

ARMENIANS IN TURKISH POLITICS AND PARLIAMENT (1923-1946)

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Abstract

There is a long and complicated history between Turks and Armenians. Armenians have consistently found a place for themselves in business, the economy, society, and government. Before the Constitutional Monarchy, Armenians began to participate actively in the governmental structure throughout the Ottoman Empire and attained a variety of high posts, including ministerial positions. After the Constitutional Monarchy, they were represented in the parliament by a sizable number of lawmakers as well as by employees and ministers. After the Turkish Republic was established, the same condition persisted. Armenian representatives have served in the Turkish Grand National Assembly from the beginning of the Turkish parliament. Atatürk also allocated quotas for the minorities for their deputies and allowed them to enter the parliament. In this article, you will find the activities of the deputy and parliamentary Armenian citizens who served in the Turkish Grand National Assembly between 1923-1946.

Keywords: *Turkish-Armenian Relations, Turkey and Armenians, Armenian Deputies, Turkish Grand National Assembly.*

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, Turks have given their communities the required value, included them in social settings, and given them the respect they deserved. Even though they first appear to exist in distinct compartments under the notion of the "system of nations," minorities have actively participated in every sector, particularly finance (Ulu, 2020: 99-109).

In the Ottoman Empire, Armenians from minorities participated more actively in governmental organizations. Armenians have held positions in every civil service category dating back to before the Constitutional Monarchy, including in the ministry. Krikor Ağaton Efendi was the first Armenian to be elected as a minister, and Grand Vizier Ali Pasha also made Ağaton Efendi

the first non-Muslim official to hold the position of minister (Ulu, 2004: 141-158). After the Constitutional Monarchy, they were represented by a significant number of deputies in the parliament as well as civil servants and ministers. In the first parliament, which consisted of two organs, the "Heyet-i Ayan" and the "Heyet-i Mebusan", which was formed by the Ottoman State with the 1876 Legal Basis, 46 of the 115 members who formed the Delegation were non-Muslim deputies (Ortaylı, 1978: 176-178). The actual working days of this parliament were from 13 December 1877 to 18 February 1878 (Bozkurt, 1989: 86). II. The 3rd Term Parliament of the Second Constitutional Monarchy was opened on 14 May 1914. Many Armenian deputies served in this Assembly, which also has the distinction of being a War Assembly. The first ones that come to mind are the Armenian deputies who took part in the parliament, which started legislative work with 15 deputies in 1914; Stepan Çırakçıyan, Onnik İhsan, Bedros Hallaçyan, Krikor Zohrap, Dikran Barsamyan, Matyos Nalbantyan, Karabet Tomayan, Agop Hırlakyan, Keğam Der Garabetyan and Artin Bosgezenyan (Alkan, 2006: 324-361). It is evident that Armenians were long represented in both the assemblies and the Ottoman state structure. They participated in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey as both deputies and parliamentarians in the Republic of Turkey, which was founded after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Ulu, 2003: 615-634).

General elections held in Turkey were held regularly every 4 years in 1923, 1927, 1931, 1935, 1939, and 1943, until the multi-party-political life in Turkey. Elections were made in 2 grades. Since the first term of the Turkish parliament, Armenian deputies have been in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Compared to other minority communities in Turkish politics, Armenians have been at the forefront both in terms of numbers and activities. Atatürk also allocated quotas for the minorities for their deputies and allowed them to enter the parliament.

By the decision of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, four non-Muslim candidates were elected as independent parliamentarians in 1935. Those people: Berç Keresteciyan [Türker] (Afyonkarahisar), Doctor Abravaya [Marmaralı], Doctor Taptas (Ankara), İstamat (Zihni) [Özdamar]-(Eskişehir) and (Niğde) were elected as deputies (Alkan, 2004: 11). After Atatürk, during the İsmet İnönü period, quotas were reserved for minority candidates. The same deputies were re-elected in 1939. While Berç Türker and İstamat Özdamar were re-elected in 1943, Mihal Kayakoğlu (Ankara) and Avram Galanti Bodrum (Niğde) became the new non-Muslim MPs who entered the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

The quota system was abandoned during the Democratic Party era, and as a result of the elections, politically engaged minority candidates were admitted to the parliament. The Minorities did not have much success in politics after 1960 despite being nominated by numerous political parties. Due to their small population, their vote base is insufficient, which is the main cause of this. In addition to all of this, it is clear that they decided early on not entering politics due to prejudice against minorities in society. Due to problems such as the vote calculations within the party, the preferences of the delegates, and the lack of democracy within the party, it has not made it possible for the minority members to engage in politics in the current order (Kayhan, 1994: 108).

Despite this, the following citizens of Armenian descent served as senators or deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly between 1923 and 1946:

- 1- Berç Keresteciyan Türker
- 2- Münib Boya
- 3- Andre Vahram
- 4- Zakar Tarver
- 5- Mıgırdıç Şellefyan
- 6- Berç Sahak Turan Member of Parliament-Member of the Senate of the Republic
- 7- Hermine Agavni Kalüstyian-Member of the Guild of Representatives

2. Armenian Citizens in the Grand National Assembly

To better understand the political context of Armenian citizens and its political engagements, political life-story of above mentioned people should be studied in detail.

Berç Türker (Keresteciyan)

Berç Keresteciyan Türker's father, who is also known as Kigorkberç Keresteci in the records, is Priest Mıgırdıç Nişan (Tuğlacı, 1987, I: 67). The journalist and linguist Bedros Efendi Keresteciyan is his uncle. Bedros Efendi participated as an administrator in the publication of the newspaper "Tercüman-ı Ahval" after completing his studies at the Muradyan College of the Mkhitharists in Paris and returning to Istanbul. Later, he worked for the Sublime Porte's Directorate of Foreign Communications.

Berç Türker was born in Istanbul in 1870 and died in 1949 (Dabeğyan, 2003: 263). He studied at Mekteb-i Sultani (Galatasaray) and Robert College. He was fluent in Armenian, French,

English, Greek, German, Italian and Spanish (Dabeğyan, 2003: 263). Türker, who is an economics and finance expert, served as the Manager of the Ottoman Bank during the Armistice years, as a Member of the Board of Directors of the T. C. Ziraat Bank (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi [BCA], 1948), the Ministry of Trade, and as the vice president of the Red Crescent Society. He was one of those sent from Istanbul to assist the National Struggle forces in Anatolia during the War of Independence. He used bartacks to transport weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies via nebolu to Anatolia (Dabeğyan, 2003: 263). In addition, Berç Keresteciyan, who served in the Hilal-i Ahmer, helped Anatolia during the National Struggle by transporting medicine chests with many items needed by the army. The ferry to Bandırma, which was beneficial to Turkey during the War of Independence and upon the order of Mustafa Kemal, was informed by the pasha's lawyer Saadettin Ferit Bey (Talay) that the British would set fire to the ship carrying them in the Black Sea, during Atatürk's ascent to Samsun. The crew watched the situation only from the shore (Pamukçayan, 2003: 277). For this service to Atatürk, Berç Keresteciyan Türker was awarded a certificate of honor by the Rotary 2420th District Governor 50 years after his death. The award ceremony was held on 29.05.2001 at Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall. Krikor Damadyan, the deputy of the Patriarch of Armenians of Turkey Mesrob 2, received the award on behalf of him and his family (Serin, 2001). In addition, the previously dismantled firing mechanisms of the cannons used in the Battle of Sakarya were secretly taken back by the Special Organization with 15,000 Lira loaned by Türker (Damadyan & Arzuman, 1998: 9; Alkan, 2004: 11; TBMM Tutanak, 2005: 48).

Türker was the honorary president of the Turkish Armenian Teali Association (Türk Ermeni Teali Cemiyeti), which was founded by his fellow citizens of Armenian descent. This society took a stand in favor of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey both during the War of Independence and the Lausanne Conference (Ermeni Ekalliyetleri, 1927). Berç Keresteciyan was also directly involved in community affairs until he was elected as a deputy. He played an active role in the patriarch elections. (Ermeni Ekalliyetlerin İntihabatı, 1926). Keresteciyan was given the surname "Türker" by Atatürk in 1936. He was the first Armenian parliamentary member to enter the Turkish Grand National Assembly during the Republican period (Tuğlacı, 1987, I: 767) and served as V-VI-VII in 1935-1939, 1939-1943, 1943-1946. He has been a deputy of Afyon for 3 terms (Öztürk, 1973: 145).

The news that Berç Keresteciyan Türker was a deputy from Afyonkarahisar in the 1939 elections was reflected on the pages of the Cumhuriyet newspaper as follows; "...The

parliamentary election, which started in the morning of today (26/3/1939), ended all over the country until noon and the candidates of the Republican People's Party were elected unanimously. Berç Türker from Afyonkarahisar, who was left vacant for the independent parliamentary position, and Dr. Taptaş, İstemat Özdamar from Eskisehir, Dr. Abravaya Marmaralı was appointed... National Chief İsmet İnönü's voting for the candidates for the Republican People's Party is a brilliance that once again reveals the strength and might of the new Turkish Republic. In the telegrams received from all the cities and towns of the country until late last night, it was reported that the candidates of the People's Party were elected to the deputies” (Yurdun Her Tarafında, 1939: 1-9).

Berç Keresteciyan Türker had a say in the work of the Grand National Assembly on the economy. Atatürk had him prepare the budget between 1923 and 1933 (Dabeğyan, 2003: 263). Berç Türker conducted important studies for Afyon, for which he was a member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, made proposals about the problems of Afyon, and presented reports to Ankara on various occasions for its economic development, enabling investments to be made in this region. He wrote the aforementioned report on September 4, 1944 and prepared a very extensive 111-page report on the agricultural, economic, commercial, and industrial conditions of the province of Afyon, as well as on public works. The report aroused great repercussions within the government. The subjects mentioned in the report were examined by the relevant ministries and the CHP General Secretariat was informed by the ministers. (BCA, 31.12.1945)

Berç Türker, who served as an independent Afyon deputy between 1934-1942, had a great commitment to Turkish culture and Turkey. In a discussion about banning Classical Turkish music on radios in 1945; “I am of the opinion that national Turkish music should never leave the country. Because every nation has its own national music. Yes, Western music is an exceptionally beautiful music, I have learned it from you too, but this is not national music. If we undermine our national music from the root, it is shameful for us and it is persecution.” He clearly stated that it would not been appropriate to ban Turkish culture in any way (TBMM Tutanak, 2005: 185). However, it is also very sensitive to the natural beauties and forests of the country. He submitted questions to the Ministry of Agriculture about the increasing forest fires and the measures taken and drew attention to this direction. In such a parliamentary question in 8.110.1935, Türker used the following expressions: (BCA, 10.10.1935) “Qualification of Question - No one can deny that our country is the most beautiful one in the world. One of the most beneficial beauties of our country is our forests. We regretfully see that

every year forest fires devastate those beautiful places and turn them into deserts. Please, I ask them to enlighten the high Kamutay” (Signed Afyon Saylavı Berç K. Türker).

Berç Türker has worked on many issues, prepared legislative proposals, and presented parliamentary questions (BCA, 1937; BCA, 1939; BCA, 9.10.1935). In one of them, he stated that as a result of the developments in the world in 1935, keeping Turkey's gates closed, especially closing the Dardanelles, was necessary for the security of the country. Although he is pro-peace, he expressed his love for Turkey by saying "We want to keep our beloved country above everything" (BCA, 9.10.1935). Berç Keresteciyan Türker displayed a national stance in the process of Hatay's accession to Turkey, as in many other issues. He said that 300,000 Turks in Iskenderun and Antakya shed tears to reunite with the homeland and emphasized that saving them is the sacred duty of 18 million Turks.

Berç Türker, who also served as the President of the Red Crescent, made great efforts for the development of the Red Crescent. Like most institutions in Turkey, which has just come out of the war, the Red Crescent had major shortcomings. It tried to provide resources with aid made by citizens and annual fees of one lira in member registrations. Türker has prepared a law proposal in order to find this source. According to the proposal, he proposed that a 20 lira Red Crescent Stamp be affixed to all documents subject to stamp stamps and all letters to be sent to other countries, and that the revenues of these stamps be given to the Red Crescent. However, this proposal was not accepted for various reasons (BCA, 26.3.1936). Türker, who retired from the Central Directorate of the Ottoman Bank, passed away on July 26, 1949 in Istanbul (Pamukçiyen, 1981: 84).

Münib Boya

In Van, he was born in 1872. His father, Boyazade Mustafa, is a Syrian, and his mother, Gürnaz, is of Armenian descent. He was fluent in Arabic, Armenian, and Kurdish. Boya, a graduate of high school, was married and had six kids (Öztürk, 1973: 108). Münip Bey completed the Van High School on 11 June 1885 and started his career as a candidate officer in the Van Province editorial office. He was appointed as the Chief Clerk of the Basra Province Administrative Council on March 24, 1910. After serving in Basra until 1912, he returned to Van and served as a member and chairman of the commission in the Provincial General Assembly.

On April 23, 1914, he was elected as the Hakkari Deputy to the Ottoman Parliament. He continued this duty until February 13, 1919, when the parliament was closed. On February 16, 1920, in the 4th Election Period, he was elected as the Deputy of the Assembly from Van and remained in this position until the closing of the Assembly. On February 24, 1920, he was appointed as the Governor of Siirt Sanjak by the government of the Grand National Assembly. After continuing this duty for about two years, he was again appointed as the Governor of Hakkari by the parliament (Öztürk, 1973: 108). After the elections held in Ankara on 19 July 1923 in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Boya was elected as a Van deputy for the second term. He started his duty as a deputy on 11 August 1923, when the period started. Non-Muslim deputies in the government that declared the Republic II. Since then, it has taken its place in the parliament. The first non-Muslim deputy in Turkey was Münib Boya, a Van deputy of Armenian origin, who also served two terms in the Ottoman Parliament. After being elected as a deputy from Van in the elections held on July 19, 1923, he took the Armenians of Van from the rocky area around the Ereğ Mountain and settled them around İskele Caddesi and Toprakkale. From Van uninterruptedly II, III, IV, V, VI, VII. He was a member of parliament (Öztürk, 1973: 108).

Zakar Tarver

He goes by Ruben Zakar Zakarian in real life. He was born in Ein, Turkey, in 1894; his parents' names are Orhan and Efkine. He finished his primary education at Istanbul Topkapi Primary School and Mekteb-i Osmani-i Hamidi before moving on to Behçecik American School for his secondary education. After completing his high school education at Istanbul Bakırköy Bezazyan, he earned his medical degree from Istanbul University in 1917. He became an X-ray specialist by specializing in his field in both France and America. Tarver, a child of Ruben, was bilingual in French and English (Damadyan & Arzuman, 1998: 14; Öztürk, 1973: 342) He worked as a freelance doctor in Istanbul.

Tarver, who was a DP candidate from Istanbul in the X. Term Parliamentary elections, joined the parliament on 14 May 1954. He continued his parliamentary work in the Health and Social Assistance Commission. XI again in the 1957 elections from Istanbul. He was also elected as a deputy during the period (Öztürk, 1973: 342). Tarver, one of the important X-ray specialists in the Armenian community, contributed greatly to the development of the Armenian Hospital in Taksim with his help (Yeşilyurt, 1995: 86-87). Zakar Tarver was among the deputies who were arrested and sent to Yassıada after the 1960 revolution (Özer, 1995: 28). He died in

Yassıada as a result of a heart attack on September 19, 1960, while the trial was still going on, and was buried in the Balıklı Armenian Cemetery (Kronoloji, 2004).

Mıgırdıç Şellefyan

His father's name is Kirkor, his mother is Kiristina and he was born in Adapazarı in 1914 (Öztürk, 1973: 393). He graduated from high school in 1931 and went into business. Şellefyan, engaged in the import and export trade of hardware and hardware, became a partner in many companies. In addition to his commercial activities, he also entered politics and became a member of the Democratic Party. Şellefyan spoke French and a small amount of English and Italian. He was married and had two children. Şellefyan, who was also a member of the Istanbul City Council, was elected XI. He was elected as a DP deputy for the term (Öztürk, 1973: 393; Akın, 2006: 87). The Patriarchate continued to support the DP government in the 1957 elections, as it did in the 1946, 1950, and 1954 elections. Şellefyan was elected as a member of the Istanbul City Council in 1955, also taking part in the local government.

The regulation made by the DP in Article 44 of the Law on Foundations was welcomed by non-Muslim communities. The Chairman of the Central Board of Trustees of the Armenian Community, Mıgırdıç Şellefyan, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, expressing his satisfaction and thanks on behalf of his community.

He served as the Chairman of the Central Board of Trustees of the Armenian Community. Some writers have described Şellefyan as a friend of the then prime minister Demirel (Onur, 1999: 154). Mıgırdıç Şellefyan, who was arrested after the military intervention of 27 May 1960, was tried by the Yassıada Courts. A lawsuit has been filed against him on the charge of unlawful acquisition of property. Due to the excessive increase in his wealth between the years 1950-1960 and the source of which is unknown, the court decided to confiscate the property of Şellefyan. In 1983, a lawsuit was filed against him by the Ankara Martial Law Command No. 4 Military Court on the charge of Smuggling in the State of Establishment. However, he was deprived of citizenship in 1984 as he went abroad on this date. He died on 10 December 1987 after a heart attack in Geneva. The Armenian community and the Patriarchate in Turkey declared his death on December 10 as a day of mourning (Yeşilyurt, 1995: 88-89).

Berç Sahak Turan

His Maraş-born father, Kahraman Yervant, is a skilled knifemaker. In Maraş, he was born in 1920. He finished his elementary and secondary education and received his high school diploma from Istanbul Pangalt Armenian High School in 1938. (Öztürk, 1973: 636; Yeşilyurt, 1995: 107-108) After graduating from the Faculty of Architecture of Istanbul Technical University in 1944, Turan worked as a freelance architect in Istanbul for a while, and entered the Ministry of Public Works, Construction and Zoning Affairs in 1945. Turan also taught Mathematics and Cosmography at Pangaltı High School. He spoke French, German, and Armenian. Married and father of 3 children, Turan was elected as Istanbul Senator from the Justice Party between 15.10.1961 and 7.6.1964 (Öztürk, 1973: 636; (Özer, 1995: 28). After he entered the parliament as a senator, he was recognized as an architect who received great tenders. He provided great assistance to Armenian foundations, hospitals, schools, and churches in Istanbul. During his time as a senator, he was a senator on Kınalıada, where Armenians were the majority. He carried out some studies for the development of (Yeşilyurt, 1995: 107-108).

He worked as a spokesperson in the Public Works and Transportation Commission in the Senate. During his term as a senator, there is a bill and two oral questions. Berç Turan made a total of nineteen speeches at the General Assembly, and his membership ended on June 7, 1964, in the one-third renewal elections. After leaving the Senate, he returned to his old profession and took place as a Master Architect at the Ministry of Public Works, Istanbul Construction Affairs I. Regional Directorate on April 8, 1966. Berç Turan, who was appointed to the position of Consultant on December 1, 1970, resigned on May 1, 1972, and left this position. Berç Turan, who died on August 3, 1997, in Istanbul, was buried in the Şişli Armenian Cemetery (Çakırbaş, 2017).

Hermine Agavni Kalüstyán

She was born in Istanbul in 1914; her father's name is Leon, and her mother's name is Heranuş. She was admitted to the French École Normale Supérieure the same year she graduated from the Esayan Armenian School. After completing this program, she received his certificate to instruct mathematics in high schools. Later returning to Turkey, Kalüstyán began teaching mathematics at the Esayan Girls' School in Istanbul in 1936. In the same year, she enrolled in Istanbul University and later graduated from Istanbul University, Department of Higher

Mathematics (Öztürk, 1973: 572). Hermine Kalüstyán, who is also a Doctor of Science, received the title of Doctor of Science with her doctoral thesis titled "Conform Depiction and Plane Motion of a Sulpable Object" in 1941. She knew French, English, and Armenian. Returning to Esayan School in 1948, Kalustyan served as the principal of the Middle School Department of Esayan School. She took part in the Board of Directors and has been a member of the Turkish Astronomy Association since 1957 (Öztürk, 1973: 572).

After the May 27 Revolution, one of the members of the National Unity Committee, Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeođlu, suggested to Cemal Gürsel that an Armenian, Jewish and Greek representative to the Constituent Assembly should join the Constituent Assembly, and Kalüstyán became one of the three non-Muslim representatives. The other two representatives; Jewish Chief Rabbinical Counsel Erol Dilek is Kaludi Laskari represented the Greeks (Yeşilyurt, 1995: 102-103). She served on the National Unity Committee between January 1961 and October 1961. She was appointed as the head of the state representative by Cemal Gürsel to the Constituent Assembly that made the 1961 Constitution. Kalustyan became a member of the CHP on February 18, 1961, after this duty (Bir Temsilci, Milliyet, 1961).

3. Approaches of Political Parties to Minorities and Armenians in Elections

After the declaration of the Republic, the political structure in the country was in a very complex state during the transition to democratic life. While the first established political party, CHF (Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası) was in power alone, new parties were established from time to time and there were attempts to transition to a multi-party system, but a multi-party system could not be implemented until 1946. Despite the fact that there is only one party in the country, minorities have sometimes changed their political direction in accordance with the policies implemented. Undoubtedly, the policies put forward by the CHF had a great impact on these changes in direction. Although the basic principle of populism was to establish a political order with equal distance and equality for everyone, there were some deviations from this path over time. As a result of the misinterpretation of nationalism by some administrators, some extreme attitudes and behaviors were perceived by minorities as a policy toward them.

CHF, in 1927 II. He published a statement after the Congress and explained the policies to be implemented from now on as follows. In the statement, it was emphasized that the CHF is a Republican, Populist, Secular, and Nationalist party. These principles have been dominated by the CHF in all politics and in the making and implementation of all laws. Nationalism has been

of high value in the CHF and country administration and has played an active role in the law and the implementation of these laws. Especially in 1931, when the party was most influential, and after, Nationalism has been a frequently used domestic political argument (Turan, 2000: 30-41). Minorities in Turkey were slightly uncomfortable with policies based on nationalism. This dissatisfaction was not ignored by the newly formed political parties. Not only did they emphasize that they did not discriminate between religion and race in their programs, but they also sought the votes of all minorities by nominating candidates from minorities in the 1930 municipal elections.

In a statement he made to Armenian newspapers published in Istanbul a short time later, Fethi Okyar, the president of the Free Republic Party, which was founded as a result of President Atatürk's announcement on August 7 that a second party would be established in Yalova, sought the votes of all minorities with the SCF's platform that did not discriminate against race or religion. Nuri Bey, the general clerk of the Free Republican Party, also stated that they would nominate candidates from minorities for the municipal elections. The total number of SCF candidates in Istanbul is 117 and the number of non-Muslim candidates among these candidates is determined as 13. Four of them were Armenian (Hakimiyet-i Milliye, 1930). In İzmir, 4 of the 77 candidates nominated by SCF were from minorities. (Yetkin, 1982: 185) Among the candidates whose names can be identified were the Armenian Ambassador Herant Bey and Kazancıyan Bey (Istanbul Belediye İntihabı, 1930: 4). On the evening of October 4, 1930, the Republican People's Party and the Free Republican Party announced their candidates. Among the minorities, those who showed the most interest in the elections were the Armenians and then the Greeks. Despite the fact that the Free Republican Party nominated these candidates, the Republican People's Party did not nominate any candidates from minorities (Yetkin, 1982: 185). However, they criticized the minority nomination of the SCF as "SCF Greeks bring Armenians to power" (Cumhuriyet, 9 Teşrinievvel 1930). As a result of all these discussions, the voting rate of SCF was around fifteen percent, this rate rose to around 25-30 percent in Kasımpaşa. It was seen that three-quarters of the votes were in favor of the CHF in the six ballot boxes opened in the municipal elections that ended on the evening of October 18, 1930, in Istanbul (Bali, 1997: 286). By 1935, in the parliamentary elections, the minorities, rather than highlighting their own identities, specifically stated that they were Turkish citizens, spoke Turkish, were involved with Turkish culture, and would not go to the parliament as a minority representative. (Akşam, Şubat 9, 1935)

Despite the fact that SCF nominated minority candidates, the high rate of votes caused the CHF to take a new approach to this issue. On February 2, 1935, under the presidency of Atatürk, the CHF General Presidency Council, the General Administration Committee, the CHF Assembly Group Administration Committee and the Executive Deputies held discussions on the new election. It was decided to include minorities among the independent candidates in the parliamentary elections to be held in these negotiations. Berç (Keresteciyan) Türker, who was a candidate from the SCF in the 1930 municipal elections in the February 8, 1935 elections, came from Afyon on behalf of the Armenians and Dr. Taptas from Ankara, İstamat Özdamar from Eskişehir, representing the Jews, Dr. Abravaya Marmaralı was elected as an Independent Member of Parliament from Niğde (Bali, 1997: 265-266). These deputies, who first entered the elections and then the parliament, acted only as citizens of the Republic of Turkey, without ever highlighting their ethnic identities in their propaganda and parliamentary work, and refrained from pretending to be the representatives of minorities (Akın, 2006: 74).

4. Conclusion

The transition to a multi-party and more democratic period in Turkey was achieved as a result of the elections held in 1946. In this process, liberalization started with the establishment of new parties, and thus, there were some developments in the status of minorities. The ruling party CHP won the 1946 elections, and the task of forming a government was given to Recep Peker. Recep Peker did not remain indifferent to the democratization process, which is a rising value throughout the country, and declared that minorities should have full equality and all kinds of rights and that some of the limitations and disabilities that existed in the past would be corrected immediately (Levi, 1998: 153). The total democratization efforts in the country have also reflected positively on minorities.

In addition to this democratic attitude of CHP administrators against minorities after 1946, moderate and friendly messages were also put forward by the DP. Minorities saw the DP first and foremost as a formation that would provide an opening for them after the single-party rule. Minorities that supported the DP in the elections sent 6 deputies to the parliament between 1950-1957. These are: Salamon Adato from Istanbul (Jewish origin and 8th and 9th Period), Andre Vohran Bayar (Greek origin 9th Period), Ahilya Moshos (Greek origin 9th Period), Hanri Soriano (Jewish 10th Period), Zahar Tarver (10th Period of Armenian origin), Alexandros Haçopulas (10th Period of Greek origin).

In the 1957 elections, the minorities that supported the DP were again elected as deputies. Zakar Tarver and Alexsantros Haçopoulos, who were previously elected from Istanbul, were re-elected, and Mıgırdıç Şellefyan (Armenian origin), Hiristaki Yuannidis (Greek origin), İshak Altabev (Jewish origin) served in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Akın, 2006: 87).

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