, p.106

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.77

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.111

was converted to a complex including a hospital with 150 beds, an orphanage for 200 children, and a public kitchen.²¹ In coordination with the Administration of Refugees (working under the Viceroyalty, headed by General V. M. Tamamshev), the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* took the responsibility of the care for Muslim orphans and opened four orphanages in Baku, four in Gence, two in Tiflis, one in Suşa, Nuha, Ahıska (Ahaltskhe), Şeki, Batum, Çakvi, Kantri, Kağızman, Ardahan, Oltu, Iğdır, Hınıs, Gümgüm (Varto).²²

Other Muslim charity organizations of the Caucasus, which had assisted the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* in relief efforts for the suffering Muslim population were, the Muslim Women's Charitable Society of Baku, the Muslim Charity Society of the Caucasus, the National Muslim Committee of Gence, the Society of Necat (Salvation), the Society for Spreading Education, and the Muslim Charity Organization of Erivan.²³

²⁰ **İsmailiye Building:** Agha Musa Naghiyev, a rich oil baron of Baku, had built and offered as a gift to the Muslim Charity Society, a huge palace dedicated to the memory of his only son, Ismail, who had died from tuberculosis. The building, which later became known as "*İsmailiye*," was burnt down by the Armenians in 1918. It was after the Soviets came to power in Baku when the monument was restored. Today, this building serves as the primary office of Azerbaijan's Academy of Sciences. (Fuad Akhundov, "Legacy of the Oil Barons", *Azerbaijan International*, 2:2, Summer 1994, pp.43-46)

²¹ Fahrettin Erdoğan, *Türk Elllerinde Hatıralarım*, (İstanbul: Yeni, 1954), pp. 126-128

²² B. Aslan, *ibid.* p.137

²³ B. Aslan, pp.173-184

3.2 Activities of the Relief Organizations in the Occupied Regions of Turkey

3.2.1 The region of Van:

The first sizable Ottoman territory to fall under the Russian occupation was the Van region. Following the Armenian revolt of April 1915²⁴, the Russian forces, predominantly the Armenian *Druzhins*,²⁵ occupied the city, and except brief periods of tactical withdrawal in 1915 and in July-August 1916, Van had remained under Russian occupation until April 2, 1918. The city, with its exclusively Armenian population during the Russian occupation, became a stronghold of the Caucasian Committee of the All-Russian Union of Towns. (Hereafter cited as the *Sogor*). A. A. Atanasyan, the *Sogor* inspector, wrote in his report that, the Russian forces found in the region 11000 Armenians, 3000 Kurds, 500 Assyrians, 400 Yezidis, and 85 Turks. According to the 1912 statistics of the Armenian Patriarchate, in the whole *vilâyet* of Van there were 185,000 Armenians, 47,000 Turks, 32,000 settled and 40,000 nomadic Kurds, 25,000 Yezidis, 18,000 Nestorians and Jakobite Assyrians, and 3,000 gypsies.²⁶ Before the war the city center itself had 42,000 inhabitants (22,450 Armenians, 15,000 Turks)²⁷, and there were 8 churches, 2 mosques, 26 schools, 2 hospitals, 3 orphanages, 4 reading rooms and libraries, 15 cultural societies, 5 press

²⁴ “In April 1915, ... [an Armenian revolt was] organized in the city of Van, [Meanwhile], the Russian Caucasian Army began an offensive toward Van with the help of a large force of Armenian volunteers recruited from among refugees from Anatolia as well as local Caucasus residents.” Stanford J. Shaw, and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol.2, (London, NY, Melbourne, and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1978, pp.315

²⁵ In the Russian imperial army special voluntary units were formed of the Armenian Russian subjects and Ottoman Armenian refugees to assist the ‘liberation of the Turkish Armenia.’ (A comprehensive account on the activities of the volunteer Armenian *druzhins* may be found in: General G. Korganoff, *La participation des Armeniën à la Guerre Mondiale sur le Front du Caucase, 1914-1918*, (Paris: Imprimerie Massis Editions, 1927))

²⁶ Justin McCarthy, *Müslümanlar ve Azınlıklar*, translated by: Bilge Umar, (İstanbul: İnkılap, 1998), p.47. Explaining the unreliable nature of the Patriarchate statistics, McCarthy analyses Ottoman, Armenian, and European estimated population accounts, and presents a medium number of all, that is 130,500 Armenians and 270,000 Muslims for the *vilâyet* of Van.

offices publishing 4 magazines and several newspapers.²⁸ During the fierce fighting of the revolt of 1915, and during the Russian-Turkish military operations, the city and its environs was totally in ruins, almost all of the houses were demolished, and the 1915 harvest was lost.²⁹ The city was in desperate need of aid from the Russian government and the relief organizations. The *Sogor* then, appointed Konstantin Saakovich Ambartsumyan as its representative in Van.³⁰ With his relentless efforts, the city turned into a kingdom of the *Sogor* and the Armenians of the city named him “King Kostya”. The main street of the city was named after the *Sogor* (the *Sogorskii prospekt*) on which all the offices of the governmental and social organizations were located.³¹ The *Sogor* institutions in the city reached a significant number (20) and intensive activity by May 1916, but the functioning of the *Sogor* institutions were far from being efficient. The relief effort was performed hastily and without a general plan and coordination, and only the Armenian refugees benefited from the aid since the chief representative and the other *Sogor* staff were Armenians.³²

The *Sogor* founded a wide network of medico-sanitary aid for the city and the environs. The network consisted of one hospital, several sanitary assistance departments in different places, a department of quarantine, several disinfecting brigades and a pharmacy unit. The hospital was opened in February 1916, after the arrival of Dr. Mandinyan, who had considered the plans for a 150-bed hospital (was completed in June) and the system of medical aid with Ambartsumyan. Other than

²⁷ R. Bekgulyants, *Po Turetskoy Armenii*, Rostov-na-Donu, 1914, p.13

²⁸ A. A. Atanasyan, *Ocheredniye nuzhdi bezhentsev Vanskogo raiona*, Tiflis, 1916, p.2

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *Ocherk deyatel'nosti Vserossiiskogo Soyuza Gorodov v Vanskom raione*, Tiflis, 1916, p.1

³¹ Sergei Goredetskii, “V stran rucheve i vulkanov: Vanskie Portreti”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 August 1917, p.2

³² *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p.2

Dr. Mandinyan, 3 nurses, 6 medical orderlies, 5 side-nurses and 2 male nurses, and an English medical team from the London Armenian Refugees Fund were working at the hospital. The English medical team consisted of a doctor, Dr Aspland, and three nurses.³³ Due to general disorganization, the responsibilities of the doctors were also vague. They were dealing with each and every need of the hospital, even with the construction works, and these had resulted in an incomplete, malfunctioning hospital. The arbitrariness of the personnel was also an obstacle, for example Dr. Aspland was reported to refuse to examine “the uninteresting patients, elders or children”.³⁴ Adding to that, academician Nikolai Marr, who was conducting an archaeological expedition in the city, complained about the English doctor, for he engaged in the search of archaeological treasures rather than dealing with his patients.³⁵ The miserable situation of the pharmacy department was also a big problem, which another inspector from the headquarters of the *Sogor*, inspector Goredetskii, depicted in his report on 3-months activities of the *Sogor* in the Van region. The conditions evolved from bad to worse, as the previous *Sogor* representative, then the commissar of Van, Ambartsumyan, stated in a briefing in August 1917.³⁶

The disinfection brigade, before which stood the vital task of cleansing the unhealthy city, was also malfunctioning. The ill-disciplined system and the

³³ F. Shishmarov, “Spetsial’naya missiya ot angliiskogo obshestva (Armenian Refugees Fund)”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 19 April 1916, P.3; [Dr. Aspland prepared a report on the hospital at Van, and some parts of it were published in Armenian Press. (Avetoon Pesak Hacobian, *Armenia and The War: An Armenian's Point of View with an Appeal to Britain and The Coming Peace Conference*, (New York:George H. Doran Company, 1918), p.172)]

³⁴ *Ocherk deyatel’nosti*, p.4

³⁵ “Defekty ispolneniya prepolagavsheisya organizatsii.”, Archives of the Russian Academy of Science at St. Petersburg, (*Arkhiv Rossiyskoy Akademii Nauk, filial v Sankt Peterburge AAN*, St.Petersburg), F. 800, o.1, d.1295, l.7, (Detailed information about the scientific expeditions and scientists are provided in the 4th chapter of this study).

³⁶ “Polozhenie v Vane,” *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 September 1917, p.3

insufficient number of personnel impeded the work. In May 1916, it was still possible to witness corpses at the outskirts of the city and all the streets were filthy. The brigade could only disinfect the buildings of the *Sogor* and the military institutions, and even could not accomplish the disinfection task of the personnel of the lake flotilla, which might be the main origin of the infectious diseases from the other side of the lake.³⁷

One of the few well-functioning institutions in the city was the quarantine department. It had obtained a quarantine room with modern disinfection equipment at the damaged building of the German hospital. Initially it was supposed to be used for the quarantine of the PoWs, however, the *Sogor* did not have the right to accept PoWs, and so the quarantine department was used for disinfection of the refugees.³⁸

Besides the medico-sanitary functions, the *Sogor* provided shelter and food for the majority of the population. There were 12 public kitchens, an orphanage, two refugee shelters, and several field canteens on the road to Hoy and İğdır.³⁹ Although the main public kitchen was well located, it also suffered from disorganization, and it could not meet the needs of the ever-growing number of refugees. In order to ease the privation of the refugees and to lessen the burden upon its institutions, the *Sogor* anticipated the participation of the refugees. However, the refugees, who found free shelter and food, were reluctant to work, “they do not even want to slice a loaf of

³⁷ *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p. 8

³⁸ *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p. 9

³⁹ A. A. Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost Soyuza Gorodov i prochikh obshchestvennikh organizatsii v raionakh: Vanskom, Mushskom, Hynysskom, Bitlisskom v svyazi polozheniem bezhentsev*, Tiflis, 1916, p.2

bread unless they were paid”.⁴⁰ The conditions of May 1916 deteriorated by time, and famine conditions were threatening the city in September 1917.⁴¹

For the temporary residence of the refugees there operated two shelters, one in the city of Van, and another, which was in very bad circumstances, in the Muslim suburb. There was also an orphanage.⁴² The orphanage, which was very well constructed for the needs of the orphans, including bedrooms, classroom, restrooms, court for gymnastic education, bath, laundry and gardens, was opened at the building of the previous German orphanage in 1915. Under the Russian occupation, it functioned as a place to gather the orphans of the region and to transfer them to Transcaucasia, but lacking the necessary personnel for investigation, the children were brought to the institution by other people or were applying themselves.⁴³ Approximately 300 children, mainly Armenians, were sheltered at the orphanage.⁴⁴ Five workshops of the *Sogor*, a blacksmith, a tin maker, a shoemaker, a bakery and a carpentry operated near the orphanage for the general needs of the *Sogor* and military institutions.⁴⁵

Because of the privations which had characterized the living of so many refugees, they were likely to be in more urgent need of help, so that, the *Sogor* in Van mainly functioned as a relief organization for the refugees. Nevertheless, starting from the second half of 1916, it opened some services for the military staff in the city, such as a general store and a coffee shop at the garrison. The main facility

⁴⁰ *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p.10

⁴¹ “Polozhenie v Vane”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 September 1917, p.3

⁴² *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p.11

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.12

⁴⁴ Sergei Goredetskii, “Vanskii Gubernator”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 10 August 1917, p.2

⁴⁵ *Ocherk deyatel'nosti*, p.19

of the *Sogor*, which was utilized by the army, was the transportation service. The service had 30 carts and 170 horses, which shuttled between Van and Hoy, especially carrying wounded and sick soldiers. Another transportation facility, which was provided by the *Sogor*, was the flotilla on the lake of Van. Since the city was short of many material, it became a necessity to establish a reliable communication line with the other side of the lake, and by the great efforts of the *Sogor* representative, Ambartsumyan, and other social organizations such as the All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos*, and society of *Nmastamatuits*⁴⁶, barges and steam cutters were built for this purpose.⁴⁷ By August 1916, the flotilla consisted of 4 steam cutters, and 10 barges. They were cruising initially between Van and Tatvan, afterwards Ahlat, Adilcevaz, Akants, Arnis (Arin-Göldüzü), Panz (Çolpan), Noroshen (Alıçla), and Surp (Yelkenli) were added on to the list of destinations.⁴⁸

Other than the *Sogor*, several Russian, Armenian, and international relief organizations operated in Van. S. I. Tigranyan represented the Committee of Her Imperial Highness Tatiana Nikolayevna. The committee dealt with medical aid and the revival of the local artisanry. A team of doctors from this committee operated a medico-sanitary assistance department at Allur. The Local Committee of the Armenians was organized under the *nachalnik*, and later the governor, A.I. Termen. The Local Committee handled the municipal tasks such as the maintenance of the irrigation canals and of the drinkable water supplies, the resettlement of newly arriving refugees, and distribution of governmental rations. The Local Committee

⁴⁶ **Nmastamatuits**: An Armenian charitable society.

⁴⁷ Sergei Goredetskii, "Vanskie portrety", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 August 1917, p.2; Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost Soyuzn Gorodov*, (Tiflis: N.p., 1916), p.4

⁴⁸ Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost Soyuzn Gorodov*, p.4

temporarily functioned also as the highest judicial organ in the city.⁴⁹ Another Armenian social organization was the United Committee, which consisted of the Armenian Charitable Society of the Caucasus, the *Nmastamatuits*, the Agricultural Committee and similar charity organizations. The United Committee mainly dealt with substantial aid, providing seeds, agricultural equipment, and also opened workshops. It was sponsored by the General Administration of Refugees, and through private donations.⁵⁰

The international relief organizations were also active in Van. The primary one was the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief. Upon the reports of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, about the miserable situation of the Armenian population, the US government took a number of steps. The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief was founded in 1915 with the support of President Woodrow Wilson. Dr. Wilson, Consul Smith, Mr. Gill, Mr. McCalm and Mr. Gressi represented the committee in Van where it assisted the organization of the cleansing of the city. The Committee employed some refugees in its activities and provided them with livestock, agricultural equipments and the like.⁵¹ The second international organization was the Lord-Mayor Fund of London for Relief of Armenia. The headquarters of the Fund in the Caucasus was in Tiflis, and Reverend Harold Buxton headed the delegation of the Fund.⁵² The activities of the Fund were divided into medical assistance and substantial aid. For the medical assistance Dr. Aspland and 3 nurses were working in the *Sogor* hospital in Van, and for substantial aid, Mr.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.2

⁵⁰ *Ocherk deyatelnosti*, p.2

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.3

Backhouse installed a project for the repair of the damaged houses in the city of Van. This project was delayed until the end of war due to the interference of the Russian soldiers. The Cossacks dismantled the wooden construction materials, such as roofs and tiles, and used them as firewood.⁵³

The relations of the popular organizations with the military authorities in Van were not without tension. The most important discord between the civil and military authorities arose in 1916. In July 1916, the Russian army tactically withdrew to the north of Van, in a maneuver in the face of a Turkish attack.⁵⁴ Till the moment of the withdrawal, the military authorities in Van did not officially inform the civilian institutions and the population. However, the commander of the Russian corps, advised A.I. Termen to evacuate the city, but added that he was not authorized to give an official order. The army withdrew on July 28, 1916, and the population and all social organizations evacuated the city in panic.⁵⁵ The results of the evacuation were disastrous for the city. All the organizations left, the population fled, the harvest of the year was lost, and looting raged the city. Late in August 1916, Termen appealed to the *Sogor*, and to other social organizations with the request of a quick return to the city, to the help of refugees, once again returning to Van.⁵⁶ In the absence of an official order by the military authorities, the governor Termen was accused of provoking the population to flee. The General Staff of the Caucasian

⁵² "Armenians Dying in Prison Camps", *New York Times*, 21 August 1916, p.5; *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 19 April 1916, p.3

⁵³ S. Goredetskii, "Vanskii Portrety", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 6 August 1917, p.2

⁵⁴ The Russian Army had also withdrawn in July 1915 after the initial occupation of the city. This first withdrawal also brought catastrophic consequences for the Armenian population of the city, and was named as "the Great Retreat." Anahide Ter Minassian, "Van 1915" in Armenian Van/Vaspurakan, ed. R.G. Hovannisian, (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999), p.242

⁵⁵ S. M. Goredetskii, "Vanskii Gubernator", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 10 August 1917, p.2

⁵⁶ "Nachalnik Vanskogo okruga", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 26 August 1916, p.3

Army published an official proclamation in the Caucasian newspapers, in which it was stated that the military authorities had not ordered an evacuation, and all the events were a result of groundless rumors, and the responsible figures would be punished.⁵⁷ The governor, A. I. Termen was found guilty and was dismissed in November 1916.⁵⁸ Another problem, which invoked tension between the military authorities and the civil organizations, was the fate of the lake flotilla of the *Sogor*. The military authorities did not want to allow the construction of such a flotilla, and afterwards they had confiscated it.⁵⁹

3.2.2 The Region of Bitlis and Muş:

The area comprised Tatvan, Bitlis, the western shores of Lake Van and the valley of Muş, and remained under the Russian occupation until 8 August 1916. At the arrival of the Russian troops, all the villages and churches in the region had been destroyed and three quarters of the population had already been exterminated.⁶⁰ Infectious diseases had been prevailing uncontrollably in the region; the death toll had risen to 40 people a day, when the Russian army entered Tatvan on 1 February. The Union of *Zemstvos* founded a field hospital in Tatvan, however the personnel of the hospital suffered from epidemics, and in 2,5 months was replenished 3 times.⁶¹

The Russian army occupied Bitlis also in February 1916. The Armenian population of the city had already perished, only a bunch of Armenians were found hidden at the field hospital run by a Turkish doctor, Mustafa Bey of Aleppo, at the

⁵⁷ “Ot shtaba kavkazskoi armii”, *Golos Kavkaza*, 27 October 1916, p.1; *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 22 October 1916

⁵⁸ S. Goredetskii, “Vanskii Gubernator”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 10 August 1917

⁵⁹ Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost Soyuzo Gorodov*, p.4; *Ocherki deyatel'nosti*, p.18

⁶⁰ *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Bitlis: 1973 İl Yıllığı*, (N.p.1973), p.7

⁶¹ Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost Soyuzo Gorodov.*, p.5

church of the Protestant American missionaries.⁶² The *Sogor* assumed the control of the hospital and orphanage of the American mission, and opened a public kitchen for Armenian refugees, whose number was 352 by 25 May 1916, and increasing since then. At the same time, the Union of *Zemstvos* undertook the task of feeding 15,000 Muslim refugees and looking after their orphans.⁶³

Following the occupation of the valley of Muş, five to seven thousand Armenian refugees gradually gathered from the vicinities. During the first months, the required food was supplied from the local stockpiles of grain, which were exhausted by time and famine conditions threatened the city by April 1916. The Central Armenian Committee and the *Sogor* commenced their activities in April 1916, and from then on the former supplied food and the latter provided medical aid by opening a hospital and a sanitary assistance unit. The *Sogor* also opened an orphanage in Muş and the orphans, who were gathered from around, were transferred to the Caucasus. Supplemental food rations from the *Sogor* stocks were needed only until the refugees were able to get their own produce from the land, which they would cultivate. Therefore, in order not to aggravate the food crisis, the *Sogor* resettled five thousand Armenian inhabitants in the evacuated villages. In Karakilise the Society of Fraternal Aid and the Armenian Agricultural Committee handled the resettlement of 2000 refugees. Thus, the majority of the refugees started to cultivate land with the aid of the mentioned organizations in the Bitlis-Muş region, with the temporary and conditional permission of the Viceroy.

⁶² V. Monak, "Bitlis", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 19 February 1916, p.2

⁶³ Atanasyan, *Deyatel'nost' Soyuzn Gorodov*, p.6

In Artsap, the Armenian Committee of Moscow and the Central Armenian Committee were active in relief organizations. The Moscow Committee had a hospital with 30 beds, and a sanitary unit, whereas a united committee was formed in Hınıskale with the participation of the representatives of the *Sogor*, and the Society of Fraternal Aid. This united committee organized the relief for 2000 refugees, predominantly women and children and 400 orphans, and opened a hospital of 50 beds, an orphanage and a mill in Hınıs.⁶⁴ Hınıs also became an important center for the activities of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye*, which opened a branch in Hınıs, headed by Canik Efendi Botaş, who provided material aid, and opened a shelter for the elderly, and an orphanage for the Muslim population. The Muslim orphans were sent to the orphanages of The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* at Kağızman, Tiflis and Baku.⁶⁵

3.2.3 The Region of Erzurum:

Before the war, Erzurum city center had a population of 11,735 Armenians, 40 Greek families and nearly 30,000 Muslims⁶⁶ according to an Armenian traveler. The Muslim population could not be evacuated from the city unlike the case in other cities such as Van, Rize, and Trabzon.⁶⁷ Mainly the *Sogor* and the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* organized the relief organizations in the region.

With the occupation of Erzurum, the military authorities called the Sarıkamış branch of the *Sogor* for the cleaning up of the city. Moreover, the military authorities demanded from the *Sogor* to respond to the nutritional needs of the war stricken residents of the city, of the refugees, and also of the workers of the Sarıkamış-

⁶⁴ İonesyan, "Rezultaty Izsledovaniya Mushskoi Doliny", *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuznogo Gorodov*, No.8, (May 1916), p.132

⁶⁵ B. Aslan, *ibid.*, pp.286-287

⁶⁶ R. Bekgulyants, *ibid.*, p.60

Erzurum road.⁶⁸ A disinfection brigade of 40 people was sent in February 1916, and by the end of the year it had 7 subdivisions active in the region. They buried 1,500 Turkish corpses, and cleansed many buildings, mainly the military institutions, barracks, dormitories, baths, and also the private houses.⁶⁹ In a city, which was raged by typhus, and in which the death rate among the 40,000 infected people was up to 70%,⁷⁰ the activities of the disinfection brigade was of utmost importance. Two hundred Turks and hundred Arabs [probably prisoners of war] were employed in the cleansing activities.⁷¹ The construction of baths was another measure against infections. The *Sogor* operated four baths for the officers, four for soldiers and one for the refugees in Erzurum. The field hospitals of the *Sogor* increased their capacities by time to strengthen struggle against epidemics, and by the end of 1916 the *Sogor* hospitals had 665 beds: 225 surgical, 106 reserved for the PoWs, 150 for the typhus patients. However, that was not enough to meet the requirements of the situation and Dr. Markaryan, the officer of the Sanitary Department of the *Sogor* in Erzurum, asked the Central Committee of the Caucasian Department of the All-Russian Union of Towns, to negotiate with the military authorities for permission to utilize the 2000 beds capacity of the military hospitals in the city.⁷²

⁶⁷ Izgoi, "Godovshina vzyatiya Erzeruma", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 4 February 1917, p.4

⁶⁸ "Neobkhodimye izmeneniye v organizatsii deyatel'nost' v Sarikamishskom raione", *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov*, no.8, (May 1916), p.124

⁶⁹ "Deyatel'nost' dezinfektsionnogo otrayada Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov v Erzerume", *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), p.11

⁷⁰ *Otchety o deyatel'nost' uchrezhdenii Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov v sarikamishskom raione*, (Tiflis: N.p. 1916), p.82-83

⁷¹ "Deyatel'nost' dezinfektsionnogo otrayada Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov v Erzerume", *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), p.11

⁷² "Khronika", *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), p.47

Malnutrition of the population was referred to as an important cause for the spread of epidemics, therefore, the medico-sanitary aid and nutritional help were perceived as interconnected for the prevention of infectious diseases. Aware of this fact, the *Sogor* tried to provision the refugees and inhabitants of the Erzurum region. In the city, the refugees were not original inhabitants, thus they were deprived of the resources of the established residents. The *Sogor* tried to meet their needs by public kitchens. In other parts of the region, in Pasinler Valley, however, the refugees were the inhabitants of the destroyed villages, so in order to guarantee the food supply, The *Sogor* organized a resettlement program of the refugees, in coordination with the Chief Administrator of the Refugees, General Tamamshev, and provided agricultural equipment, and credits for the temporarily settled refugees.⁷³

Another important task levied on the *Sogor* was the supply of food for the workers of the Erzurum-Sarıkaş road.⁷⁴ However the scope of the task was not clearly defined by the military authorities. First of all, there were two different construction businesses in the mentioned direction; the railroad and the highway constructions. Second, the Russian Red Cross was also involved in feeding of workers. The *Sogor* sent two representatives to investigate the matter⁷⁵, and the military authorities divided the region into two, one under the responsibility of the Russian Red Cross, and the other under the *Sogor*'s responsibility.⁷⁶

⁷³ “O položanii bezhentsev v Pasinskoi doline i okrestnostyakh Erzeruma”, *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzha Gorodov*, no.8, (May 1916), p.115-123

⁷⁴ N. T. Stelmaschuka red., *Kavkazskii Kalendar na 1917 god*, (Tiflis: Tipografiya Kantselyarii Namestnika, 1916), p.347

⁷⁵ “Pitanie rabochikh na stroyuscheisya dorog Sarykamish-Erzerum”, *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Otdela Vserossiiskogo Soyuzha Gorodov*, no.6 (March 1916), pp.221-226

⁷⁶ *Otchety o deyatel'nost' uchrezhdenii Vserossiiskogo Soyuzha Gorodov v sarikamishskom raione*, (Tiflis: N.p., 1916), p.89

Table 1. The <i>Sogor</i> institutions in the Erzurum region by 1917: ⁷⁷	
Erzurum	1.Field hospital- General-diagnostic-400beds 2.Field hospital- General-400beds 3.Field hospital-Infectious diseases-150beds 4.Hospital of Russian Technicians brigade-100beds 5.Medico-sanitary assistance positions 6.Dental cabinet 7.Disinfection department 8.Canteens 9.Baths 10.Storage 11.Workshops
Köprüküy	1.Field hospital for workers 2.Canteens
Karakilise	1.Canteens 2.Orphanage 3.Medico-sanitary assistance unit
Hasankale	1.Canteens 2.Transportation station

Other than the main cities of the region, there were canteens in Cibok, Kötek, Hasankale, Karakaya-Gedik, Çat, Parmaksız, Çanak, Yüzbaş, Fama, Kame (Ağaçlı), Karaorgan, Agmalı (Çatak), Omragom (Yeşilöz), Aliçekrek (Aliçeyrek); coffee shops in Deveboynu, Bardakçı; medico-sanitary assistance positions in Aliçekrek and Omragom; transportation units in Yüzbaş, Fama, Kame and Kan; baths in Agmalı and Zivin (Süngütaşı).

Since the majority of the population in the city was consisted of the Muslims the *Sogor* cooperated with the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* branch in Kars for the organization of relief to the Muslims.⁷⁸ The chief representative of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* in the occupied regions, Hüsrev Paşa Bey Sultanov, had also applied for permission, and

⁷⁷ *Uchrezhdenie Kavkazskogo Otdela Vserossiiskogo Soyuzu Gorodov po dannym na 1-oe Yanvaryu 1917 goda*, (Tiflis: N.p., 1917), pp.4-6; *Proekty Smety Raskhodov Kavkazskogo Otdela Vserossiiskogo Soyuzu Gorodov*, (Tiflis: N.p., 1917), pp.20-68

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.84

the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* started its activities in the city by March 1916,⁷⁹(a few weeks after the occupation). Initially, the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* sent food for the Muslim population, and the representatives of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* surveyed the requirements of the Muslims. Adding to nutritional requirements, both the representatives of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* and officials of the *Sogor* expressed the pressing need of a hospital for the Muslim population. The chief representative of the *Sogor* in Erzurum suggested to the representatives of *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* to open a hospital for the Muslims,⁸⁰ and Sultanov applied to the Russian Red Cross, in March 1916, in order to take permission for the establishment of a field hospital.⁸¹ Although there was no substantial evidence for the opening of a hospital by the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye*, news about the transfer of a hospital of Muslim charity organization to the *Sogor*, reveals its existence. In November 1916, the hospital was left under the management of the medico-sanitary department of the *Sogor*, and the expenses of this hospital would be sponsored by the Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions of Turkey by then.⁸²

The conditions of the Muslim orphans were worse than the Armenian orphans, since the *Sogor* was especially dealing with the latter. Although Muslim orphans in the Erzurum region were taken to the orphanages of the *Sogor* and the Moscow Armenian Committee⁸³, their situation was miserable. Many orphans were

⁷⁹ B. Aslan, p.270

⁸⁰ *Otchety o deyatel'nost' uchrezhdenii Vserossiiskogo Soyuzza Gorodov v sarikamishskom raione*, Tiflis, 1916, p.84

⁸¹ B. Aslan, p.271

⁸² "Khronika", *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzza Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), p.47

⁸³ "Khronika", *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzza Gorodov*, no.3, (25 November 1916), p.99

taken as servants and they were subject to inhumane treatment.⁸⁴ The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* took the responsibility of the Muslim orphans, and sent many of them to the orphanages in Tiflis and Baku⁸⁵. By 1917, there were thousands of Muslim orphans from the occupied regions in Baku and they were in very decent conditions.⁸⁶ The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* authorized a delegation headed by Seyidov, to open a branch in Erzurum, and Seyidov stayed in the city until the end of Russian occupation and in coordination with the Muslim city administration of Hakkı Pasha,⁸⁷ which played an important role in preventing Armenian atrocities against the Muslim population.⁸⁸

Hasankale and the valley of Pasinler were the other important places of the relief activities of The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* in the Erzurum region. The relief in Hasankale was organized by the Sarıkamış branch, which opened a public kitchen, distributed food provisions and cloths, repaired a destroyed water resort and established an Education Society with the participation of Muslim soldiers of the Russian Army.⁸⁹ The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* opened a field hospital and a field kitchen for Muslim refugees in the valley of Pasinler.

In the Erzurum region, the last territory occupied by the Russian armies was Erzincan. In Erzincan The *Sogor* had a public kitchen serving 400 peoples a day. The Armenian Committee of Moscow had sent food and cereals for plantation, however insufficient. The aid was distributed in the city, but the surrounding places could not benefit from it. The *Sogor* resettled some of the refugees in the villages, but they

⁸⁴ Lev Kpiani, “Deti”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 7 October 1916, pp.2-3

⁸⁵ B. Aslan, p.271

⁸⁶ Erdoğan, *ibid.*, p.128

⁸⁷ B. Aslan, p.277

⁸⁸ B. Aslan, pp.272-284; Yavuz Aslan, “Erzurum’da Ermeni Mezalimi Hakkında Kantarcızade Hacı Mustafa’nın Hatıraları”, *Atatürk Üniversitesi İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no.6, (1993), pp.97-102

returned en masse to Erzincan, since these villages became a target for Kurdish tribes.⁹⁰

The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* also founded its branch in Erzincan. The center of relief was the mosque of Gerek, and the Muslim part of the city was divided into 7 districts with *muhtars*. The Russian administration did not allow this system to function. Although the succeeding representatives Cafer and Mazhar beys could not stay long in the city, the last representative, Abdulmabut Bey managed to stay and organize relief, and he aroused social consciousness of the Muslim population. During his presence he actively took part in the prevention of Armenian atrocities against the Muslims, and he left the city upon the withdrawal of the Russian Army.⁹¹

3.2.4 The region of Trabzon

Before the war, the city center of Trabzon had a total population of 51,016, (29,168 Turks, 13,190 Orthodox Greeks, 7,121 Armenians, 1,453 Catholics).⁹² After fierce fighting near Of,⁹³ the Turkish Army and the majority of the Turkish population had evacuated Trabzon on 16 April 1916.⁹⁴ “The Russian General [Liakhov] was received at the outskirts of the city by a deputation of citizens [exclusively of Christian citizens] headed by the American consul,”⁹⁵ and the

⁸⁹ B. Aslan, p.285

⁹⁰ “Polozhenie Arмян v zavoevannykh oblastiakh”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 24 November 1917, p.2

⁹¹ Ali Kemali, *Erzincan: Tarihi, Coğrafi, İctimai, Etnoğrafi, İdari, İhsai, tetkikat tecrübesi*, (N.p: Resimli Ay Matbaası T. L. Şirketi, 1932, p.121-125

⁹² S. O. Dickerman, “Report on the Vilayet of Trebizond” p.29, National Archives Washington D. C., Records of the Department of State, Inquiry Documents, Special Records and Studies, 1917-1919, Inquiry Document 120, National Archives Microfilm Publication MC1107, roll 9); Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1967, p.27

⁹³ Hasan Umur, *Of ve Of muharebeleri*, (İstanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1949), pp.41-65

⁹⁴ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Trabzon Tarihi: Fetihden Kurtuluş Kadar*, (Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2000), pp.174-175

⁹⁵ “The Russian Campaign of 1915-1916 in Armenia”, *The Times: History of the War*, (London: “The Times” Printing House Square, 1917), Vol. X, Chapter 159, p.263

Russian forces occupied the city on 18 April 1916. In the meantime, the city was left to the control of Greek *gendarmes*, since the new population of the city, which was approximately 15,000, consisted of Greeks.⁹⁶ Since the city had surrendered without fighting, it was spared destruction. The Muslim population had evacuated the city leaving everything intact; even the closed stores were full of commodities, the military and civilian administrative buildings, bridges, barracks, and houses were all in good condition, but plundered by the Greeks.⁹⁷ The *Sogor* inspectors, *Knyaz* Argutinskii-Dolgorukii and A. I. Mitkevich who arrived at the city after the occupation, and found the city almost at European standards, with clean streets, well-built houses, pavements, street illuminations, sewer system, and water supplies, though in oriental style.⁹⁸ The buildings were decorated with the flags of the United States of America, denoting that they were under the protection of the United States.⁹⁹ The medical conditions were satisfactory, although there was only one military field hospital.

Since the location of Trabzon was perceived as a remedy for the supply problem and also because the city was at a close point to the new western line of the Caucasian Front, the Russian military authorities ascribed more significance to the city and the region than the other places in occupied territories. Initially, a temporary military administration was founded, headed by General Yablochkin who was empowered with the rights of a governor-general. Besides this temporary Governor-

⁹⁶ A. M. Argutinskii-Dolgorukii, *Doklad knyaza Argutinskogo-Dolgorukogo o komandirovke v Trapezund*, (Tiflis: N.p., 1916), p.2

⁹⁷ "The Consul at Trebizond (Heizer) to the Secretary of State", 29 April 1916, Trebizond, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1916 Supplement The World War, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1929, pp.35-36

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.1

General, a “constructor of the fortified region of Trabzon”, Major General Schwartz, functioned, and under them, there was a city administration (*gorodskaya uprava*) formed of the residents of the city, headed by a prominent Greek.¹⁰⁰ Although the Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church in Trabzon, Chrysantos, did not take part in the city administration, he enjoyed real influence on the inhabitants of the city. Initially, the city administration was exclusively a Greek political entity, however, after the return of a significant number of Muslims to the city, two Muslim members, Karlıkzade Hafız Şevket and Zegirzade Zühtü İbrahim, were appointed to the city administration.¹⁰¹

This multi-headed structure of the new administration appeared to be destructive for the city. For the sake of centralization, after the proclamation of *Prikaz* no.739, Major General Schwartz was appointed as the commander of the fortified region on June 20, 1916,¹⁰² and he assigned the duties of the *nachalnik* to Sergei Rudolfovich Mintslov, who had good relations with the city elite. He actively got involved in social organizations, and tried to alleviate the problems of the native population with the Russian rulers. He initiated the publication of a local Russian newspaper, *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*. The newspaper was published in an abandoned Ottoman press. The first number appeared in November 1, 1916 and published daily till June 1917. The paper was in the format of a daily telegraph published 6 days in a week, and on Mondays was printed in the format of a

⁹⁹ A. I Mitkevich, “Po Anatoliiskomu Bregu”, *Izvestiya Vserossiiskogo Soyuzo Gorodov*, No.27-28, (1916), p.320

¹⁰⁰ S. R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya Epopeya: Dinevnik*, (Berlin: Sibirskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1922) p.45

¹⁰¹ “Khronika”, *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, 8 November 1916, p.2

¹⁰² Mintslov, *ibid.*, p.51

newspaper giving local news besides the news from Russia proper. Other than *Trapezondskii Voennyi Listok*, a number of Greek newspapers were published in the city, such as *Efxinos Pontus*, *Icho Tou Pontus*, *Pontikos*, *Logos*, *I Komnini*, and *Epochi*,¹⁰³ and a publicist, Mustafa Sırrı, took permission to publish a Turkish daily, *Trabzon Gazetesi*.¹⁰⁴

Even the appointment of S. R. Mintslov as the acting *nachalnik*, could not reconcile the Russian administration with the residents of the city and the Greek city administration had resigned in late November 1916, and Major General Schwartz appointed a Russian subject (Karaim) from the region of Kars, Dr. Kefeli as the head of the city administration. This appointment strained the relations further, and the Greek elites displayed their dissatisfaction in different boycotts such as not participating in the elections of the judges in February 1917.¹⁰⁵

The Russian rule failed in every task it took upon. The construction works were proceeding sluggardly in a disorganized way. Although the Viceroy, General Yudenich and General Yanushkevich were briefed about the huge construction projects at different times, projects were generally left on paper.¹⁰⁶ The police system was ineffective in preventing crime, which were escalating by time. The sanitary conditions and supply of the city were rapidly deteriorating. The influx of

¹⁰³ Huseyin Albayrak, *Trabzon basın tarihi ve Batum, Gümüşhane, Rize, Giresun, Ordu, Samsun basını*, (Ankara: N.p., 1994), p. 277

¹⁰⁴ There is no evidence for the appearance of the paper other than news on the pages of the *Trapezondskii Voennyi Listok*. “Alongside with the permission of the *nachalnik* for the opening of Turkish schools, the first issue of the *Trabzon Gazetesi* in Turkish appeared on January 16, the redactor of which was the experienced publicist Mustafa Sırrı.”, *Trapezondskii Voennyi Listok*, 16 January 1917, p.3

¹⁰⁵ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.234

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp.146, 194

malnourished soldiers and starving refugees rendered the city unprotected against epidemics.¹⁰⁷

The *Sogor* initiated its activities under such conditions. An important point of the report of the *Sogor* inspector, Argutinskii-Dolgorukii, was about the worsening sanitary conditions in the city. The *Sogor* took over the only hospital, which was left by the Turkish administration,¹⁰⁸ however, it was not sufficient for the worsening conditions. The *Sogor* opened special barracks for the infectious diseases in July 1916,¹⁰⁹ and the foundation of hospitals in Trabzon, Gümüşhane, Rize and Cevizlik was planned. The representative of the *Sogor* in Trabzon, Gogolashvili,¹¹⁰ appealed to General Shwartz, asking permission to open a large field hospital with 500 beds in Cevizlik, but, though the general initially did not approve, later he gave permission for a 100 beds hospital in the defined location.¹¹¹ Other than the *Sogor*, the Russian Red Cross opened hospitals in the city and in Soğuksu, which were also matters of conflict between the civilian and military authorities. A general from the military administration demanded the evacuation of the hospital at Soğuksu for he would use the building as a summer residence. The head of the city administration, Dr. Kefeli, in his turn, tried to acquire the building of the Red Cross hospital in the city as his residence. The conflicts were resettled in favor of the Red Cross upon the interference of the Viceroyalty.¹¹² Although the *Sogor* and other institutions

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, pp.73-74

¹⁰⁸ “V Trapezund (Nasha Beseda s Trapezundskim politismaisterom)”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 25 June 1916, p.2

¹⁰⁹ *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzu Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), p.22

¹¹⁰ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.236

¹¹¹ *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuzu Gorodov*, no.4, (10 December 1916), pp.50-51

¹¹² Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, pp.222-223

managed to establish several field hospitals in and around Trabzon, due to the disorganization and malfunctioning of the city administration to cleanse the city and provide sufficient food for the population, and due to obstacles from the military authorities, sanitary conditions gradually worsened.¹¹³

Besides worsening medico-sanitary conditions, there was the problem of the care for many unprotected Armenian children, hidden during the deportation of the Armenian population by the local Greeks, and some Muslims, and by the American consul. Although the Charitable Society of Batum then collected those children, the *Sogor* inspector *Knyaz Argutinskii-Dolgorukii* proposed an organized research for the orphans survived and opening of an orphanage for them.¹¹⁴ Upon the report of *Knyaz Argutinskii-Dolgorukii*, in May 1916 A. S. Babov was appointed for the investigation of the Armenian orphans in the region.¹¹⁵ He organized a commission of 5 people, and as a result of his investigation, 100 Armenian children were collected and sent to Batum and Kobulet, and were placed in the orphanages of the Armenian Charitable Society.¹¹⁶ It was also mentioned in the Armenian sources that an Armenian committee from the Caucasus collected thirty-three Armenian orphans, which were held hostage by the Turks.¹¹⁷

The institutions of the charitable societies in Trabzon also served as schools. The representatives of the civilian organizations under the leadership of the acting

¹¹³ Lev Kpiani, "Batun-Trebizond", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 30 May 1917, p.2; S.R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, 245

¹¹⁴ *Argutinskii-Dolgorukii*, *ibid.*, p.6

¹¹⁵ A. Babov, "Kravovaya Stranitsa iz Istorii Rezni Armyan v Trapezunde i v ego Okrestnostyakh-I", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 29 May 1916, p.3

¹¹⁶ "Deyatel'nost' Kavkazskogo Otdela na raznykh napravleniyakh Fronta", *Izvestiya Vserossiiskogo Soyuza Gorodov*, no.27-28, (1916), p.334

nachalnik of the city and the redactor of *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, Sergey Rudolfovich Mintslov, founded a Society of Enlightenment in Trabzon. They appealed to the civilian and military hospitals to enlist the illiterate patients and to inform the Society for the available hours of their hospitals for lectures. The Society had its meetings at the building of the postal treasury, and the office of *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok* served as the contact point.¹¹⁸ By February 1917, the mentioned public figures decided to reorganize the Society with more elaborate aims, such as the foundation of a school and a library for the soldiers, and organizing theatre shows. The first activity to raise money for these objectives had been a concert-cabaret at the hotel *Rossiya*, and after this performance, a general meeting would be convened.¹¹⁹ However, General Schwartz intervened in the formation, and demanded from the public figures to elect personalities selected by himself as the head and members of the Society. The Society did not yield to the instructions of the general, and the general did not give permission for the future activities of the Society in response. Hence, the civilian initiative was once more impeded by the military orders.¹²⁰ The Local Society of Enlightenment resumed its activities after the outbreak of revolution in March 1917, in Petrograd. In April 1917, they opened a library, started to collect books, and subscribed to 50 journals and newspapers.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Kevork Yeghia Suakjian, *Genocid in Trebizond: A Case Study of Armeno-Turkish Relations During The First World War*, PhD diss. The University of Nebraska, (Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms International, 1981), p.138

¹¹⁸ Archives of Russian Navy (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv VoЕННО-Morskogo Flota (RGAVMF)*, St. Petersburg), F.1269, o.1, d.4, l.548 (18 December 1916)

¹¹⁹ S. R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.250-251

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p.251

¹²¹ “Khronika”, *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, 2 April 1917, p.4

The philanthropic societies were active also in other cities and towns of the Trabzon region. The *Sogor* operated a field hospital in Ellev (Görelle),¹²² a public kitchen in Zefanos¹²³, a medico-sanitary assistance unit and a canteen at Hamsiköy, coffeeshops at Kala and Drona, baths and laundry at Fol, and a mobile unit to search for orphans at Gülümhane.

The All Russian Union of *Zemstvos* had a field hospital in Polathane,¹²⁴ and the Russian Red Cross had a hospital, and orphanage in Bayburt. The orphanage functioned especially for Muslim orphans, since the Armenian orphanage accepted exclusively the Armenians. The Red Cross personnel in Bayburt had very intimate relations with the Muslim population so much so that, the nurses adopted pseudo Muslim names.¹²⁵

¹²² Lev Kipiani, "Platana-Fol-Ellev", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 23 August 1917, p.2

¹²³ Lev Kipiani, "Belaya Villa", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 5 August 1917, p.2

¹²⁴ "Obyavleniya", *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, 29 November 1916, p.4

¹²⁵ "Testimony of sister Tatyana Karameli, from the Russian Red Cross", *Ermeniler Tarafından Yapılan Katliam Belgeleri*, Ankara: T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2001, pp.363-375

Table 2. The <i>Sogor</i> institutions in the Trabzon region by 1917: ¹²⁶	
Trabzon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infection barracks No.1 (for serious cases-100beds) 2. Infection barrack-50beds 3. Field hospital No. 4 (for refugees) 4. Dental cabinet 5. Medico-Sanitary assistance units 6. Bacteriological laboratory 7. Medico-sanitary construction brigade 8. Orphanage 9. Bread distribution unit 10. Transportation unit 11. Disinfection unit 12. Storages (commodity, food, pharmacy) 13. Pharmacy 14. Baths (separate for senior and junior officers, soldiers, refugees, and patients)
Cevizlik	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Field hospital No.3 2. Medico-sanitary-assistance unit 3. Canteens 4. Laundry 5. Bakery 6. Baths
Zigana-Hanları	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laundry 2. Bath 3. Medico-sanitary assistance unit 4. Canteen

Although the Muslim population in the city of Trabzon was almost nonexistent, Muslims in the in the surroundings of Trabzon did not leave their villages,¹²⁷ and some of the Muslim refugees were returning to the region. The conditions of the villagers and the returning refugees were not better than the Muslim population in the other occupied territories. These conditions were alleged to be dangerous for the acting army, and the military authorities got in contact with the

¹²⁶ *Uchrezhdeniye Kavkazskogo Otdela*, pp.13-14

¹²⁷ S. R. Mintslov, *Statisticheskie ocherki Trebizonda*, (Trebizond: 1916), pp.4-20

Batum branch of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* in June 1916,¹²⁸ and demanded the organization of the relief for the Muslims. The *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* favorably responded to the demand, and founded a branch in Trabzon to organize the aid for the Muslim population.¹²⁹ An Azerbaijani Turkish officer of the Russian Army managed the branch, and local personalities were also employed in the activities.¹³⁰ Apart from providing material aid, the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* was active in the settlement of the judicial conflicts of the Muslims with the Russian civil and military institutions.¹³¹

The ineffective security system of the Russian administration left the Muslim population defenseless against Greek and Armenian atrocities which were intensified, as in other regions, after the withdrawal of the Russian forces in 1918.¹³² Throughout and after the end of the occupation, the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* clandestinely but actively participated and even pioneered Muslim resistance. They congregated the Muslim population in relatively secure districts of the city¹³³, and the Muslim soldiers of the Russian army took part in reconnaissance activities, in order to avert the Greek or Armenian attacks on the Muslim population.¹³⁴ The last favor of the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* was warning about the plans of the Armenians to blow up the

¹²⁸ RGIA, F.21, o.1, d.285, l.28 reverse

¹²⁹ B. Aslan, p.298

¹³⁰ Sadi Selçuk, *Esaretin Acı Hatıraları ve 37. Kafkas Tümeninin Trabzonu düşmandan istirdadı: "Kurtuluş"*, (Konya: Ülkü Basımevi, 1955), p.91; B. Aslan, p. 299

¹³¹ S. Selçuk, p.87; B. Aslan, p. 300

¹³² Sabahattin Özel, *Milli Mücadelede Trabzon*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), pp.10-11; B. Aslan, p. 301

¹³³ S. Selçuk, p.89; B. Aslan, p. 302

¹³⁴ Muzaffer Lermioğlu, *Akçaabat Tarihi-Akçaabat Tarihi ve Birinci Genel Savaş-Hicret Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: 1949), pp.328-329; B. Aslan, p.300

arsenal in the city. Although they could not prevent the sabotage, no one suffered among the Muslim population.¹³⁵

Another society, which took part in the relief organizations for the Muslim population of the coastal region, was the Georgian Charity Organization of Batum. Their activities stemmed also from political considerations. The Georgian Society favored the Laz population of the region for help, identifying them as Muslim Georgians.¹³⁶ The Society opened offices in Rize and Trabzon, distributed food in the region, founded an orphanage and a school for the “children of Laz” in Rize.¹³⁷ In addition to these activities in the occupied regions, they dealt with the problem of the Turkish civilian prisoners of war in Russia. According to a Georgian newspaper, *Sakartvelo*, Turkish subjects of ethnic Georgian Muslims [Laz] origin from the occupied regions, involved in commercial activities at different places of the Russian Empire, were arrested as subjects of the enemy government, and were exiled to the northern provinces of the Russian Empire. Taking the case of the returning Armenian subjects of Turkey as a precedent, the newspapers suggested that the Georgian Charitable Society should defend the rights of the Georgian Muslims and provide their return to their residences, which were by then had already become Russian territory.¹³⁸

Other than the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* and the Georgian Charitable Society, the Viceroy also intervened in the relief organizations for the Muslim population of the coastal region. In October 1916, Nikolai Nikolayevich assigned a special credit to

¹³⁵ S. Selçuk, pp.107-108; B. Aslan, pp.303-306

¹³⁶ *Tiflisskii Listok*, 20 August 1916, p.3

¹³⁷ *Tiflisskii Listok*, 26 August 1916, p.3

¹³⁸ “O chem pishut: Sakartvelo”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 12 November 1916, p.4

provide food for the Muslims, and appointed V. M Tamamshev, chief of the administration of refugees, to organize the distribution of food. The latter appealed to the representatives of the *Sogor* with the request of opening food storages and distribution points on the directions of Fol-Trabzon and Trabzon-Gümüşhane.¹³⁹ Thereafter, the Muslims also benefited from the *Sogor* aid.¹⁴⁰

Concluding Remarks

Although the *Sogor*, the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* and various other organizations were involved in the relief activities for the Muslim and Christian populations of the occupied regions, the results were far from being satisfactory. Even in the main cities, famine and epidemics prevailed by 1917,¹⁴¹ and there were some places to which none of the organizations had reached.¹⁴² The worsening conditions of the occupied regions were reflected in the newspapers, and on this occasion, the first attempt to regulate the activities was made by the Caucasian Viceroyalty in February 1917. The Supply Department of the Viceroyalty decided to centralize the relief organizations. The activities of the civilian and governmental organizations would be united; the commodity and money aid would be distributed fairly and without discrimination towards race and religion. In order to prevent disorganization, a special convention was assembled under the presidency of the Governor-General. The military officials responsible for the supply of the army, representatives of the relief organizations and other persons whose experiences might be useful

¹³⁹ *Tifliskii Listok*, 5 October 1916, p.2

¹⁴⁰ Ahmet Refik (Altınay), *Kafkas yollarında: hâtralar ve tahassüsler*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001), p.27

¹⁴¹ S.R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.245

¹⁴² *Bulleten' Mediko Sanitarnogo Otdela Glavnogo Kavkazskogo Komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soyuza Gorodov*, no.3, (1916), p.100

participated in the convention. A consultation bureau, and local branches of this bureau to determine local needs and to organize relief in these localities were established by the convention. The whole structure would be formed by the Governor-Generalship.¹⁴³

However, due to the turbulent events of following months, the central system could not be installed. The disorganization problem was again discussed in a meeting of the Armenian social organizations in May 1917. The main problem was restated as the nonexistence of a central administration to regulate the relief organization, but this meeting also was in vain.¹⁴⁴ The Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions, which was identified as being responsible for the centralization of the relief organizations, had dealt with the establishment of the administrative structure and the security system of the region rather than provisioning the population.¹⁴⁵

The inefficiency of the occupation administration led social organizations to undertake the huge task of feeding and healing a population of 800,000 in a rough geography. Although the government provided credits to the *Sogor*, the *Cemiyet-i Hayriye* and other organizations, and although these organizations raised funds through private donations, the aid sent to the region was not sufficient. The medico-sanitary aid was also left upon the shoulders of the social organizations, which had difficulty in employing the necessary number of personnel. The Governor-Generalship planned to send two doctors to each of the 29 *okrugs* in the occupied

¹⁴³ “Ot Upravlenie Voennogo General-Gubernatorstva Oblastei Turtsii”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 26 February 1917, p.2

¹⁴⁴ “Armyanskie Organizatsii Pomosh’ Bezhentsem”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 3 May 1917, p.2

¹⁴⁵ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.94

regions, but was able to send doctors to only 11 *okrugs*; moreover only one doctor could be sent to some of these 11 *okrugs*.¹⁴⁶

The discriminative approach of the organizations, which was outlawed by the convention of February 1917, was another shortcoming in the relief activities. Mainly the philanthropists came to the help of the Christian, i.e., the Armenian population; that is to say, the Muslim population could hardly benefit from relief. Even the Viceroy had to intervene on behalf of the Muslims, as he instructed the *Sogor* representatives to open special canteens for Muslims, in the Trabzon region.

The subsequent part of this study is dealing with the academic explorations conducted by Russian scientists in eastern and northeastern Anatolia.

¹⁴⁶ V. Nikolskii, “K voprosu o mediko-sanitarnom ustroistve v zavoevannykh oblastiakh Turtsii -II-”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 17 November 1917, p.4

4. CHAPTER 4: ACADEMIC STUDIES

During the relatively short period of occupation, the conquered regions of Turkey became a scene for the activities of Russian academic institutions, as was the case for other territories occupied by the Russian Empire. In the 19th century, the Russian governments had initiated the formation of special institutions to study the peculiarities of the Caucasus, and Turkestan. Upon the successful military advance of Russian troops deep into Turkey, the academic establishments of the Russian Empire diverted their activities also to the occupied regions of Turkey, which were not accessible prior to the war. There were also cases when they were called for explorations by certain state offices as a part of wartime requirements. Hence, Russian academicians carried out intensive and wide range of academic studies in the occupied regions.

The first group of scientists who were called to the occupied territories was geographers and botanists to study the colonization prospects of the region. However, due to wartime difficulties, and depending on the unfavorable attitude of the military authorities, these expeditions and explorations did not satisfy the Ministry of Agriculture and its representatives in the occupied regions.¹

Another group of scientists were the archaeologists interested in the historical and architectural treasures of the region. Their main focus of interest was exploring, registering and preserving the historical and archaeological monuments of different civilizations that had suffered drastically in the detrimental conditions caused by military activities and ethnic strife. Moreover, ethnographers and historians came to the region and made or attempted to make explorations. Various academic

institutions, namely, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Imperial Russian Museum of Alexander III, and the Caucasian Museum in Tiflis, planned these studies. The Ministries of Finance and Public Enlightenment had been the sponsors of the academic studies, all of which were conducted with the approval and under supervision of the military authorities of the occupied regions.

Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich, the president of the Archaeological Society of Moscow, and Grafina Uvarova, the president of the Imperial Archaeological Society, wrote letters to the Viceroy at the Caucasus, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, on 11 March 1916, requesting the preparations of necessary regulations for the preservation of the archaeological treasures of the occupied regions. In his letter, Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich also inquired about the possibility of the attachment of archaeologists to the staffs of the marching armies.²

The response of the Viceroy, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich revealed the fact that, the problem of the preservation of the cultural and historical monuments at the Caucasian Front had also constituted a matter of concern for the military authorities. The Viceroy informed Georgii Mikhailovich that he had instructed the senior commanders at the front to take necessary measures for the preservation of the historical monuments in their respective territories. Furthermore, the Viceroy stated that, although the peculiar conditions of war hindered the appointment of archaeologists to the army staffs, with special permissions, they might conduct archaeological studies in the region.³

¹ The botanic and geographic expeditions were explained in Chapter 2 of this study.

² *RGIA* F.530, o.1, d.63, l.2-2 reverse

³ *ibid.*

The matters of preservation, and the status of the archaeologists, were regulated by a special *Prikaz* of the Viceroy. *Prikaz* no.117 on the preservation of the cultural artifacts, buildings, and archaeological sites was issued on 30 March 1916. The *Prikaz* served as the main official document founding the basis of all scientific studies in the region. By the *Prikaz*, the churches, mosques, monasteries, cemeteries, archives, libraries, museums with all contents especially historical manuscripts and books, all the inscriptions and decorations on steles, rocks and hills, were all claimed to be state property and declared to be under the protection of the Russian state. The *Prikaz* also regulated prospective archaeological studies in the region. It stipulated that, all the explorative studies would be conducted with the special permission of the Commander-in-Chief (the Viceroy) and under the supervision of local commanders.⁴

Thus, by the confirmation of the military authorities and upon the assignments of the academic institutions, N. Y. Marr, I. A. Orbeli, S. V. Ter-Avetisyan, E. Takaishvili, N. L. Okunev, F. I. Uspenskii, and I. Ya. Stelletskii organized short or long expeditions. These scientists accomplished, to a considerable extent, the huge task of the registration and conservation of the monuments with the participation of many other archaeologists, photographers, and technicians.

4.1 Archaeological Expeditions to Eastern Anatolia

The first region to attract the Russian scientists was the Van region, which was the first region to fall under the Russian occupation. This region, especially the city of Van, which was known as Tushpa, the capital of the Urartu kingdom between

⁴ Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg (*Arkhiv Akademii Nauk*, hereafter cited as *AAN*), F.169, o.1, delo 4, l. 1, “*Prikaz* No.117, Glavnokomanduyushago Kavkazskoi Armiei”,

the 13th and 8th centuries BC, had already been a focus of interest for the Russian archaeologists even before the war. The first Russian archaeologist sent to Van was I. A. Orbeli⁵ in 1912. He conducted research at the fortress of Van and Toprakkale. This preliminary survey of Orbeli and Boris Vladimirovich Farmakovskii⁶'s report on "Stone friezes with carved figures from Van" in 1914, invoked scientific interest and academic N. Ya. Marr⁷, who had been involved in archaeological and linguistic studies in the Caucasus for many years, proposed the establishment of a special commission for research and excavations at Toprakkale and Van under the Oriental Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁸ The department prepared a protocol for the commission, which would undertake the task of explorations on the antiquity of Van and neighboring places. Since the mentioned places were in the vicinity of the Russian border, it was stated at the same meeting that particularly Russian scientists should conduct the explorations. Hence, the departments assigned I. A. Orbeli prepare a survey in the summer of 1914. Although the Ministry of Public

(17 March 1916), Tiflis.

⁵ **I. A. Orbeli (1887-1961)**: First president of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR (1943—47), president of the State Museum of Hermitage (1934—51) Participated in the Ani excavations of N. Ya. Marr and conducted important surveys in Turkey and Armenia. Major studies were concentrated on mediaval cultures of the Caucasus, Armenian epigraphy, national epos, Kurdish language, Georgian and Armenian architecture. (see K. N. Yuzbashyan, *Akademik I. A. Orbeli*, Moscow, 1964)

⁶ **Boris Vladimirovich Farmakovskii**: (1870-1928). Archaeologist, art historian, correspondent member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

⁷ **Nikolai Yakovievich Marr**: (1864-1934) Born in Georgia to a family of a Georgian mother, and Scottish father. Specialised on Armenian, Georgian and Iranian language and history. Conducted detailed excavations for long years in Ani, Kars. Marr developed a linguistic theory which considered the Caucasian languages as Iaphetic, linking them with Etruscan and Bask languages. This theory had been an official theory till the 1950's.

⁸ N. Marr, I. Orbeli, *Arkheologicheskaya Ekspeditsiya 1916 goda v Van: Raskopki dvukh nish na Vanskoi skale i nadpisi Sardura vtorogo iz raskopok zapadnoi nish*, (Peterburg: Akademicheskaya Tipografiya, 1922), p.1

Enlightenment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave permission and guaranteed the expenditures, the outbreak of war suspended the projects.⁹

4.1.1 The First Expedition of Ter-Avetisyan

The war, on the one hand, disrupted the earlier plans of archaeologists, but on the otherhand, it laid down new possibilities before them in the course of time. Following the occupation of the region of Van by the Russian armies in 1915, The Russian Academy of Sciences immediately reactivated the prewar plans about archaeological studies. Being the director of the Commission for the Preservation of the Antiquities at the Caucasian Front, N. Ya. Marr described the detrimental conditions of the region for archaeological artifacts and stressed the necessity of the conservation in a conference at the Oriental Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences convened in summer 1915. Upon the resolutions of this conference, the senior professor from the Department of Archaeology of the Caucasian Museum in Tiflis, S. V. Ter-Avetisyan, applied to the Viceroy at the Caucasus, for a preliminary survey on account of the Russian Academy of Sciences.¹⁰ The purpose of this study was to survey the Van region and to register manuscripts, archaeological monuments and sites in order to prevent further destruction.¹¹ Since the artifacts and manuscripts to be registered during the survey would be predominantly related to religion, Ter-Avetisyan appealed to the Catholicos to have monks accompany of the survey.¹² Ter-Avetisyan's journey began from Tiflis on 28 November 1915, and the first monument to be registered was the church at Saray. Ter-Avetisyan collected

⁹ *ibid.*, p.2

¹⁰ "Khronika Kavkazskogo Muzeya", *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Muzeya*, Tom X, 1917, Tiflis, No:1, pp.104-105.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.104

manuscripts, which were damaged and spread all over, from the destroyed church. The second site of examination was Vastan. The commander of the Frontier Corps, General Kulebyakin, had already prepared a list and current features of the architectural monuments in Vastan. The General also actively cooperated with the expedition team of Ter-Avetisyan through their work.¹³ They registered the Vastan mosque, mausoleums and the monasteries of Chagar Surp-Nishan and the Mother of God. The mosque and the monasteries were totally plundered and partially demolished.

Turning in the direction of Van, the expedition staff visited the village of Artamed to examine the inscriptions from the time of the Kingdom of Van and the famous irrigation canals of Semiramid. In the city of Van, which was almost totally ruined, the Ter-Avetisyan expedition prepared a list of mosques and churches. The churches in the Armenian suburb of the city had been destroyed and plundered. The mosques had shared a similar fate. The beautiful tiles and faiences of the *Kurşun Camii* (Lead Mosque) were stripped off and manuscripts found in the mosque were thrown everywhere, as was the case in the churches.¹⁴ The fortress of Van, Toprakkale and the Port of Meher were the last sites of examination in the city.¹⁵ After the expedition the team copied the illegible inscriptions on the surface, photographed and drew the plans of the fortress and caves. Then, they left the city for the monasteries on the islands of Akhtamar, Lim (Kadir Adası), Ktuts, and Varak. They collected the surviving manuscripts, photographed and drew the plans

¹² “Otchet 1915-go goda”, *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Muzeya*, Vol.11, 1918, Tiflis, no:3-4, p.21

¹³ *ibid.*, p.22

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.22

¹⁵ “Khronika Kavkazskogo Muzeya”, p.105

of the monasteries. The Monastery of Lim was destroyed and all the manuscripts had disappeared along with other valuable items. Although the building of the Varak and Ktuts monasteries were damaged, their libraries remained intact, and were transferred to Echmiadzin by Ter-Avetisyan. At the end of the two-month long expedition, the total number of the manuscripts brought by Ter-Avetisyan to Echmiadzin was 1087.¹⁶ Cuneiform steles, ancient and medieval armory, and other historical and ethnographic materials were delivered to the Caucasian Museum.¹⁷ The field diaries of Ter-Avetisyan were submitted to the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Islamic manuscripts collected during the expedition were delivered to the Asian Museum of the Academy. These Islamic manuscripts were studied by I. A. Falev, who was also charged with the task of registration of particularly Islamic monuments and cultural artifacts in Eastern Anatolia.¹⁸

4.1.2 Archaeological and Ethnographical Expeditions to the region of Van

The results of the Ter-Avetisyan expedition were beyond expectations. In a speech on 10 March 1916 at the Oriental Department of Russian Academy of Sciences, Marr suggested renewal of a systematic study in the region. The Oriental Department conferred the task of organizing an expedition to N. Ya. Marr and Veselovskii, and they appointed I. A. Orbeli to undertake the mission. Marr found Orbeli competent enough to accomplish such an explorative study in a region where he had worked before. For his own studies, Marr planned to devote the summer of 1916 for the excavations in Ani. Besides, as the director of the Commission for the

¹⁶ “Otchet 1915-go goda”, p.23

¹⁷ “Khronika Kavkazskogo Muzeya”, p.105

Preservation of the Antiquities at the Caucasian Front, he decided to travel along the northern shores of the Lake Van, through the places, which had not been visited by S. V. Ter-Avetisyan. After all, Marr intended to visit Van on his way back to Tiflis, just in order to familiarize with the results of the Orbeli expedition, which was planned to be concluded by then.¹⁹

However, the peculiar conditions of war compelled Marr to lead the expedition himself.²⁰ The Oriental Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Ethnographical Department of the Russian Museum of Alexander III applied to the Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich for the approval of two expeditions. The first one was an archaeological expedition according to the projects of 1914, which would be headed by N. Ya. Marr, and second one was an ethnographical expedition to be led by A. A. Miller.²¹ The Grand Duke, petitioned to the Tsar on 29 March 1916, and the latter signed the petition denoting his imperial consent and added with his handwriting “need to hurry”.²²

Thus, the two expeditionary teams, which departed from Petrograd, arrived in Tiflis on 17 June 1916. The first team was the archaeological expeditionary team of Marr, and consisted of Marr, Orbeli, P. E. Knyagintskii, and the photographer, A. M. Vruir. The second team, which aimed at conducting an ethnographical expedition,

¹⁸ N. Ya. Marr, “Otchet Akademika N. Ya. Marra o komandirovke letom 1916 goda na Kavkaz dlya ohrany pamyatnikov v raione voennikh deistvii”, *Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, Vol. 10, 1916, p.1481

¹⁹ Vera Andreevna Mikhankova, *Nikoai Yakovlevich Marr: Ocherk ego zhizni*, (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademicheskii Nauk SSSR v Leningrade, 1949), p.243; Marr, *Arheologicheskaya Ekspeditsiya*, p. 2

²⁰ Mikhankova, *ibid.*

²¹ *RGIA* F.530, o.1, d.63, ll.7 reverse-8

²² *RGIA* F.530, o.1, d.63, l.9-9reverse

consisted of the ethnographer and anthropologist A. A. Miller, A. G. Aleni and I. P. Makinyants.²³

The archaeological expedition managed to start early enough to take advantage of the aftermath of the war; that is, to travel with military protection and aid.²⁴ In the region of Van, Marr and his staff employed soldiers in their excavations. The main site of his research was Toprakkale, where German, French and English travelers or archaeologists had made unsystematical excavations that had complicated the studies of Marr. Meanwhile, I. A. Orbeli was dealing with inscriptions and dispersed stones with cuneiforms in the city and around. His research led him to two niches below the fortress at the slope of the Rock. These niches were known as *Hazine Kapısı* (the Port of Treasury) referring to the presence of a treasure beneath. Fortunately, the existence of a shrine, (the tomb of a Muslim saint, *Şeyh Abdurrahman Baba Tekkesi*), prevented treasure-hunters from digging.²⁵ Orbeli decided to excavate the niches having identified a semi-visible inscription. This excavation surpassed the highest expectations of the scientists. At the western niche a huge stele was found with cuneiform inscriptions. N. Ya. Marr read the inscription, which belonged to the King Sardur II, (Marr would publish a detailed description of it in 1922.) At the eastern niche a pedestal of another stele was exposed, but the stele was not in its place. While looking for the stele or its parts in the neighborhood, Orbeli found some of its parts at the church of St. Isaac.²⁶

²³ “Nauchnye Ekspeditsii”, *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 4 June 1916, p.3

²⁴ N. I. Platonova, “Nikolai Yakovlevich Marr –Arkheolog i organizator Arkheologicheskoi Nauk”, *Arkheologicheskie Vesti*, no.5 (1996-1997), St. Petersburg, 1998, p.376

²⁵ N. Marr, I. Orbeli, *Arkheologicheskaya Ekspeditsiya 1916 goda v Van*, p.8

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp.19-20

The second expedition, which aimed at exploring the region from an ethnographical aspect could not be realized. Members of that expedition were either employed at the military institutions to translate documents from local languages in Tiflis or were charged with works related to the activities of the Caucasian Museum there.²⁷ Thus they were unable to leave the city. Another unaccomplished ethnographical survey was to be undertaken by P. A. Falev. In coordination with the Marr expedition, Falev intended to conduct an ethnographical and linguistic survey among the Muslim population of the occupied territories of Eastern Anatolia. On his way to Bitlis and Muş he met Ter-Avetisyan in Tiflis, who had returned from his expedition in the region where Falev was prepared to go. Ter-Avetisyan told the latter that, in the occupied regions the Muslim population was almost nonexistent and all the attainable Muslim manuscripts and books were collected and brought to Tiflis by himself. Thus, Falev gave up his plans for the ethnographical research and went to the Iranian Azerbaijan instead.²⁸

4.1.3 The Second Expedition of Ter-Avetisyan

According to previous plans, instead of directing the exploration in Van, Marr intended to arrange an expedition to the places around the western shores of the Lake Van where Ter-Avetisyan did not visit in summer 1915. Since Marr opted to stay in Van during the summer of 1916, the expedition planned by N. Ya. Marr was conducted by Ter-Avetisyan in 1916, between 13 May and 5 September. The expedition began from Sarıkamış, proceeding to Köprüköy, Hasankale and Erzurum.

²⁷ N. Ya. Marr, “Defekti ispolneniya pepologovsheisya organizatsii”, *AAN F.800*, o.1, d.1295, l.8

²⁸ P. A. Falev, “Otchet o poezdke v Zakavkaze i v Azerbaidzhan letom 1916 goda v svyazi s okhranoi pamyatnikov vostochnikh drevnostei na kavkazskom fronte”, *Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, Serial 6, Vol.11, nos. 1-11, (January-June, 1917), pp.171-176

From there, Ter-Avetisyan turned again towards Hasankale and Köprüköy, and visited Muş, Hınıs and Bitlis. With the accumulation of a significant collection, composed of manuscripts and some archaeological artifacts, Ter-Avetisyan returned to Tiflis for the safe transfer of this collection, and afterwards, traveled through Erzurum to Mamahatun and Erzincan. The director of the Caucasian Museum, A. N. Kaznakov, who after Erzurum returned to Van, accompanied Ter-Avetisyan.²⁹ They spent 2 days to draw the plans of the fortress in Hasankale. On May 7, Ter-Avetisyan and Kaznakov arrived in Erzurum, and dealt with the documentation of the archaeological sites and artifacts in the city. The first place of attention had been the library, which was then in a chaotic situation. The library held manuscripts and printed books in Armenian and Ottoman, and books in French. They sent some of the books and manuscripts to Tiflis, and left the rest of the books (10.000 in amount) under the control of the *nachalnik* of Erzurum and requested the placement of the books at an Armenian church. The most important architectural monuments examined, described and photographed by Ter-Avetisyan were the buildings of the Seljukid period. They were the Çifte Minare, Ulu Cami, Yakutiye mosque [*sic*], city fortress, and several tombs at different locations in and around the city.³⁰ On his way to Hınıs he photographed and examined an old bridge and in Hınıs penned descriptions of the fortress and the mosque. Then, Kaznakov left for Van, where he

²⁹ S. V. Ter-Avetisyan, “Predvaritel’niy otchet po II komandirovke S. V. Ter-Avetisyana v zanyatiya russkimi voiskami chasti Turetskoi Armenii”, *Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, (1916), p.1484

³⁰ Ter-Avetisyan, “Predvaritelniy otchet po II komandirovke”, p.1485

made explorations of the caves and underground facilities of the fortress of Van, and published the results in the journal of the Caucasian Museum³¹

Passing through the mountain of Bingöl, Ter-Avetisyan traveled alone to the right banks of Fırat River and visited the ruins of an ancient Armenian city, Ashtishat (village of Derik [Saltepe]), where he documented the ruins of the churches, and tombs of some Armenian saints (the first translators of Bible into Armenian). On May 21, his next stop was the village of Avran (Akören). He photographed the churches of St. Stephen and Surp Karabet [the Holy Forerunner, St. John the Baptist (Çengelli Kilise)], which were blown up by Turkish and Kurdish looters.³² Before his arrival some Armenian monks were sent to this area by the Catholicos of All-Armenians to collect the manuscripts, which survived, so that Ter-Avetisyan, could not find any books or manuscripts there. On May 22, he arrived in Muş, photographed and conducted research in the churches and monasteries of the city. Finding out that the engraved wooden port of the Arakelotz [monastery of the Apostles], which was taken by Turks in order to sell it to a German scientist (Belk), was in Bitlis, he searched for the port and sent it to the Caucasian Museum.³³ In Bitlis, he cooperated with the *nachalnik* of the city in his search for manuscripts, and photographed all the damaged buildings of churches and mosques in the city. Although he could not find any Armenian manuscripts, he purchased 300 samples of Muslim manuscripts for the Academy of Sciences. Furthermore, Ter-Avetisyan dealt with excavations in the environs of Bitlis. He dug in 3 mounds and found out 3 steles

³¹ A. N. Kaznakov, "Peshera s tainikami v Vanskoi Tsitateli", *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Muzeya*, Vol.11, no.1-2, (1917), pp.28-32

³² *ibid.*, p.1485

³³ *ibid.*, p.1486

with inscriptions at the village of Dermet, and a fourth at the monastery of Surp Oganēs, and sent these steles to Tiflis.

Ter-Avetisyan found the monuments of Erzincan in a worse condition than the ones in Bitlis. His efforts to collect Armenian manuscripts were in vain, though, he managed to gather 600 Muslim manuscripts for the Academy of Sciences.³⁴ Since the city itself did not possess any significant monument, Ter-Avetisyan had reported the descriptions of the monasteries around the city.³⁵

The Arabic manuscripts, which were collected by Ter-Avetisyan and delivered to the Aziatskii Museum of the Academy of Sciences, were studied by I. Yu. Krachkovskii. He prepared a categorical list of the manuscripts, which mainly consisted of interpretive auxiliary works (*şerhs* and *haşiyes*), and the original books on which the former had been written.³⁶ On the Ottoman manuscripts on the other hand, P. A. Falev conducted research. This collection included many official documents, history, literature and grammar books, and *divans* of some prominent Ottoman poets. Falev classified the books categorically and chronologically in order to assess the evolution of the literary tradition.³⁷

4.1.4 The Expedition of Okunev

Another archaeologist and former member of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, sent by the Academy of Sciences, to the Caucasian Front,

³⁴ “Ekspeditsiya Ter-Avetisyana”, *Tiflisskii Listok*, 28 August 1916, p.2

³⁵ Ter-Avetisyan, “Predvaritelnyy otchet”, p.1487

³⁶ I. Yu. Krachkovskii, “Arabskie rukopisi postupivshiya v Aziatskii Muzei Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk s Kavkazskogo Fronta”, *Izvestiya Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, Serial 6, Vol. 11, (1917), pp.913-949

³⁷ P. A. Falev, “Osmanskiya rukopisi postupivshiya v Aziatskii Muzei Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk s Kavkazskogo Fronta”, *Izvestiya Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, Serial 6, Vol.12, nos.12-18, (September-December, 1918), pp.1619-1630

was N. L. Okunev³⁸ His task comprised the collection of the archaeological artifacts of the Christian civilizations in the occupied regions and organization of the protection of the archaeological monuments and sites he visited. Okunev had organized the program and the staff of his expedition in coordination with Ter-Avetisyan, and the latter planned to join the expedition later. The expedition staff consisted of Okunev, the head of the expedition, A. Ya. Beloborodov, an archaeologist, and a photographer, Bul'benko, appointed by Ter-Avetisyan. The team gathered in Tiflis and left for Erzurum on 21 July 1916.

First place of examination was Hasankale, where Ter-Avetisyan had worked before and where he would join the Okunev team. However, Ter-Avetisyan could not leave Tiflis and the Okunev expedition continued to work without Ter-Avetisyan. They photographed the excavations that Ter-Avetisyan had made in Hasankale and investigated the Armenian monastery of Astvazazin. On 28 July 1916, they arrived in Erzurum and shot the photographs of the Seljukid monuments of Çifte Minare and Yakutiye *medreses* and several tombs- *kümbets*. Çifte Minare and Yakutiye had been damaged during the previous Russo-Turkish wars of 1828 and 1878. In 1829, when the Russian armies first occupied the city, some decorations on the portal of Yakutiye had been destroyed (i.e. the two-headed eagle)³⁹, and when withdrawing, Russians took with them the carved doors of the mausoleum in Çifte Minare.⁴⁰ During the 1916-18 occupation, the Çifte Minare was used as an arsenal,

³⁸ **N. L. Okunev (1886-1949)**: Professor of art history specialized on the architecture of Byzantium and slavic architecture, once a member of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople.

³⁹ Gökçe Durmuşlu, "Yakutiye Medresesi", in *Erzurum Şehrindeki Tarihi Eserler*, ed. Gürsoy Solmaz, (Erzurum: N.p., 2002)

⁴⁰ T. A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, Vol. 2, (London: The Pindar Press, 1989), p.192

and Yakutiye as barracks and workshops.⁴¹ The Okunev group also conveyed an inquiry about the structure of the social and administrative organizations of the Ottoman period, in Erzurum, though did not reach significant results.

Cooperating with the military authorities, the Okunev expedition undertook a survey around Mamahatun. There, they examined the caravanserai and the tomb of Mamahatun and also visited the monastery at the village of Piçariç (Çadırkaya), and discovered an underground infrastructure at the ancient fortress. After Mamahatun, they arrived in Erzincan on 2 August and collected artifacts of Armenian antiquity with the help of the Armenian Charity Organization of Moscow, and explored the monastery of Perses Agrapet. Returning to Erzurum, the Okunev team accomplished the task of photographing the antiquities and then went to Bayburt on 12 August 1916. In and around the city they photographed Armenian churches and monasteries and also prepared the plans of these buildings. In Bayburt, Beloborodov caught fever and returned to Russia, from then on Okunev continued on his expedition along the valley of Çoruh with the photographer.⁴²

The next place to examine was Ispir, where they had registered the church near the Turkish fortress with photographs. During their explorations at the villages of Kalekasrık, Danzurt, Arsis, Kiskim, the natives had assisted the scientists to locate and register the monuments of Dört Kilise, Parhal, İşhan, Öşk (Eoşk), and Haho (Hahul). The churches in this region were mainly Georgian churches of medieval

⁴¹ The Photo Archive of the Institute of the History for the Material Culture (*Fotoarkhiv Instituta Istorii Materialnogo Kultura*, St. Petersburg), Entry: 0.188.31/no.II.7847 (Yakutiye *medresesi*); O.188.15/no.II.7831 (Çifte Minare *medresesi*)

⁴² N. L. Okunev, "Predvaritel'nyi Otchet privat-dotsenta Petrogradskogo Universiteta N. L. Okuneva o komandirovke letom 1917 goda na Kavkazskii front dlya okhrany pamyatnikov drevnosti i kul'tury", *Izvestiya Rossikogo Akademii Nauk*, Serial 6, Vol. 11, (1917), p. 1438

ages.⁴³ They had photographed and depicted the peculiarities of the churches in these villages, which were damaged severely during the turbulent years of war and deportation. Some of the churches, which had been used as military barracks during the war, were then used as barns and storages for food and hay, by the villagers. Okunev got in touch with the military authorities and the village administrations in order to prevent this usage and secure the preservation of the churches, which were also subject to damage by the Russian soldiers. The church in Hahul, which had been converted to a mosque during the Ottoman era, was intact and was reopened as a church upon the orders of the commander in the region.⁴⁴

Throughout the journey, the expedition team enjoyed the cooperation of military and civilian officers, and at the end of the expedition, Okunev delivered the documentation, the plans, maps and 500 photographs to the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁴⁵

4.1.5 The Expedition of Takaishvili

The second phase of the Okunev expedition had been the survey of the Çoruh valley, in which mainly Georgian churches were placed. This region had been a focus of interest for the Georgian academic circles, who was referring to the region as the prolongation of Southern Georgia. The prominent Georgian archaeologist Ekvitime Takaishvili,⁴⁶ had organized two expeditions to the regions of southern

⁴³ Mine Kadiroglu, “Çoruh Havzası Ortaçağ Gürcü Mimarisi Araştırmaları”, *Türk Arkeoloji ve Etnografya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no.1, (2000), pp.81-83

⁴⁴ Okunev, *ibid.*, pp. 1435-1438

⁴⁵ The photographs shot by Bul’benko are currently among the collections of the The Photo Archive of the Institute of the History for the Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg.

⁴⁶ **E. S. Takaishvili (1863-1953)**: Georgian historian, archaeologist, philologist, pedagogue. He conducted studies on ancient Georgian manuscripts, ancient Georgian literature, and architectural, epigraphic monuments. (See R. Metreveli, *Ekvitime Takaishvili*, Tiflis, 1963)

Georgia, Ahıska, Ardahan, Kars and Oltu, which were under Russian rule, in 1902 and 1907. Takaishvili found the opportunity to realize a third expedition to explore the monuments of Tao, Tortum and Ispir in the Çoruh basin, with the occupation of northeastern territories of Turkey by the Russian Army, in 1916. In early 1917, Georgian archaeologists visited the monasteries in the Çoruh basin⁴⁷ and the Georgian Society of History and Ethnography, which was founded by Takaishvili, planned a detailed expedition in the summer of 1917.⁴⁸ The Georgian aristocracy and Georgian church would sponsor the expenditures of this expedition, whereas transportation for the expedition would be arranged by the Caucasian Department of the All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos*. Civilian engineer A. N. Kolgin, artists Lado Gudiashvili and Mikhail Chiaureli, an architect, and the hieromonach Ippolit participated in the expedition. The hieromonach Ippolit would accompany the expedition staff in order to familiarize with the Georgian churches and after his return to Tiflis, he would organize their reconstruction and preservation. However, due to the withdrawal of the Russian Army this task could not be accomplished.

They left Tiflis for the expedition on 21 July 1917, and passing through Oltu, the expedition team reached at Tortum and Hahul (Bağbaşı). The Hahul monastery and the Tortum fortress were examined and after the survey of the fortresses of Akçakale and Erseskale, the church in Ekeki was studied. On the route to İŝhan and Oŝk, Georgian scientists had registered the ruins of the churches near Isi alongside the huge churches of İŝhan and Oŝk. Initially the expedition was intended to

⁴⁷ N. M. Shugurov, "Khohulskii Sobor", *Trapezondskii Voennyi Listok*, 12 February 1917, p.4

⁴⁸ E. Takaishvili, *Arkheologicheskaya ekspeditsiya 1917-go goda v yuzhniye provintsii Gruzii*, Tiflis, 1952, p.19. (Today the Ekvtime Takaishvili Society of Georgian History is a special subdivision of the Department of Social Sciences of the Georgian Academy of Sciences)

accomplish the detailed studies of the churches in the region between İřhan and Bayburt. However, Takaishvili sent some members of the expedition to Dört Kilise and Parhal for a preliminary examination of the churches there. This decision proved to be beneficial since a future expedition would not be possible after the withdrawal of the Russian Army in 1918. Both parts of the staff prepared detailed descriptions of the churches they had studied. The scientists drew the plans, took photographs, and read and deciphered inscriptions on the walls and on the steles.

On their return to Tiflis, the expedition staff had associated with the members of the Uspenskii expedition to Trabzon, and improved and prepared the last variants of the plans. The results of this expedition were first disclosed in 1920 in an exhibition on ancient Georgian architecture and a catalog of the findings was prepared by Takaishvili, in Georgian and by D. P. Gordeev, in Russian. All the materials gathered and prepared were placed in the Museum of the Georgian Society of Ethnography and History.⁴⁹

The results of this expedition had invaluable worth for knowledge on the Georgian architecture of the middle ages. As a result of this expedition, many unregistered churches were listed and studied, new scientific conclusions on the architectural styles of the churches were reached. The plans, which were drawn during this expedition, would serve as the main data for references in future studies since the churches were damaged, and many inscriptions, which were deciphered and explained during this research, disappeared in the following years.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ E. Takaishvili, *Arkheologicheskaya ekspeditsiya 1917-go goda v yuzhniye provintsii Gruzii*, (Tiflis: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Gruzinskoi SSR, 1952), pp.17-22

⁵⁰ Mine Kadiroglu *The Architecture of the Georgian Church at İřhan*, European University Studies: Series 28. History of Art, Vol 121, 1991, p. 5

4.2 Archaeological Expeditions to the Southern Coasts of the Black Sea

The southern coast of the Black Sea was the last territory that became accessible to the studies of Russian scientists, as Russian troops drove deep into the Ottoman territories. Newly conquered territories on the coast of the Black Sea had hosted between 1204-1461 the empire of Trebizond, which was founded by the members of a former Byzantine imperial family (The Comnenos). The empire comprised the entire southern coastal region of the Black Sea except its westernmost section. At the zenith of its wealth and power, the court of the emperors of Trebizond was a great artistic and cultural center, and thus the city had been the last refuge of the Byzantino-Greek civilization.⁵¹

The interests of the Russian scientists in Trabzon were very much influenced by the previous studies of the Russian academicians in the field of Byzantinology and especially by the studies of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople. The institute, which was proposed to serve both as a scientific institute and as a prestigious lighthouse of the Russian civilization in the East,⁵² was opened on 10 March 1895.⁵³ Feodor Ivanovich Uspenskii⁵⁴, who had long been studying the problems of social and economic life in Byzantium, was appointed as

⁵¹ See: W. Miller, *Trebizond, the last Greek Empire*, (London: S.P.C.K., 1926)

⁵² The institute had also served as a significant political asset, as it was envisioned by the Russian diplomatic society. In a memorandum to the Soviet government in October 1921, F. Uspenskii alleged that: "The two establishments [the Palestinian Society and the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople] have one thing in common, a circumstance very few people realize here: that both the Palestinian Society and the institute in Constantinople had made it possible for us to compete with Western powers, and in such strategic places (in different respects) like Jerusalem and Constantinople. This competition had been going on for more than 25 years and it was -one could safely say- to Russia's credit." Igor P. Medvedev, "The Saint-Petersburg -based Project: Archives of Russian Byzantinologists as a Source of the History of Science", *XX International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, (19-25 August 2001), Paris: 2001, p.98

⁵³ E. Yu. Basargina, *Russkii Arkheologicheskii Institut v Konstantinopole*, (St. Petersburg: Dimitri Bulanin, 1999), p.22-29

the director of the institute.⁵⁵ The institute organized many archaeological expeditions in and around the Ottoman Empire, in Istanbul, Iznik, Izmit, Trabzon, Syria, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Macedonia.⁵⁶ The results of these studies were published in the sixteen volumes of its special publication, *Izvestiya Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole*.

Although the studies of the institute were interrupted by the outbreak of war after a 30-year period of existence, the institute was not legally abolished and the rapid advance of the Russian Army at the Caucasian Front reactivated the hopes of its reestablishment in Istanbul. The director of the institute, F. I. Uspenskii thus pioneered the efforts for the establishment of a special commission to organize the protection and research of the archaeological monuments in the newly occupied territories on the Black Sea coast, where his institute had conducted a preliminary research in 1895.

4.2.1 The First Uspenskii Expedition to Trabzon (summer 1916)

The Imperial Russian Archaeological Society convened a general meeting and at this meeting on 6 April 1916, decided to assemble in coordination with the Academy of Sciences, a commission for the preservation of the historical monuments of the occupied regions at the southern Black Sea coasts.⁵⁷ The

⁵⁴ **Feodor Ivanovich Uspenskii** (1845-1928) Famous Byzantinologist, director of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople.

⁵⁵ A. A. Vasiliev, "Byzantine Studies in Russia: Past and Present," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 32, No. 3. (Apr., 1927), pp. 539-545

⁵⁶ Basargina, *Russkii Arkheologicheskii*, p.40

⁵⁷ Probably a military historical commission attached to the Caucasian Army was the first expeditionary team to visit Trabzon, on 19 April 1916. This commission was headed by a captain named Kolobov, and included the prominent artist, historian Georgii Kreskentyevich Lukomskii and a photographer. However, we do not have any evidence for the existence of such a commission other than a reference in the memoirs of Lev Bykovsky. Lev Bykovsky, *Na Kavkazsko-Turetskomu Fronti: Spomyiny z 1916-1918rr.*, (Denver: Pratsy Institutu Doslydyv Volyny, 1968), p.66

prospective members of the commission would be Fyodor Ivanovich Uspenskii, Fyodor Ivanovich Schmidt from the Imperial University of Kharkov, and Ya. I. Smirnov, a senior officer from the Imperial Hermitage. B. V. Farmakovskii informed the Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich about this decision and asked his approval and assistance in getting permission from the Ministry of Court and the Ministry of Public Enlightenment.⁵⁸ The plans for this expedition were prepared in haste, even without consulting the members of the prospective commission other than F. I. Uspenskii, let alone consulting their institutions. Being aware of this fact, the Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich rejected the proposal and advised a well-thought out plan.⁵⁹

However, later in the summer of 1916, Uspenskii achieved his aim, and a special commission composed of Schmidt and artist N. K. Kluge had arrived in Trabzon on 13 May 1916, under the special permission of the Viceroy Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich. The expenses of the expedition of this commission would be financed through the accounts of the temporarily closed Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, and the scientists throughout the studies in Trabzon would use the official papers of the institute. Initially, the commission was declared to be in charge of the preservation of the archaeological artifacts and sites in the whole occupied area at the Black Sea coast. However, due to the continuation of military clashes in the territories around Trabzon and also due to the imminent and

⁵⁸ *RGIA* F.530, o.1, d.63, l.3

⁵⁹ *RGIA* F.530, o.1, d.63, ll.7 reverse - 8.

huge task of protection of the monuments in the city, the commission confined its studies within the boundaries of the city center during the 1916 expedition.⁶⁰

Trabzon was not damaged by the war; however, the city had witnessed two destructive periods for the monuments. The first period was the deportation of the Armenians, and the second was the evacuation of the Muslim inhabitants. During both periods, the possessions and especially the temples of the respective communities were plundered, robbed and damaged by the people who remained.⁶¹ Thus, the expedition team set forth the preservation of the temples of the forsaken inhabitants, especially the Muslims, as a primary task.⁶² *Prikaz* no.117⁶³ of the Viceroy had laid the legal basis for this task. By this *Prikaz* all the mosques, which had been converted from churches centuries ago, were closed for Muslim prayer and were left under the authority of the archaeological commission. The closure of the mosques for Muslim worshipping did not make much sense since the Muslim population in the city was only about twenty persons, at the moment that the Russian Army entered the city.⁶⁴ The importance of the *Prikaz* was that, it did not transfer the former-churches to the Greek authorities of the city, and this fact would be a matter of conflict between the Greek population and members of the archaeological expedition. Hence, the keys of 12 church-cum-mosques were handed to the expeditionary team of Uspenskii, and the team commenced its work in the mosques

⁶⁰ F. I. Uspenskii, "Soobsheniya i otchet akademika F. I. Uspenskogo o komandirovke v Trapezunt", *Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, Serial 6, Vol. 10, nos.11-18 (June-December), (1916), pp.1467-1468

⁶¹ S. R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.28

⁶² F. I. Uspenskii, *ibid.*, p.1465

⁶³ The details of *Prikaz* no.117 was explained in the pages 87-88 of this study.

⁶⁴ S. R. Mintslov, *ibid.*, p.45

of Ayasofya, Orta Hisar and Yeni Cuma, the former churches of St. Sophia, Chrysocephalos and St. Eugene respectively.

Schmidt and artist Kluge made a detailed and systematic study of the church of St. Sophia.⁶⁵ The church was constructed during the time of Emperor Manuel I (1238-1263) and constituted one of the finest monuments of the Byzantine era. It had been converted to a mosque in 1573,⁶⁶ and during the First World War, the Turkish military authorities used it as a warehouse and military hospital and then once again as a mosque. Schmidt and Kluge removed the plaster covering the frescos on the walls, and the wooden floor over the mosaics. Kluge prepared the plans of the church and drew watercolor copies of the frescos.⁶⁷ When the work in St. Sophia was at its climax, a personal conflict between Uspenskii and Schmidt broke out. Uspenskii ordered the termination of the studies. An annoyed Schmidt left Trabzon in 31 June and Kluge on 18 July.⁶⁸ Thus, Uspenskii, who had stayed in Trabzon till 8 October 1916, had to continue the work alone. The septuagenarian academician did not have the necessary strength to undertake this task and was aided by the acting *nachalnik* of the fortified region, Sergei Rudolfovich Mintslov.⁶⁹ The latter had been interested in archaeological artifacts⁷⁰ and till the arrival of the Uspenskii commission had made surface research in the city.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Uspenskii, *ibid.*, p.1468

⁶⁶ Sellina Ballance, "The Byzantine Churches of Trebizond", *Anatolian Studies*, Vol.10, (1960), p.162

⁶⁷ *AANF*.169, o.1, d.13

⁶⁸ E. Yu. Basargina, "Istoriko-Arkheologicheskaya Ekspeditsiya v Trapezund (1916)", XVIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies, (Leningrad: N.p., 1991), p.304

⁶⁹ Mintslov, *ibid.*, p.44

⁷⁰ S. R. Mintslov, *Neskol'ko Slovo o Poddelkakh Stariny*, (Trabzon: N.p., 1917)

⁷¹ S. R. Mintslov, "Sobor Bogoroditsy Zlatoglavoii", *Trapezondskii Listok*, 4 December 1916, 3; Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p. 34

Uspenskii and Mintslov studied the church of St. Eugene or the Yeni Cuma Mosque. The Church of Saint Eugene is located south of the city of Trebizond. The church was dedicated to Saint Eugene whom Alexius Comnenus (1204-1222) declared patron saint of the city, building it in the same place where he had been buried after being martyred. Uspenskii and Mintslov exposed the mosaic floor, and made some excavations in and around the church, and, unearthed an ancient skeleton, which they claimed to belong to St. Eugene. However, Uspenskii was not satisfied with the expertise and methods of Mintslov, so he dismissed the latter from the studies.⁷² Uspenskii seemed to be more concerned about the ignorance of the local Greeks about the patron saint of the city, St. Eugene, rather than the church dedicated to him. He desperately searched for the icon of St. Eugene, but eventually came to the conclusion that even the memory of the saint had long faded away, let alone any material relics.⁷³

The last monument to be studied in Trabzon during the summer of 1916 was the Orta Hisar Mosque or the former Church of Chrysocephalos. It was the Cathedral of the Comnenos dynasty and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It had been named after the Virgin Panaghia Chrysocephalos, which meant ‘Golden Head,’ due to the golden halo of one of the statues. The building was in good condition. While exploring the building and its environs Uspenskii and Mintslov had noticed the strange architecture of a *türbe* (tomb) next to the church. The *türbe* was dedicated to Hoşoğlan, a legendary Muslim martyr of the siege of Trabzon in 1461. However, the building of the *türbe* resembled a basilica, and making further research on it,

⁷² Basargina, “Istoriko-Arkheologicheskaya”, p.304

⁷³ Uspenskii, p.1469; Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.36

Uspenskii disclosed crosses on the four columns of the building. Since the *türbe* was in the court of the church of Chrysocephalos, which was used as the graveyard of the emperors of Trebizond, Uspenskii decided that the *türbe* had originally belonged to an emperor. Uspenskii demanded the commander to raze the shabby dwellings abandoned by the Muslims around the *türbe*, and the latter fulfilled this request during the construction works for new and broad roads in the city.⁷⁴ Uspenskii excavated the *türbe* with the assistance of F. M. Morozov, an archaeologist then working at a field hospital,⁷⁵ and dug out two skeletons, one belonging to a beheaded Muslim and the other to an emperor of Trebizond, buried in a sarcophagus. Later on, interpreting the information given in the Greek chronicles, Uspenskii came to the conclusion that the second skeleton belonged to the emperor Alexius IV of Trebizond. Uspenskii handed the relics of the emperor to the Metropolitan of Trabzon, Phillipides Chrysanthos,⁷⁶ and the latter took them along while leaving Trabzon and afterwards buried them in Thessaloniki.⁷⁷

During the expedition of 1916, Uspenskii collected a great number of Islamic books, manuscripts and documents. These were packed and sealed with the stamp of the Archaeological Institute in Constantinople and the most precious ones were sent to Petrograd to be delivered to the Imperial Academy of Sciences. The rest of the materials were stored in the temporarily established library and museum by Uspenskii, in Orta Hisar Mosque (the former church of Chrysocephalos), where

⁷⁴ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, pp.35-36

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.130

⁷⁶ F. I. Uspenskii, "Usypal'nitsa tsarya Aleksey IV v Trapezunte", *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, Vol. 23, (Petrograd, 1923), pp.1-14

⁷⁷ A. Bryer, D. Winfield, *The Byzantine monuments and topography of the Pontos*, Vol.1, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1985), p.201

before the Russian occupation the Turkish administration had founded a library with 10,000 books.⁷⁸ In this temporary museum and library, which was located at the center of the city and relatively well protected, Uspenski placed his own library, his collections of books and artifacts, and also the findings of Mintslov.⁷⁹ Before leaving the city on 8 October 1916, Uspenskii turned over the keys of the mosques (former churches) to Mintslov, the acting *nachalnik* of the fortified region, entrusting the preservation of the temporary museum and other churches until resumption of the academic studies the following summer.⁸⁰

I. Yu Krachkovskii studied the manuscripts delivered to the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences by Uspenskii. The manuscripts consisted of 17 Korans all belonging to 19th century but for one. Since among the collections in Petrograd there were Korans dating back to 7th century, the ones brought from Trabzon did not create much special interest.⁸¹ Uspenskii was also conscious of this, but he intended to use these and the rest of the manuscripts as a bargaining chip for the confiscated library of the Russian Institute in Constantinople.

4.2.2 The Second Uspenskii Expedition to Trabzon

Uspenskii had arrived in Trabzon, in the summer of 1917, as he had planned the previous year. However, then the political conditions in the city had drastically changed. In 1916, Uspenskii was a respected archaeologist who was working under the aegis of the Viceroy at the Caucasus, and he was an intimate friend of the

⁷⁸ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.33

⁷⁹ “Doklad Uspenskogo”, *Izvestiya Imperatorskogo Akademii Nauk*, Vol. X, p.1491

⁸⁰ Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya*, p.129

⁸¹ I. Yu. Krachkovskii, “Opisanie sobraniya Koranov, privezennykh iz Trapezunta akademikom F. I. Uspenskim”, *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk*, Serial.6, Vol.11, nos.1-11, (January-June), (1917), pp. 346-349

commander of the fortified region, Major General Schwartz. Following the revolutionary changes in the administrative structure of the occupied regions, Uspenskii lost his privileged status. Besides, the Russian administration itself assumed a shaky existence, and new authorities emerged in the city, the most important of which was the Metropolitan of Trabzon. The Greek population was busy with attempts to acquire patronage of the city, and harbored aspirations over the former-churches, which were left under the control of the academic expeditions. The Greeks founded a local archaeological society headed by a participant of the last year's expedition to obtain the control of these monuments.⁸²

The physical conditions of these monuments were worse than the political situation of the city. Since the previous administration had been abolished, the security of the former churches was in abeyance. The Russian soldiers and natives had broken into these former churches, plundered the commodity and destroyed the buildings. Before initiating a new archaeological expedition, Uspenskii then decided to ascertain the scale of damage incurred upon the former churches. For this purpose, he assembled a commission with the participation of the representatives of the city administration, police and the new commander of the fortified region.

The Ortahisar Mosque, the former church of Chrysocephalos, which was used as a temporary museum and library, was plundered; all the documents and books other than he packed were dispersed, during the turbulent days of the Russian revolution. The mosque was used first as a field hospital and then as military barracks. The mosque of Yeni Cuma (the former church of St. Eugene) was robbed

⁸² F. I. Uspenskii, "Otchet o zanyatiyakh v Trapezunte letom 1917 goda", *Izvestiya Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, Serial VI, Vol.12, nos.1-11, (January-June), (1918), p.208

of its paintings, wooden structure, and was partially damaged. The doors of the Aya Sofya mosque were also broken; all wooden material had been dismantled and removed. The mosques, former churches, of Ismailbaba and Karabet Camii had shared the same fate too.⁸³

The expedition of 1917 had a larger staff than the 1916 expedition. The team consisted of Ahafanhel E. Krymskii, N. D. Protasov, A. E. Makarenko, N. B. Baklanov, N. K. Kluge, and G. K. Meier.⁸⁴ The expeditionary staff commenced their works at the end of June 1917. Krymskii with his assistant concentrated his studies in the destroyed library and museum of the Ortahisar Mosque. They rearranged the manuscripts and books into respective categories. They paid great attention to the preservation of legal documents since these were the sole evidences for the prospective ownership regulations after the return of the Muslim inhabitants of the city. This effort aroused disturbance among the Greek population, who had occupied the abandoned dwellings and stores of the Muslims. In July 1917, the local society of archaeology organized a public visit to the mosque, to which hundreds of Greeks flooded and interrupted the studies of the scientists. A few days later, thieves broke into the mosque and stole some documents and books.⁸⁵ After the cessation of the activities of the 1917 expedition, Krymskii continued his studies in the city with the cooperation of members of the Ukrainian Community (*Ukrainska Gromada*). Then, the scientist surveyed the acropolis and the Hellenic temple of Artemis in Trabzon.⁸⁶

⁸³ *ibid.*, pp.209-211

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p.211

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p.216

⁸⁶ Lev Bykovsky, *Na Kavkazsko-Turetskomu Fronti: Spomyyny z 1916-1918rr.*, (Denver: Pratsy Institutu Doslydyv Volyny, 1968), p.61

N. B. Baklanov, on the other hand, conducted a surface research at the ruins of the city walls and the palace. Since the ruins were inhabited by Muslim refugees and due to the absence of required equipment, Baklanov could not accomplish the task, though he managed to take photographs. Baklanov managed to make a detailed measurement of the Yeni Cuma Mosque (the former church of St. Eugene), and later published the results of this study with the description of the Ortahisar Mosque (the former church of Chrysecephalos).⁸⁷ Meanwhile, N. D. Protasov worked on the iconographic material and other figurative paintings of the churches of St. Eugene, Chrysecephalos, St. Sophia and St. John near Cevizlik.⁸⁸ Uspenskii assigned the exploration of the fortress, and the church at the palace, to A. E. Makarenko, and the latter had draw the plan of the fortress and copied the frescos in the church.⁸⁹ A representative of the Moscow Archaeological Society took photographs of the historical monuments of Trabzon, upon the request of Count A. A. Bobrinskii. All other members of the expedition also took pictures of the archaeological artifacts they were working on and the artist General G. K. Meier drew the pictures of the acropolis, the churches of St. Eugene, St. Sophia, Chrysocephalos, Panagia-Kerula (the Mosque of Karabet), the fortress, the ruins of the palace, the tomb of Alexius IV. The artist Kluge on the other hand, copied the icons and frescos in the churches.⁹⁰

Although the 1917 expedition had to be performed in a chaotic and hostile atmosphere, its results proved much more beneficial than those of the previous year. The Russian scientists could only work at the places, which were designated as sites

⁸⁷ N. Baklanov, "Deux Monument Byzantines de Trebizond," *Byzantion*, Vol.4, (1929), pp.363-391

⁸⁸ Uspenskii, "Otchet o zanyatiyakh", pp.217, 220

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.219-220

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p.222

for academic research. They could not extend their research areas to the active Greek churches or libraries and their access to these places was prevented.⁹¹ As it was the case in the mosque of Ortahisar, the scientific efforts had disturbed the Greek residents and incurred hostility in the form of a forced visit and robbery. It was interesting that the Muslims and the Muslim Charitable Society of Baku offered every kind of help during the studies of the scientists.⁹² Assessing all the unfavorable conditions, Uspenskii had stayed in the city after the departure of the other members of the expedition till October, for the arrangement of necessary regulations to secure the monuments and collected materials. He applied to the Special Commission for Transcaucasia (OZAKOM) for the protection of the monuments. Since the OZAKOM did not possess real authority and even lost all its powers by the time Uspenskii applied,⁹³ it could not take any precautions other than offering some advice. Uspenskii, in turn, initiated the formation of a commission responsible of the security of the monuments in September 1917. The commission consisted of the representatives of the commander of the fortified region and the city administration and the Mufti. However, it was obvious that, this commission was a stillborn entity as it was the last months of 1917.

Another scientific study carried out in the summer of 1917 in Trabzon was, the biological survey of Dr. Vitold Eichler. He was a specialist of insectology, and was appointed to the army staffs in charge of biological explorations at the war fronts. He had served in 1915 at the German Front and in the autumn of 1915 was

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p.252

⁹² *ibid.*, p.216

transferred to the Caucasian Front. His studies in Trabzon started in August 1916 and after a long period of sickness, were accomplished in July 1917. He had traveled in the Trabzon region and collected 5000 examples of beetles in the towns and villages of Görele, Cevizlik, Hamsiköy, Daltaban, Kelkit, Sadak, Kesse, Ardesse, and Zigana.⁹⁴

4.3 An Unsuccessful Attempt for a General Expedition in Eastern and Northeastern Anatolia

During the first months of 1917, a special department under the Governor-Generalship of the occupied regions was established to centralize the archaeological studies in the territory of the Governor-Generalship. The Archaeological Department under the Governor-Generalship was headed by an active member of the Russian Military-Historical Society, the Commission for the Studies of the Antiquities of Moscow, the Archaeological Society of Moscow and the Society for the Studies of the Historical Monuments, Ignatii Yakovlevich Stelletsii.⁹⁵

In consultation with Ter-Avetisyan, Stelletsii had been planning an ambitious expedition, which would cover the whole area under the authority of the Governor-Generalship. After the discovery of an elaborate underground gallery from the time of the kingdom of Bagratids, near the village of Piçariç (Çadırkaya)⁹⁶, and after the robbery of treasure hunters at the mound near Hasankale, Stelletsii

⁹³ Ronald Grigor Suny, "Nationalism and Social Class in the Russian Revolution: The Cases of Baku and Tiflis", in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social Change*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), p.252

⁹⁴ "Razniya Izvestiya," *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Muzeya*, Vol.11, nos.3-4, (1918), pp.312-314

⁹⁵ **Ignatii Yakovlevich Stelletsii** (1878-1949). A prominent archaeologist who had dedicated his life to the search for the underground library of Ivan Grozny in Moscow and prepared a detailed plan of the underground infrastructure of Moscow.

⁹⁶ Knyaz V. N. Gadzhemukov, "Vnimaniyu Arkheologov", *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo Muzeya*, Vol.11, nos.1-2, (1917), pp.136-137

enhanced his attempts to organize a detailed expedition in the whole region of the occupied areas. He received official assignment from the Governor-General of the occupied regions of Turkey on 29 April 1917.⁹⁷ Before he could realize the expedition, however, the administrative structure of the occupied regions underwent radical alterations. Unyielding against the ignorance of the new administration, Stelletskaa tried to arouse public consciousness about the preservation and studies of the historical monuments through publishing articles in the Tiflis newspapers in May 1917, and propagating his projects to social organizations. In an article in *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, he depicted the treasures stolen from Hasankale (part of which was then found and delivered to the Hermitage in Petrograd) and insisted on the necessity of conducting systematic studies on the archaeological treasures of the region by the participation of the local intelligentsia.⁹⁸ Later in May 1917, he summoned a meeting of the representatives of the local social organizations and got their support for his project.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, Stelletskaa applied to the new Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army, General Nikolai Nikolayevich Yudenich, who directed the project of Stelletskaa to the newly formed Special Commission for Transcaucasia.¹⁰⁰ Then, Stelletskaa personally presented his project to the Special Commission for Transcaucasia, and on 2 June 1917 appealed with an emotional letter to the commissar of the Provisional Government for the Administration of the occupied

⁹⁷ AAN, F.169, o.1, d.1, l.4 reverse

⁹⁸ I. Stelletskaa, "Voina i Arkheologia", *Kavkazskoe Slovo*, 25 April 1917, pp.2-3

⁹⁹ AANF.169, o.1, d.1, l.29

¹⁰⁰ AANF.169, o.1, d.1, l.5 reverse

regions.¹⁰¹ Although both institutions approved the necessity of such an expedition, Stelletskaa's project could not be brought into existence, during the chaotic year of 1917.

Concluding Remarks

The years of Russian occupation had been an important period for scientific expeditions by the Russian scientists, who were familiar with the history, archaeology, and ethnography of the region. The results of these studies were of great value. However, all the expeditions were to varying extents crippled by wartime conditions. The ethnographic studies could not even be realized, whereas, the Marr expedition to Van, had to be ceased after 2 months of study due to the tactical withdrawal of the Russian Army in July 1916. Besides, many scientists, including Uspenskii, were seriously infected by epidemics, and the studies were either delayed, or cancelled. Eventually, the Russian revolution of 1917 put an end to all studies.

¹⁰¹ *AANF*.169, o.1, d.1, ll.29-30

5. CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The situation on the Caucasian Front in 1917 was dire for the Turkish side. It had lost almost all the important defense positions and transportation facilities along with an enormous number of soldiers. The Russian side, on the other hand, was consolidating its rule in the area, improving the supply lines, and planning to initiate a new decisive campaign in cooperation with the British forces in Mesopotamia. This collaborative campaign “over the whole area between the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf”¹ could never be realized due to the outbreak of the March 1917 Revolution in Petrograd. The impact of the revolution on the Russian Army was disastrous. The Russian Caucasian Army, as well as the army at the German Front, disintegrated throughout 1917², and as a consequence of the November 1917 events in Petrograd, “demobilization became spontaneous even before the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, [between the delegates of the Central Powers and Russians] had begun.”³ At that point, the new commander of the Caucasian Army, Mikhail Alekseevich Przhevalskii could not decline Vehib Pasha’s proposal for a truce. The two parties signed the truce in Erzincan on 18 December 1917, which required the cessation of all military operations, and the preservation of the front line at the positions held by the Russian and Turkish armies since the winter of 1916-1917.⁴

¹ W.E.D.Allen, P.Muratoff, *Caucasian battlefields: a history of the wars on the Turco-Caucasian border 1828-1921*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), p.450

² see: G. S. Melikyan, *Istochnikovedeniye i Istorioografiya Revolyutsionnogo Dvijeniya v Kavkazskoi Armii v 1914-1918*, (Erevan: 1972)

³ W.E.D.Allen, P.Muratoff, *Caucasian battlefields*, pp.449-450

⁴ Enver Konukçu, *Büyük Güçler ve Ermeni Kıskaçındaki Erzincan’ın Albayrağımıza Kavuşması*, (Ankara: Erzincan İli Kültür ve Eğitim Derneği Erzincanlılar Kültür ve Sağlık Vakfı, 2001), pp. 119-125

However, “the Erzincan Truce did not stem the tide of desertion”⁵ and took a character of withdrawal by December 1917. The extended frontline was left to the control of the urgently formed Armenian forces with the assistance and participation of a few Russian officers and soldiers. Protesting against the outrages of the disbanded Russian soldiers and the massacres of Muslims committed by Armenian bands, Vehib Pasha launched a rapid advance. Erzincan was conquered on 13 February 1918, then followed Bayburt, and Erzurum. On February 24 the Turkish Army entered Trabzon and Mamahatun (Tercan). Thus, the Ottoman forces had reached the 1914 borders by spring 1918, and the period of Russian occupation came to an end.

The Russian armies occupied two important areas during the First World War. In the early stages of the war, Russian troops invaded the Austro-Hungarian part of Galicia in August 1914 and occupied the area until May 1915. The second territory was the Eastern, and Northeastern regions of Anatolia, which stayed under Russian occupation roughly between April 1916 and February 1918. Right after the victorious advance of the Russian armies, Russian governmental and military authorities contemplated the reorganization of the administration and economic life in the occupied areas of the Austro-Hungarian⁶ and Ottoman empires. The conquered regions of both empires were transformed into temporary military governor-generalships, which were headed by military officers. The system of military governor-generalship in remote areas of the Russian Empire had proved to be

⁵ Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p.110

successful in the 19th century,⁷ especially in the conquered territories of Turkestan. The Russian Imperial Government had established the temporary military governor-generalship of Turkestan in 1867, where the civil and military power had been concentrated in the hands of military authorities.⁸ The first military governor-general of Turkestan, General Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufmann established a firm Russian rule to restore order while native customs and institutions were left intact.⁹

Tsar Nicholas II ratified ‘the Rules for the Temporary Administration of the Occupied Regions of Turkey by the Law of War’ on 18 June 1916, and Major General Nikolai Nikolayevich Peshkov was appointed as the first Military Governor General of the occupied regions in Turkey. He would submit to the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army, the Viceroy at the Caucasus, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, who had the responsibility over the occupied area until the appointment of the military governor-general. The military governor-general was the retired temporary general-governor of the Kharkov *guberniya*. In his new post, Peshkov initiated the establishment of the structure of the administration in the occupied regions. Meanwhile, under the supervision of military commanders, the first projects of colonization and exploitation of the resources in the occupied territories were commenced.

⁶ For a detailed account on the Temporary Military Governor Generalship of Galicia see: A.Yu. Bakhturina, *Politika Rossiiskoi Imperii v Vostochnoi Galitsii v godi Pervoi Mirovoi Voini*, (Moscow:AIPO-XX, 2000)

⁷ A. G. Trifonov, B. V. Mozhuev, “The Governor-Generalship in the Russian System of Territorial Administration”, *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol.39, no.4, (July-August 2001), p.84

⁸ David MacKenzie, “The Conquest of Turkestan (1860-65)” in *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, ed. Michael Rywkin, (London, New York: Mansell, 1988), pp.218-219

⁹ David MacKenzie, “Turkestan’s Significance to Russia (1850-1917)”, *Russian Review*, Vol.33, issue 2, (April 1974), p.171

However, the activities of the military governor-generalship for the centralization of the administration proved to be ineffective and hindered the initiated efforts of colonization and exploitation of the area. The appointments of the officials to the territorial subdivisions (*oblasts* and *okrugs*) were delayed until January 1917, which resulted in the continuation of the power vacuum especially in remote areas and exasperated the miserable life conditions of the population. Peshkov retarded the colonization and resettlement projects till the signature of the ultimate peace treaty, which was expected to legally incorporate the region to the Russian Empire. Moreover, he never visited the occupied regions and stayed in his chancellery in Tiflis throughout his tenure¹⁰. This situation necessitated the intervention of the Viceroy. He visited important cities under occupation, such as Erzurum, Erzincan and Trabzon, inspected the activities of the regional officers and interfered in the relief efforts. The replacement of the military governor-general did not help in the turbulent year of 1917. The following months after March 1917, witnessed the emerging of new power bases such as the revolutionary *ispolnitel'nyi komitets* (executive committees) among the soldiers of the Russian army and among the native population of the occupied regions. For example, in Trabzon, besides the local executive committee of the Greeks, Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish soldiers established separate executive committees.¹¹ Projects of colonization, research for natural resources, and construction efforts were left incomplete amidst these conditions.

¹⁰ S. R. Mintslov, *Trapezundskaya Epopeya*, (Berlin: Sibirskoe Knigoizdatel'stvo, 1922), p.94

¹¹ "Khronika", *Trapezondskii Voyennyi Listok*, 7 May 1917, p.4

‘The Rules for the Temporary Administration of the Occupied Regions of Turkey by the Law of War’ underlined an important change in the attitude of the Russian Imperial Government towards the Armenian population of the occupied regions. Before the war, Russia had mastered reform projects to be implemented in Eastern Anatolia, trying to establish a “Turkish Armenia under the Russian protectorate.”¹² The ‘Armenian reforms of 1914’ were to a great extent in line with the Russian proposal, which projected to grant considerable autonomy to the six provinces of eastern Anatolia, under a European inspector-general. With the interference of Germany and Britain, the Ottoman Government avoided the formation of a united autonomous region, but assented to the establishment of two inspector-generalships with the addition of Trabzon to the six *vilâyets*.¹³ The outbreak of the war hindered the implementation of these reforms, however, already by spring 1916, the Russian armies invaded the “six *vilâyets*”, and the Russian government was free to implement the prewar projects, had it wished to do so.

To the dismay of the euphoric Armenian activists in Russia and in Europe (the Armenian National Delegation in Paris), the ‘Rules for the Temporary Administration of the Occupied Regions of Turkey by the Law of War’ required total submission of the population to the Russian suzerainty. There were no references to any national identification. The only issues related to nationality were found in the clauses on the judicial system, where, the Sharia was referred to as the primary source for the resolution of cases between the Muslim population. Other than this, all

¹² Manoug Somakian, *Empires in Conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers: 1895-1920*, (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995), p.58

¹³ Salahi R. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy*, (London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1987), p.284

ethnic groups proclaimed to be equal before the Russian law, and the rural administrations were to be in conformity with the ethnic structure of respective rural administrative units.

Furthermore, all the appointed *nachalniks* but that of Van, were ethnically of Russian or Cossack origin. All colonization projects envisaged the settlement of the Russian subjects, especially the Cossacks, and the bulk of the settlers would be formed by the special regiments in charge of the production of fodder and food in occupied areas. Armenians and Georgian were not included in these regiments. Besides, the commanders of the Caucasian Army and later the Governor-Generalship did not allow the resettlement of the refugees, mainly the Armenians.¹⁴ These refugees were only temporarily permitted to cultivate land in order to alleviate the immediate difficulties of supply of the army and the needs of the population.

Whereas the military administrative authorities maintained a less than favorable attitude towards the refugees, many Russian and international philanthropic societies were engaged with intensive and extensive relief operations in occupied regions. The main objective of aid was the Armenian refugees, whose suffering had been an international matter of concern for some years. Although the Armenians had a preferential status for these societies, the Muslim inhabitants also benefited from relief, especially organized by Muslim philanthropic societies of the Russian Empire. The Muslim soldiers and officers of the Russian Army also participated in relief for the Muslim population, and they even played a great role in checking the atrocities committed by the Armenian bands during the tumultuous year

¹⁴ J. Kirakosyan, *Zapadnaya Armenia v Gody Pervoi Mirovoi Voyny*, Erevan: (Izdatel'stvo Erevanskogo Universiteta, 1971), p.422

of 1917. The relief organizations and the political nonintervention of the Russian administration in the functions of the local institutions and in the local traditions, assured the Muslim population of the goodwill of the Russian rulers. The Muslim inhabitants of the places, which fell under the Russian occupation in the summer of 1916, did not flee,¹⁵ whereas the Muslim population of Van, Erzurum, and Trabzon had fled with the withdrawal of the Turkish Army in the early stages of the war in 1915-1916.

The colonization projects trying to allocate land for Russian settlers, the construction plans to facilitate the exploitation of the resources, and the structure of the temporary military administration, which aimed at restoring order while retaining the local institutions and traditions were all in line with the historical process of Russian expansionism, which might be defined by the Russian term, *osvoenie*.¹⁶ The term *osvoenie* was used interchangeably with the term *kolonizatsia* (colonization), though the former had a broader connotation. The *osvoenie* process required familiarization with occupied territory while mastering over the people and resources of the region. For this purpose, The Caucasian Archaeographical Commission¹⁷ and the Tashkent Branch of Society of Amateurs of Natural Science, Anthropology, and

¹⁵ Sabri Özcan San, *Rusların Gümüşhane İlini İşgali*, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.68

¹⁶ **Osvoenie**: the substantive form of the verb *osvoit*, which means, to appropriate, to learn to master, assimilate or familiarize oneself with. In connection with the Russian colonial expansion the term was used more in the sense of a strategy to appropriate and assimilate a territorial space.

¹⁷ **Caucasian Archaeographical Commission**: The scientific institute founded in Tiflis with the initiative of the Russian authorities in 1864. The Commission published *Akty Sobrannnye Kavkazskoi Arkheographicheskoi Komissieyu* between 1866 and 1904 in twelve volumes. The original material covered a wide range from history, to politics, to economics, to religion and contains information revealing the political structures of the Caucasian region and the details of administration under the Russian Viceroy. The colonial policy Russian government had an effect on the selection of the documents in which basic attention was directed on the origins and the evolution of wars and boundary disputes within the region.

Ethnography¹⁸ had been formed with the initiatives of the Russian imperial governments, in order to study the ethnography, history and archaeology of occupied areas, Caucasus and Turkestan respectively.

The Turkish territories under occupation were not an exception to this practice. Leading academic institutions of the Russian Empire assigned academicians with the purpose of conducting ethnographical, archaeological, botanical and geographical studies in the region. The botanical and geographical studies, which aimed at exploring soil productivity and land allocation for future colonization of occupied areas, which were sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, were realized to a limited extent due to wartime conditions and due to the restrictions imposed by the military authorities. Ethnographical research could not be undertaken since the wartime conditions radically altered the ethnic makeup of the region. On the other hand, archaeological studies proved to be successful and fruitful in comparison to other scientific studies. However, even the archaeological studies preponderantly had a preliminary survey character. Although the results of the Ter-Avetisyan, Marr, Uspenskii, and Takaishvili expeditions made revelations, which could not be surpassed to this very day, these expeditions also could not fulfill their ultimate objectives.

The Russian Revolutions of 1917 “that shook the World” constituted a *force majeure* to devastate the last *osvoenie* project of a region, which was conquered by the Russian Army and recognized as a war trophy in the secret agreements of the First World War.

¹⁸ Daniel Brower, Islam and Ethnicity”, in *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini eds., (Bloomington, and Indianapolis: Indiana

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