

FROM OLD HOMELAND TO THE NEW ONE: MIGRATION MOVEMENTS  
AND POLICIES BETWEEN 1918-1923

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## ABSTRACT

### FROM OLD HOMELAND TO THE NEW ONE: MIGRATION MOVEMENTS AND POLICIES BETWEEN 1918-1923

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The period between 1918 and 1923 witnessed a huge transformation process. Various migration waves, civilian tragedies, challenging policies and ideologies, occupations and liberations took place during this period. Following Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology chapters, this study discusses the key migration concepts, their “descent and emergence”, from a genealogical perspective and links them to the migratory movements between 1918-1923. In Chapter IV, it explains the migratory movements starting from the Armistice of Mudros. These movements could fall into five main categories: i) Refugees fleeing conflict or war zones such as the White Russians in the West or Muslim and non-Muslim groups in the East, ii) Repatriation of the Armenian, Rum, Kurdish and Arab refugees who were forced to migrate during the World War I, iii) Incoming migrants in the Armistice period to seize the majority considering the Wilsonian Principles, iv) Consecutive migration movements due to the occupations and liberations in Anatolia, v) Migrations upon the decision of Allied Powers or the Istanbul and Ankara Governments. Since all these movements are often intertwined, they are discussed regionally. In Chapter V, migration policies during the period are examined. It is found that both Istanbul and Ankara governments had anti-migration stance. Nation- and state-building efforts, maintaining population dominance, establishing order and security, as well as socio-economic concerns are the main driving factors behind the migration policies of Istanbul and Ankara governments.

**Key Words:** Migration, Armistice, Homeland, Migrant, Refugee

## ÖZ

### ESKİ VATANDAN YENİSİNE: 1918-1923 ARASI GÖÇ HAREKETLERİ VE POLİTİKALARI

ARABACI, Talip

Yüksek Lisans, Göç Çalışmaları

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1918-1923 yılları, büyük bir dönüşüm sürecine şahitlik etmiştir. Bu dönemde çeşitli göç dalgaları, sivil trajediler, çetin siyasalar ve ideolojiler, işgaller ve düşman işgalinden kurtuluşlar meydana gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, giriş, literatür taraması ve metodoloji bölümlerinin ardından, temel göç kavramlarını, bu kavramların “şeceresini ve ortaya çıkışı”nı soykütüksel bir bakış açısıyla ele almakta, bunları 1918-1923 arasındaki göç hareketleriyle ilişkilendirmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde, Mondros Mütarekesi’nden başlayarak göç hareketlerini açıklamaktadır. Bu hareketler beş ana kategoriye ayrılabilir: i) Batı’daki Beyaz Ruslar veya Doğu’daki Müslüman ve Gayrimüslim gruplar gibi çatışma veya savaş bölgelerinden kaçan mülteciler, ii) I. Dünya Savaşı sırasında göç etmeye zorlanan Ermeni, Rum, Kürt ve Arapların geri gönderilmesi, iii) Mütareke döneminde Wilson Prensipleri’ni gözeterek çoğunluğu ele geçirmek amacıyla gelen göçmenler, iv) Anadolu’daki işgaller ve işgallerden kurtuluşlar nedeniyle ortaya çıkan müteselsil göç hareketleri, v) İtilaf Devletleri veya İstanbul ve Ankara Hükümetlerinin kararları üzerine meydana gelen göçler. Bütün bu göç hareketleri genellikle iç içe geçtiği için bölgesel olarak irdelenmektedir. Beşinci bölümde ise dönemin göç politikaları incelenmekte; gerek İstanbul, gerek Ankara Hükümetlerinin göç karşıtı tavır takındığı ortaya konmaktadır. Bu hükümetlerin göç politikalarının arkasındaki temel itici etmenlerin, ulus ve devlet inşa etme çabaları, nüfus hâkimiyetini sürdürme, düzen ve asayişin tesisi ve sosyo-ekonomik kaygılar olduğu görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Mütareke, Vatan, Muhâcir, Mülteci

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- a.k.a. : Also known as
- BCA : Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Republican Archives (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi*)
- BOA : Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi*)
- CPC : Committee for Pontic Studies
- CUP : The Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti*)
- DGTM : Directorate General of Tribes and Migrants (*Aşâir ve Muhâcirîn Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi*)
- IACI : Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry on the Greek Occupation of Smyrna and Adjacent Territories
- ICRC : International Committee of the Red Cross
- IOM : International Organization for Migration
- MAZC : Meclis-i Âyan Zabıt Ceridesi
- MF : Mobile Forces (*Kuvâ-yı Seyyâre*)
- NF : National Forces (*Kuvâ-yı Milliye*)
- NS : National Struggle (*Millî Mücadele*)
- TRFEI : Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam
- TGNA : Turkish Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*)
- THS : Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*)
- TLI : Turkish Language Institution (*Türk Dil Kurumu*)
- USNARA : The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
- WWI : World War I

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

From 1918 until 1923, Türkiye witnessed a huge transformation process in such a short period of time including regime transitions from the Second Constitutional Era under the Ottoman Dynasty ruling in 1918 to the proclamation of the young Republic of Türkiye in 1923. From the administrative aspect, this period saw two Ottoman Sultans (Mehmed V and Mehmed VI), ruling elites such as the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and the emergence of new Turkish leadership during the National Struggle (NS). It comes after several wars which caused huge territorial losses from the Balkans to Tripoli, Yemen, Libya and the Caucasia, so that only Anatolia left behind. Each and every loss of an Ottoman territory brought continuous migration movements to and from the remaining land, Anatolia (Çiftçi, 2013). The migration inflows between 1908 and 1923 constituted the third largest mass migration wave in Türkiye's history including the mass inflows of Syrian people after 2011 (Dündar 2021, 26). From the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the World War I (WWI), nearly 6 million *muhâcirîn* settled in Türkiye (Beyoğlu, 2004). At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Muslims consisted of 59.6% of the total Ottoman population. However, following the territorial losses and migration inflows, this had reached 76.2% at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Beyoğlu, 2004).

There has been lack of consensus in terminology, as well as in policies and decisions of the ruling elites between 1918-1923. In order to understand these changes, it is important to look at previous years' political and socio-economic developments.

With the changes in borders, in addition to the demography, the concept of homeland had changed (Taştan, 2012). Initially, homeland was where the Caliph (Sultan) resided, it was the secured lands where a Muslim Ottoman citizen could continue his life performing daily religious practices freely. It was the land of Muslims (*dâr al-Islam*) regardless of their ethnic origin (Taştan, 2012). Such an embracement of Muslims was due to the rising ideologies, eminent during the last years of the Ottoman State, namely Ottomanism and Islamism. This approach was required to keep remaining lands at hand after 1850s (Günaydın, 2019). The understanding which was believed to (re)unite all the Ottoman subjects was based on the dominant religion *Islam*. As soon as the lands in Africa and Europe were lost and the ineffectiveness of Ottomanism and Islamism policies was clearly and bitterly understood by the ruling elites, Turkism has gained support and the homeland became the last land, Anatolia. There was a pessimistic view after the Balkan Wars that even this last one would be lost sooner. Therefore, the migrant movements from those lost territories headed towards Anatolia.

The Ottoman administrations handled each migration wave specifically according to the place of origin, migrants' ethnic and religious identities, and migration intervals. To coordinate migrants' issues and settle them down (Taş, 2017), *Muhâcirîn Komisyonu* (The Commission of Migrants) was established in 1860. It was transformed into the *Aşâir ve Muhâcirîn Müdüriyeti Umumiyesi* (DGTM) in 1914.

While Muslim refugees coming from the lost territories were regarded as *muhâcir* in some periods, they were regarded as *mültecî* in others. There was not a clear-cut distinction between migrants and refugees, and these words were interchangeably used in official documents as well. Internal migrants were mostly considered as fugitives or deserters if they were fleeing the occupying forces, frontlines or internal rebellions during the NS, sometimes even labelled as traitors

(Çelik, 2008; Tosun, 2017). In certain years, CUP leaders did not want to embrace migrants not to lose leverage in foreign policy and adopted an anti-migration stance (Öksüz and Küçüker, 2019). Whereas in some other years, migration of the Turkish population from lands far and near were encouraged to take benefit of their workforce in agriculture, of their tax revenues, to increase the population and to fill the gap in recruitment to the army (Eyigün and Hacısalıhoğlu, 2019; Yıldırım, 2016).

Although the period between 1918 and 1923 is a short one considering the centuries-long Ottoman ruling, those years had witnessed various migration waves, civilian tragedies, challenging policies and ideologies, occupations and liberations, despair and hopes. In a nutshell, it was a huge process of transformation as explained above. Yet this period, from a historical migration perspective, remains mainly unexplored and has been under researched. Policies and conceptual changes related to migration in this period needs to be further investigated. While discussing all these changes and conceptual developments, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature and contribute to the existing studies through employing genealogy as a methodology. It also looks into the contributions of these migration waves and policies to today's Türkiye.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

There have been many studies focusing on the migration movements starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, coming from Crimea, Caucasia, the Balkans, as well as research on political and socio-economic dimensions of these movements. From the nation building perspective, the Armistice of Mudros and NS period have long been a special area of interest. However, as well-observed by Dündar (2021, 52), migration studies in Türkiye could not stay out of political or national discourse, lacked theoretical framework and have become crisis-oriented. Holistic approaches in this area have been very limited. Following so-called “Syrian refugee crisis”, migration studies have been getting more popular but as the saying goes: “There is nothing new under the Sun”.

In addition to the lack of theoretical background, concerns on the inability to use foreign resources efficiently, the difficulty of reaching out to primary sources, having one-sided approaches, disregarding the role of events on the push and pull factors of migration, are still valid. For instance, *tehcir* has been one of the most controversial topics discussed by Turkish and foreign academics but the focus has generally been ethnic based which eventually turns into a blame game, dealing with the events either through victimizing Armenians or Muslims (Turkish and Kurdish) populations. As explained in the key concepts section (Chapter III), there are only a few studies which reveal that there were 13 different ethnic and religious groups other than Armenians who were also subjected to *tehcir*. Even its original title, “Temporary Law on the Measures to be Taken Militarily for Those who Oppose the Government's Actions



During Wartime (*Vakt-i seferde icraat-i hükûmete karşı gelenler için cihet-i askeriyece ittihaz olunacak tedâbir hakkında Kanun-ı Muvakkat*), is not known. In many studies the original title is stated as “The Relocation and Resettlement Law” or as *Sevk ve İskân Kanunu*.

As for the NS and Armistice period, the focus of the studies has been, in general, the struggle for regaining independence against the imperial occupying forces. Among related topics are nation building process around key concepts, internal migratory movements stemming from the occupations and persecution policies by the imperial forces or their “tools” like Armenians and *Rums* (Ottoman Greeks). Both migration and NS have been studied scarcely studied, except for the studies focused on certain regions of Anatolia. Whereas these studies mostly aim at refuting the claims of “massacre” or “genocide” against *Rums* and Armenians, to prove that these groups are not innocent.

There are a number of well-structured, systematic and dedicated studies, exploring the NS period and the field of migration, such as *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler* by Kemal Karpat, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler* and *Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret* by Nedim İpek, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Muhâcir Komisyonları ve Faaliyetleri (1860-1923)* by Ufuk Erdem. Acknowledging their contributions to the literature, it can be stated that migration movements and policies peculiar to the period 1918-1923 have been studied to a limited extend except for the Yıldırım's (2020) study.

Yıldırım's (2020) book titled *Mütareke Döneminde Göç ve İskân 1918-1923* is of particular importance. Her book, which focuses on the Armistice Period, discusses the internal and external migration inflows to Anatolia and the settlement policies

during this particular period. While her study generally adheres to the writing methods of the history discipline, it does not delve enough into the theoretical framework and the critical approach. Adhering to the official discourse, Yıldırım's starting point is the negligence of the Turkish refugees' tragedies experienced in their own lands after WWI. More emphasis is given to the first years of Armistice and the Istanbul Government in the study, whereas the policies of the Ankara Government are briefly mentioned. While highlighting the population movements, the focus has been on migration movements to Istanbul and Anatolia. It is also worth mentioning that the 1915 events are the focus of the migration movements in the Eastern Anatolia region. Circassian and Caucasian refugees, refugees from Russia, and relocation of tribes to the inner provinces are not mentioned in her study.

Furthermore, Erdem's (2018) study, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Muhâcir Komisyonları ve Faaliyetleri (1860-1923)* gives useful insights in understanding important aspects of the Ottoman State's migration policies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries till the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Commissions' structures, their development over time, budget and expenditures including the financial assistance to the migrants and refugees are explained in details in the book. The period in question covers the activities until 1923, however there is limited discussion regarding the Commissions' activities during the NS period.

Another study by İpek (2022), *Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret*, covers the migration during the Armistice and NS period. His explanations on migration related concepts and their use constitute an important contribution to the Turkish migration literature. The book's third chapter discusses the migration movements caused by the Russian occupation in the eastern and northern parts of the Ottoman State, called *Şark Mültecileri*, and the migrations in the Western Anatolia driven by the Greek

occupation, *Garp Mültecileri*. In addition to the population movements, İpek also gives an overall summary of the migration policies behind these movements. That being said, focus of this study is also the migration flows that took place in the last period of the Ottoman State. Besides, migration movements after WWI in the Western Anatolia, Istanbul and Eastern Anatolia including some parts of the Black Sea region are also discussed but the ones occurred in other regions are not mentioned. İpek's (2013) second book titled *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler* covers a broader scope compared to the first one, encompassing external migration movements as well. In addition to migrants from Algeria, Iran, Tripoli, and Russia, migration outflows from Anatolia to Caucasia, America, and Argentina are also covered. However, the scope of these external migrations belongs to the pre-WWI period.

McCarthy's (2022) book, *Ölüm ve Sürgün Osmanlı Müslümanlarının Etnik Kırımı (1821-1922)* ("Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922"), is one of the most important studies in the field. McCarthy's (2022) comprehensive study sheds light on an important part of history that has been deliberately obscured by the Western academics and politicians. Migration movements in Anatolia are covered in details using the Ottoman and foreign documents, supplemented by population statistics. However, his estimates regarding Muslim casualties are considered "moderate". Karpas (1997) commends McCarthy's book for its comprehensive approach, vast documentation, and the author's commitment to maintain objectivity, deeming it "praiseworthy". The book constitutes a meticulous but belated response to one-sided narratives, whether they originate from Turkish, European, Armenian, Greek or American sources. One important drawback may be, as Dündar states, not utilizing Russian documents (Dündar 2021, 61). Despite its good grasp of knowledge and a comprehensive approach, McCarthy's (2022) study also

highlights the need for further studies on migration movements involving Arabs, Kurdish, Persian and other minority groups in the specified period, since the narrative predominantly revolve around the experience of dominant populations.

In addition, the book titled *Türkiye Kurulurken Kürtler 1916-1920* by Hakan (2016) also needs to be acknowledged in this literature review. Hakan (2016) presents another overshadowed side of history in the East: The “Kurdish” Question. Migration is not the primary focus, and is limited to the 1916-1920 period in his study. However, his findings on Kurdish migration movements during WWI, conflicts with other groups in the region, supports for the Ottoman army while the regions were liberated from occupation, the return of Kurdish refugees, the policies of British, Ottoman and Ankara governments towards Kurdish people, all provided valuable insights.

Last but not least, Şeker’s (2002) PhD Thesis titled *Ethnic Conflicts in Anatolia and the Establishment of the Turkish Republic, 1918-1923* offers a unique perspective by addressing the ethnic conflicts from a different angle. His study also covers the migration flows of the specified period as they were an integral part and direct consequence of the ethnic conflicts under examination. His findings about the CUP’s demographic engineering policy, and its impacts on the Turkish, Kurdish, Rum and Armenian nationalism, enrich the discussions about *tehcir* policies that have been stuck into the official discourse or blame game. The study reveals the role of these policies in guiding the young Republic’s attitude towards migration, as well as in the national identity building process. However, similar to McCarthy’s study, this book also focuses on the main ethnic groups in Anatolia and forced migration.

Taking these leading studies into account, along with many others not mentioned due to their scopes, this study differs from the others in terms of its methodological

approach to key concepts, theoretical background, and scope. This research aims to investigate the evolution of perceptions on homeland and attitudes towards migrants from 1918 to 1923, seeking answers to the following questions:

When did a migrant become a *muhâcir* or a *mültecî* even they were coming from the similar regions heading towards their last homeland? When were these migrant populations welcomed and when did they become unwanted? What was the general approach of the Ottoman bureaucracy and politicians towards the migrants coming from different countries after WWI? Following the occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Powers and the formation of a new government in Ankara, what were the policies towards the migrants, were they pro-migration or anti-migration? What did consecutive migrants who had come to Anatolia after the loss of their “previous” homelands do when Anatolia was occupied? How did all those bitter past experiences shape today’s homeland perception in Türkiye, and how did they contribute to the birth of modern Türkiye?

While seeking answers to these questions, as explained earlier, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature and to contribute to the existing knowledge with a unique theoretical perspective that has not been employed before in the specified period. This study employs genealogy a methodology, which is a critical “historical perspective” and an inquiry method which rooted in Friedrich Nietzsche’s writings but mostly linked to Michel Foucault’s studies (Bevir, 2008; Crowley, 2009; Tamboukou, 2019). Foucault lays down genealogy as a new form of historical work which studies empirical phenomena and leads to the detailed findings (Ahmeti, 2021).

Genealogy is deemed to be a valuable complement to traditional research methods while challenging universal established practices and conceptions of

“knowledge, truth and power” (Ahmeti, 2021; Crowley, 2009). It provides insights into historical events, concepts, their evolution and development over time so that the socio-economic and cultural ties behind them could be mapped out (Martin, 2016). Genealogy, as a form of critique, helps to find out discontinuities, accidents and errors during the historical journey of a concept (Bevir, 2008; Bowman and Hook, 2010; Knauft, 2017).

Genealogy allows to reveal the dynamics of “descent and emergence” and “how the contingencies of these processes continue to shape the present” (Bowman and Hook, 2010). Putting aside all the ideological or universal views, the analysis of “descent” observes “numberless beginnings” rather than the very origin of a concept, whereas “emergence” tries to seize its accidental appearance without any order (Tamboukou, 2019).

In line with the genealogical approach summarized above, this study aims to find out the evolution of key concepts, their reoccurrences with a new understanding, and links to the migration policies and movements between 1918-1923. During this study, main objective is to look more closely, to rethink and to question these concepts, the chain of events around them, while avoiding to give final conclusions and judgement as the Foucauldian path envisages.

The period in question, 1918-1923, starts with the Armistice of Mudros which ended WWI for the Ottoman State, and continues with the NS Era between 1919-1922. To understand the change in perception of homeland and policies towards migration during these periods, laws and charters, memories of the Ottoman high-level statemen, bureaucrats, foreign diplomats, officers, and commanders served in the Ottoman lands during that period, official correspondence, foreign archives, literary works and

novels, national and local newspapers, and session minutes of the Parliaments have been examined. Since it is beyond the capacity of this study to elaborate on all these invaluable sources due to time and space limitations, particular examples shedding light on the general understanding and change of these concepts are discussed.

In this study, in line with the genealogical approach, key concepts are discussed in Chapter III, which are deemed necessary in order to have a better understanding on migratory movements taking place around them. Therefore, elaborating on these concepts is not limited to their definition, how they have changed and perceived over time is explained. In Chapter IV, migration movements related to the internal and external developments, namely occupations, political decisions, legal regulations, military measures, diplomatic attempts, or socio-economic conditions are examined. This chapter covers mostly mass migration movements and important events leading to these movements, but not all the occupations and movements occurred during the period. Where deemed necessary, as done in section 4.3 while looking into the incidents in the Eastern Anatolia, a historical background is also provided. In Chapter V, migration policies of the ruling elites or respective governments are summarized. Finally, in the conclusion part, an overview regarding the effects of those migration policies and movements on today's modern Türkiye, as well as this study's contributions are put forward.

## CHAPTER III

### KEY CONCEPTS

To have a better understanding on the migration movements and policies that were implemented between 1918 and 1923, key concepts frequently mentioned in the official documents, writings, memoirs, and literature are discussed in this section. The meanings attributed to these concepts may differ from those of the modern migration literature. However, without elaborating the nuanced meaning attached to these words, and their development over time, the policies and movements related to these concepts could be hard to understand.

To begin with, *vatan* (homeland) would be the first concept since all the other concepts are related to *vatan* in this study. In a nutshell, a migration movement has been either from the old homeland or to the new one which is to be done by a *muhâcir* or *mültecî*. Homeland could be the origin or destination of the act of *migration*. If someone is to be expelled or banished from the homeland, it is called *sürgün*. If a soldier abandons the military while he is expected to fight and die for his homeland, he is considered a *firari* (deserter or escapee). *Millet* is a community who lives on the same homeland sharing common values or future. But Ottoman *millets* differs from the nation state's *millet*. Thus, these interrelated concepts and important events surrounding them need to be further elaborated in this section.



### 3.1. Homeland

From a genealogical perspective, in order to find out the “descent” and “emergence” of a concept, it is important to dive into its journey to better grasp its development. *Vatan* (homeland) is of an Arabic origin word used to describe a person’s place of birth, the lands where he or she grew up or dwelled upon (Devellioğlu, 1984). Before the conquest and the Turkification of Anatolia, Central Asia had been seen as the original homeland of Turkoman groups. As increasing population, drought, famine, and conflicts left no room but to leave, people started looking for new lands to settle in. Those consecutive migration movements in search of new fertile lands had also been a part of the process of acquiring homeland. Turkoman groups began their exploratory raids into Byzantine-controlled Anatolia as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century. However, the most impactful raids took place during the reign of the Seljukid’s leaders Tuğrul Bey and Çağrı Bey. Finally, Anatolia’s doors were opened to Turkoman tribes and Anatolia became the Turkish homeland after the battle against the Byzantine Empire in Malazgirt won by Seljukids (Efe, 2018). This victory is of a particular importance as it paved the way for new migrant groups to advance in Anatolia starting from the eastern provinces. In the span of nearly a decade, they reached out to the Black Sea, Marmara, Mediterranean and the Aegean islands, thereby testing the potential of further advancement (Gümüş, 2013).

It was the settlement policy which turned a geographical territory into the homeland for Turkoman groups. Through well-organized and planned settlement policies, Turkoman groups began to attribute special meaning to the Anatolia and considered it as a homeland since the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Küçükdağ and Arabacı 1994, 64). The homeland is not merely where one resides alongside their loved ones, earns their livelihood, and experiences a sense of belonging. Making a homeland meant taking

care of the land, valuing and cultivating it, building lasting monuments and sealing it through these means. Without effective settlement policies, it would not have been possible for the Turkoman groups to consider the territories in Anatolia, the Balkans, Crimea, and the Middle East as a homeland.

Against this background, following the wars and lands lost in the Balkans, Crimea, the Middle East and Africa, the necessity of re-establishing the concept of homeland emerged. The concepts of nationalism, identity and homeland were occupying a central position in the European minds from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Durgun, 2010). As the impacts of the nationalist movements triggered by the French Revolution of 1789 became eminent, the Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals had been aware of the need to modernize and to carry out reforms in the Ottoman State. In order to prevent separatist movements and territorial losses in the wake of increasing nationalist movements, the Ottoman statesmen must build identity and belonging around the new homeland concept (Akcasu, 2016).

The meaning attributed to *vatan* began to change in the *Tanzimat* period (Kushner, 1979) following the territorial losses caused by the rebellions and wars. Territorial losses necessitated the need for finding a common ground that would unite different groups in the remaining lands (Şeker, 2002). Until the *Tanzimat* Edict, the dominant determining factor was religion. Homeland was defining the State's territories where different ethnic and religious groups lived side by side, Muslims' being the ruling religious community (*millet-i hâkime*) over the others. For its defence, for instance, only Muslims were conscripted in the army.

During the *Tanzimat* period, in line with the equality principle, all the religious groups and ethnicities were considered equal. This time, to defend the homeland

(*muhâfaza-i vatan*), all the Ottoman citizens including the *millet*s were invited to join the army. This was also a result of the common identity building policy. However, due to the reluctance of the non-Muslims to join, as well as the resistance of the Muslims in the army to accept them, the former group were exempted from the military service until 1909 providing that they paid the exemption tax (Çabas, 2020). Eventually, the CUP Government removed the military exemption tax as of July 1909 (Hacısalihoglu, 2007).

During the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), in parallel to the territorial losses, loyalty to the Sultan and the Caliph had been promoted. All the lands belonged to the Sultan (*Memâlik-i Mahrûse-yi Pâdişâh*) and all subjects were under his protection. Every individual born within the Ottoman territories was granted the Ottoman citizenship according to the Nationality Law. On the other hand, Hamidian Ottomanism was exclusivist in favour of Sunni-Ottomans (Akcasu, 2016) and different from the CUP's Ottomanism as explained below. His aim was to strengthen a centralized Islamism policy.

The CUP leadership, which took over the government as the Second Constitutional Monarchy was declared, had been defending Ottomanism and the unity of all elements in the Ottoman State (*İttihad-ı Anâsır*). Reflections of the CUP's Ottomanism Policy could be seen on *Meşveret* newspaper led by Ahmet Rıza Bey, one of the prominent leaders of the CUP who later served as the Chairman of both *Meclis-i Mebûsan* and *Meclis-i Âyân*. In the first issue of *Meşveret* published in Paris on December 7, 1885, Ahmet Rıza Bey stated in his editorial that the CUP invited all Ottoman subjects to the unity and alliance regardless of their religion, language, ethnicity and sect (Barış, 2011). Whereas, during his tenure in *Meclis-i Âyân*, he would criticize the migration policies of the CUP leaders and say that in pursuit of a Turkism

policy, the CUP had forced *muhâcirîn* to migrate to Anatolia which caused the disagreements and confusion among the Ottoman elements (*anâsırı Osmaniyye*) (MAZC, Cilt 2, 1918:41).

The main purpose of Ottomanism was to create a modern nation with a common future upon which the modern state established and the integrity was assured. Homeland was the territories where all the Ottoman subjects lived in equality and unity. Mundji Bey, the Turkish Consul General in New York City and a loyal member of the CUP, explained this policy clearly in his article published on the North American Review defending “The Ottoman Empire for Ottomans” (Mundji, 1908):

“Till now the Turks were dominant and ruling race in the Empire; hereafter the country will be ruled by her citizens. The Turk, the Armenian, the Greek, the Syrian, the Jew, the Kurd, the Circassian, all will have equal opportunities; all will represent the Empire. The preference will be given not to the race or religion, but to individual ability and integrity. Hereafter there will be no more Turkey, but a regenerated Ottoman Empire.”

Another advocate of the Ottomanism and Ottoman citizenship, Namık Kemal, a.k.a. *Vatan Şairi* (Poet of Homeland) depicted the homeland as a sacred idea worth dying for. In 1873, in his well-known play *Vatan Yahut Silistre*, Crimea, the Balkans and Anatolia were included in the homeland. However, enthusiasm of the “Young Turks” on Ottomanism lasted until the Balkan Wars 1912-1913. Once the Ottoman National Army was defeated in the Balkans which resulted in the annexation of almost all the Ottoman lands in Europe, the failure of the Ottomanism idea became evident. This was also reinforced by the “disloyalty” of non-Muslims (Şeker 2002, 24), as well as the Arab revolts in the East. Even though many of the CUP leadership cadres were

born in the Balkans, they were convinced that those lands slipped of the Ottoman State's hands. Thus, the concept of homeland turned into an imaginary map, rather than being stuck on the pre-defined territories. According to the one of the most prominent Turkism leaders Ziya Gökalp, whose nationalism was culture centered (Durgun, 2010), the greater homeland for all Turks was *Turan*.

CUP's Ottomanism eventually turned into exclusive Turkish nationalism (Şeker, 2002) and adopted the ideas brought forward by Namık Kemal, Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp. Akşin (1971) claimed that the CUP generation had learnt Turkism from Namık Kemal, yet they did not dilute it as he did after he adopted Islamism towards the end of his life. Akçura, in his article titled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Styles of Policy), revealed that the policies of Ottomanism and Islamism were no longer valid and that it had been a necessity to embrace Turkism policy and unify all the Turkish people (*tevhid-i etrâk*) (Akçura, 1976). According to Akçura, *Turan* was not an imaginary homeland but a physical, geographical land where the Turkish unity would be formed (Durgun, 2010). This land would not be limited to the Ottoman borders. If there were no external interventions, the most suitable ground for this would have not been the Ottoman lands, but Turkistan, the Yayık and İdil basins, where Turks constituted the majority (Akçura, 1976).

There had been many discussions among the Turkish intellectuals over the geography to be focused on while pursuing a Turkism policy. Halide Edip was among those who supported a narrower Turkism policy and the idea of "looking at our home", Anatolia (Durgun, 2010), rather than a greater one which aims at *Turan*. When the Allied Powers began occupying Anatolia following the Armistice of Mudros, many of these intellectuals embraced the thoughts of at least keeping Anatolia and defending it at all costs. During the NS led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Akçura also supported the

Anatolian Turkism and contributed to the establishment and strengthening of nationalism in the young Republic (Berk, 2017). The boundaries of homeland had also been changed over time during the journey explained above, in line with the changing of homeland concept. Each part that was torn away from the Ottoman territories redefined the boundaries while strengthening the sense of homeland (Karpas 2010, 51).

NS's legitimacy was built open defending the homeland at all cost and uniting the nation. While it was a process of liberating the only homeland from the occupying forces (Criss 2005, 18), a transition period where the nation-building attempts took place. *Hâkimiyet-i Milliye*, the main publication mean of the NS, was describing the homeland as a legacy inherited from our ancestors. A homeland was where common values such as language and culture were to be lived. It was a place to be bounded with passionate and sense of belonging. The newspaper was also defining Anatolia as the homeland of Turks. It is noteworthy that the thesis of "ancient people of Anatolia had been Turks" was persistently and highly emphasized in newspaper's articles between 1920-1922 (Mumyakmaz, 2007).

Going back to the "sacred idea" of homeland worth dying for, the following question should be asked here: Would anyone die for a piece of land if he or she did not have any sense of belonging to it? Would it be fair to blame a minority group member not being loyal to the homeland while his or her group had been subject to discrimination, seen among "others" that were "inferior"? Or as in the case of a deserter, to blame a soldier while he had not been taken good care of, not given sufficient food and clothing, and being ordered to die by a commander from a different nation, ethnicity or an elitist party? If your homeland, the land where you earn to live, have your family, feel a sense of belonging has already been lost, with your beloved

ones being slaughtered on it, what would be left from a homeland other than bitter memories, blood and tears?

Hence, the period starting with the Armistice could be seen as an important period to decide on a homeland for each nation. The Ottoman State experienced significant weakening, resulting in the loss of many lands, and no ability and strength to protect neither its borders nor the inhabitants. Consequently, each ethnic group should have decided where its own homeland must be. However, these groups were not the sole player to decide. They had to follow those who acted on behalf of them and to bear the consequences regardless of their involvement. The presence of the Russian army in the Eastern Anatolia for instance exemplified external influences on the region. As some Armenian committees made an alliance with the Russian army in the fight against the Ottoman State during WWI, the *millet-i sâdıka* (loyal nation) of the *Tanzimat* period became the traitors and unwanted group. When the Russian troops withdrawn following the Brest-Litovsk Agreement, many Armenians followed them on the grounds that they would no longer stay in lands ruled by the Ottomans. As for the *Rum* people living in the Western Anatolia or in the Black Sea regions, they started demonstrations even before the landing of occupying Greek troops in support of the Allied forces, their fate was seen tied to the presence of occupiers. Abandoning wholesale approaches might have been necessary here, but once the bond of trust was damaged in the eyes of the ruling elite, it would not be possible to restore it.

### **3.2. Migrant and Refugee**

*Muhâcir* (migrant) is derived from the Arabic infinitive *hijrah* or *hegira* which originally means abandoning one's bonds or commitments and departure from one

place to another (Algül, 1993). *Muhâcir* is the person who does this journey. Its plural forms are *muhâcirûn* or *muhâcirîn* (only men or a group of men and women together) or *muhâcirât* (only women). In the Islamic terminology, it is used to describe the journey of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions from Mecca to Medina to escape the persecution. In a broader term, it explains a Muslim's departure from a non-Muslim territory (*dâr al-harb* or house of war) to a Muslim land (*dâr al-Islam* or house of Islam and peace) (TRFEI, 2024). It is believed to encompass "departure, exit, exodus, emigration, and immigration" terms as well, and is generally accepted as equal to "forced migration" or seeking refuge by those who cannot practice their religion (Elmadma, 2023; Uberman and Shay, 2016).

In fact, when a Muslim is subject to persecution and cannot perform its religious duties, he or she has to leave that place since "the earth of Allah is wide enough" for them according to verse 97 of Surah Al Nisâ. For this reason, by some religious scholars, migration from *dâr al-harb* to *dâr al-Islam* is considered an obligation rather than an option (Elmadma, 2023). Recently, the provisions of this verse have been abused by the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" terrorist organization to gain supporters through migration from all over the world, particularly from European societies, and attracted the attention once again (Uberman and Shay, 2016).

There is also the other side of the coin: Host societies or receiving countries. Those who help, embrace and host the *muhâcirîn* and *muhâcirât* were called *ansar*. Both *muhâcirîn* and *ansar* are praised and promised many blessings and rewards in the Quran (Muslims' holy book), as well as in the hadiths (words of the Prophet Muhammad) (Algül, 1993). Therefore, the Ottoman policies towards Muslim refugees who were subjected to forced migration had been particularly positioned in a favourable way compared to others. Mostly Muslim migrants were called *muhâcirîn*,



and their migrations also had a religious aspect, being aware of the fact that they were going to *dâr al-Islam*, thereby performing hijrah.

In a broader concept, *muhâcir* is used for the migrants whose settlements were considered favourable (Dündar 2021, 87, 91). However, they were not allowed to move freely within the Ottoman State. These migrants had to get transit permits (*mürûr tezkeresi*) to go somewhere for any reasons (Sağnıç, 2020). Favourable policies do not necessarily mean that both the Ottoman State and the young Republic of Türkiye pursued an open-door policy to *muhâcirîn* at all times (Dündar 2021, 54; Kale 2014, 259). However, non-Muslims were subjected to different migration policies, and were consequently treated less favourably compared to Muslim *muhâcirîn* (Sağnıç, 2020).

*Mültecî* (refugee) is of an Arabic origin as well, describing a person who comes from a foreign land and seeks refuge in the destination (Devellioğlu, 1984). *Mültecî* aims to return home when the conditions that force her or him to migrate are eliminated. However, if he or she cannot return and is to be resettled in another location after a certain period of time, then becomes *muhâcir* (Dündar 2021, 86-91; İpek 2022, 21). According to a Circular of 1916 by the Ministry of Interior, it was asked to name the Ottoman subjects who were fleeing warzones as *mültecî*, while calling those who were coming specifically from the Balkans as *muhâcir* (Erdem 2018, 7).

*Muhâcir*, *mültecî* and *göçmen* have been used interchangeably in the literature (Dündar, 2021; İpek, 2022). It led to confusion even among the Ottoman lawmakers, therefore requesting the DGTM to explain the meanings attributed to these words. In reply, the Director General of DGTM Mehmet Hamdi Bey explained that those who came from the Ottoman lands which were previously left to the foreign states through an agreement were referred to *muhâcir*. Whereas he defined those who fled from the

occupied lands on the borders to the internal provinces of homeland were called refugees (*mültecî*) regardless of their religion and ethnic origin (MAZC, Cilt 1, 1918:16). In TGNA, the use of these concepts was also similar. Speaking at the TGNA session dated March 31, 1923, Doctor Rıza Nur Bey, the Minister of Health and Social Assistance, named those who took refuge in another part of the homeland following the invasion *refugees*, and those who migrated from foreign countries *muhâcir* (Özkan 2020, 484).

This definition of refugee was covering both internal and external migrants. From the explanations of Hamdi Bey, it could be stated that *muhâcir* had been taken out of its Islamic context explained earlier, and begun to be used with a more secular and humanitarian approach.

It was still hard to reach a consensus in the definitions. Even for the same country of origin, be it Russia, Crimean and Circassian people who came to Anatolia were called *muhâcirîn*, whereas those who came to the eastern provinces of Anatolia from the Russian occupied lands were called *Şark Mültecîleri* (Eastern Refugees) (Barut, 2018; Özkan, 2020). Mehmet Hamdi Bey, during the same hearing, while explaining both the *muhâcir* and *mültecî* concepts, he had also mentioned Kurdish, Turkoman and Arab tribes (*Aşâir*) which amounted to 120,000 people who came from the Iranian borders and took refuge in the inner provinces (MAZC, Cilt 1, 1918:16). Moreover, in certain cases, external migrants were called *muhâcir* even if they had not arrived in Türkiye (Dündar 2021, 22). The use of *göçmen* became more popular following the population exchanges (*mübadele*) in the documents from the Republican Era.

As for the Muslim Arab migrants who settled in 1920 in Konya, a different approach ‘belonging to the Turkish culture’ was adopted. With this understanding,

Arab migrants were considered as refugees rather than *muhâcirîn* on the grounds that they did not have any bond with the Turkish culture (Kurtulgan 2012, 133).

Due to the turbulent times witnessed during WWI, the Ottoman institutions were not able to record the exact numbers related to *muhâcirîn* or *mültecî*. In November 1916, nearly 800,000 migrants and refugees were reported (Yüksel, 2020). On January 3, 1918, in the *Meclis-i Âyan* hearing, it was reported that there were 1,077,155 *muhâcirîn* and *mültecî* (MAZC, Cilt 1, 1918:16). Whereas, in March 1918, there were 843,396 *mültecî* and 384,996 *muhâcirîn* within the country. Hamdi Bey stated that of 843,396 refugees, 287,474 were from Erzurum, 102,808 from Van and 128,288 from Bitlis. If the unregistered ones were to be taken into account, this figure would reach 1.5 million (İpek, 2022).

### **3.3. Migration and Migrant**

There has been a large interdisciplinary corpus of studies on migration, drawing contributions from fields such as sociology, history, economy, international relations, psychology, political sciences and others. Since each field's approach is based on its own dynamics from a multi-theoretical approach, there is no common definition of *göç* (migration). Turkish Language Institution (TLI 2024) defines *göç* as “the movement of individuals or groups from one country to another or from one settlement to another for economic, social or political reasons: *hicret, muhaceret*”. According to İpek (2022), *göç* is “the movement of people from one settlement unit to another in order to settle down”. Thus, depending on the destination and origin, be it internal or external, this term may cover both migration, immigration, emigration, relocation, internal displacement in English. In this study, migration and migrant will be used as

umbrella terms as stated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019, 133-140) for the sake of simplification.

Based on the context above, *göçmen* (migrant) defines those who migrate from one settlement to another. İpek's (2022) migrant definition could be seen as limited to the external migration movements in historical studies, whereas IOM's migrant definition covers almost all forms of migration (IOM, 2019).

### 3.4. Exile

*Sürgün* (exile) is used to describe a person who was forced to migrate outside the location where he or she used to live (TLI, 2024). It could cover the meanings of exile, deportation, banishment or expatriation depending on the context and the time period in question.

*Sürgün* had been used as an involuntarily settlement or a punishment method by the Ottoman rulers (Taşbaş, 2012). As Barkan (1952) stated, this policy used to help the rebuilding of a newly conquered country, to facilitate the dispatch of troops, to ensure food and supplies for their possible operations in the region. Settling *muhâcirîn* among the existing people of these new lands through *sürgün* policy would create a buffer zone. Taking advantage of their mobility and military capabilities, and considering their reluctance to comply with the regulations, nomadic tribes had also been a great source in this regard. Contributing to the Turkification and Islamisation process in the Balkans, this "colonization" policy had been used effectively since the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Aktepe, 1953; Barkan, 1952).

Other than the colonization method explained above, as a punishment, exile (*sürgün, nefy, iclâ, tağrîb, teb'id, tard, tenkil*) had been imposed on individuals (Erken,

2021; İpek, 2022). The aim was to rid the society from crime and criminals, while rehabilitating and disciplining the criminal (*islâh-ı nefis*) in a different location. Along with the castle imprisonment (*kalebend*), shackle imprisonment (*prangabend*) and penal servitude (*kürek*), exile had been one of the most commonly used punishment type restricting freedom by the *Tanzimat* Edict (Taşbaş, 2012). The main reasons behind the exile decisions could be categorized as: Disrupting the society's order, failure to comply with the Sharia provisions, violating regulations and prohibitions, abusing the official duty or oppressing the public (Alan, 2014).

Crimes and activities subject to exile included banditry, disturbing public peace, sedition, alleged espionage, adultery, prostitution, women trafficking, bribery, fraud, slander and perjury, theft, fortune-telling, consuming alcohol, gambling, and disobeying religious rules. While those who committed relatively minor and ordinary crimes were being deported to the neighbouring or inner Anatolian provinces, those with severe sentences were exiled to the Mediterranean and Aegean islands, or to Fezzan, Taif and Yemen where communication, transportation and living conditions were harsh (Alan, 2014). Although exile requires migration in any case, it could be temporary depending on the type of crime committed. The Sultan or a court might forgive the exiles, remove the punishment and allow them to return to their hometowns (*ıtlak*, *avf-u ıtlak* or *sebil*) (Korkmaz, 2017).

Exile was also a common punishment method for statesmen and bureaucrats. In addition to the ordinary crimes listed above to be committed by the officials, disagreements, hatred, and hostility between the officials could end in exile punishments. Incompetence, failure to do the duties properly, criticising to the Sultan or the central government were among other political exile reasons.

Political opponents' inclusion among the exiles started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after the *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* edicts. According to Article 113 of the Ottoman Basic Law (*Kanûn-u Esâsî*), the Sultan had the right to exile its subjects who were proven to have violated the security of the government (Erken, 2021) and this Article was believed to suppress dissenting voices. As per this Article, Sultan Abdulhamid II exiled many CUP members and other opponents during his reign.

With the General Amnesty in 1908, which was declared immediately after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, all political criminals and exiles were forgiven. Some of them, such as Müşhir Fuat Pasha and Prince Sabahattin, were welcomed as the “real heroes of liberty” on their return. However, the CUP policy did not include equal treatment to all exiles. While rights and positions of those who were members of the CUP were given back, “others” were completely excluded (Kerimoğlu, 2007).

Sultan Abdulhamid II himself also shared the same destiny and was exiled to Thessaloniki. Following the March 31 Incident of 1909, Martial Courts (*Divan-ı Harbi Örfî*) were formed in Istanbul. They sentenced capital punishment or exile to those who were reported to be involved in the uprising. Soon after, with a Constitutional Amendment, Article 113 which gave the right to the Sultan to exile was removed. But the CUP's exile policy was implemented through the Martial Courts and it was no different than that of the previous reigns.

As implemented in the aftermath of the 31 March Incident of 1909, following the Harbiye Raid in 1913 exile was again used as an intimidation and persecution policy by the CUP to suppress the opponents. Journalists, lawmakers, religious leaders,

military academy students were exiled to the islands of Rhodes or Lesbos (*Midilli*), or to provinces like Sinop, Sivas, and Çorum (Korkmaz, 2017).

On the brink of WWI, citizens of the hostile (*muhasım*) states, namely Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Romania, Russia and the US, were subjected to exile. While some of the exiles were sent to inner provinces, some others were deported back to their country. Alleged espionage acts, reciprocity, insulting the state, revolutionary attempts, anti-state propaganda, fraud, theft, campaigns of disinformation and malicious publications were among the reasons of exile for these foreign (*ecnebi*) citizens (Çam, 2020; Gün, 2021).

During the CUP rule, exile continued to be used as a punishment method of ordinary crimes as well. *Tehcir* might also be considered as a form of exile implemented during the CUP Government's ruling but it is explained separately in the next section. The CUP's exile policy was found even worse than the Abdulhamid II's Sultanate which was known as the "regime of tyranny" or "despotism". In fact, during his reign which lasted more than three decades, Abdulhamid II preferred exile over sentencing political opponents to death though he was an absolute monarch.

During the Armistice and occupation period, the Allied Powers exiled leading Ottoman bureaucrats, politicians, scholars and commanders to Malta. Among the reasons for exile are failure to comply with demobilization, preventing demobilization, insolence against British officers and commanders, ill-treatment of the prisoners of war, acts of aggression against Armenians or other ethnic minorities in Anatolia or the Caucasus, looting the properties and goods, other violations of the war laws or practices (Akşin 1992, 156). The first one to be exiled to Malta was Ali İhsan (Sabis) Pasha, who was the Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army in Mosul due to his strong resistance

to the British forces. He was followed by the CUP members, NS supporters, and members of *Meclis-i Mebûsan*, governors, academics, and journalists. Thus, in total, 147 Ottoman citizens were exiled by the British Commissioner in Istanbul.

Exile punishments also existed during the early years of the young Turkish Republic, particularly on the Kurdish tribes in the Eastern Anatolia. There were nearly 20 uprisings according to the official records and these uprisings were suppressed by forced migration, exile and military intervention (Durgun, 2010). While the Kurdish people who were directly involved in the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925 in the Eastern Anatolia were trialled and sentenced to death penalty by the Independence Courts, those who were considered to be indirectly involved in the rebellion were sentenced to exile or imprisonment. The exiles were expelled to the Western cities of Türkiye with their family members. To find a more lasting solution to possible future rebellions, the Eastern Reform Plan was prepared on September 24, 1925. In line with this Plan to be implemented by the Military Martial Law Administration, Kurdish families were to be sent to the Western cities including those who were settled in the abandoned Armenian properties. Kurdish families were no longer to be allowed to rent houses in certain regions and were to be repopulated by the Turkish, Laz, and Georgian families from the Northern or Western cities or new refugees coming from the Western Thrace, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Caucasia (Buğday, 2018).

One last example to the exile practices of the young Republic could be “The 150s”. In the Lausanne Conference, the Allied Powers had proposed declaring a general political amnesty in Türkiye. Turkish Delegation agreed on the proposal but stated that 150 persons were to be exempted from the amnesty. The citizenship of those 150 persons was revoked, and they were deported in accordance with the Law passed



on May 28, 1927. This law remained in effect until the general amnesty on May 29, 1938 (Mazıcı, 2015).

### 3.5. Tehcir

As observed in the use of *muhâcir* and *mültecî* concepts, the same confusion is relevant in the concept of *tehcir*. Of the same Arabic origin as *muhâcir*, *tehcir* means to make someone migrate (Devellioğlu, 1984). It could be translated in English as relocation, resettlement, displacement, evacuation, expulsion, forcible transfer, removal and deportation (IOM 2019, 45-46). Throughout the Ottoman history, *tehcir* was used to employ the Ottoman subjects to make them work more efficiently in the most productive fields (Barkan, 1952).

In many studies, “deportation” has been used to describe this policy. However, considering the use and general practices of the deportation in the international law and migration literature, this concept has generally been used to refer to the “forced displacement across international borders”. The choice of this word by certain academics may be related to its prohibition by the international law which also considers deportation as a crime against humanity and crime of genocide.

Despite the fact that the CUP’s controversial *tehcir* policy is out of this study’s scope, it could be helpful to provide an overall background information. Mainly due to the incidents which took place in the Eastern Anatolia following the occupation by the Russian forces, the Ministry of Interior under the CUP Government decided to relocate certain populations. This is generally known as the *Tehcir* Law or the Relocation and Resettlement Law but its original title is *Vakt-i seferde icraat-i hükûmete karşı gelenler için cihet-i askeriyece ittihaz olunacak tedâbir hakkında*

*Kanun-ı Muvakkat* (Temporary Law on the measures to be taken militarily for those who oppose the Government's actions during wartime). It was passed on May 27, 1915 and applied not only to Armenians and Rums, but also to Assyrians Chaldeans, Arabs, Albanians, Bosnians, Gypsies, Circassians, Georgians, Kurds, Laz, Turks and Jews (Dündar 2018, 62-65). Arabs from Medina, Lebanon, and Syria were settled in many cities such as Kütahya, Konya, Istanbul, Samsun, Kırşehir, Izmir, and Adana. Exact figures were not available but Arabs from Medina who were subjected to *tehcir* is estimated to be around 40,000 (Beyoğlu, 2004).

In theory, *tehcir* had been regarded as a well-planned policy, even a “demographic engineering” (Şeker 2002, 26), but all the preparations and necessary measures were left to the regional administrations. In practice, insufficient protection due to the continuing war, epidemic, lack of food, famine, strikes and looms made by other armed tribes and bandits on the migration routes, as well as the involvement of the corrupted Ottoman officers, caused a devastating humanitarian tragedy (McCarthy 2022, 211-214).

Once the WWI was over, the Ottoman Government allowed the Armenian, Rum, Arab and Kurd families who had been subjected to *tehcir* to return to their hometowns as explained in Section 4.3. Next step would be the trial and punishment of those involved and responsible for the incidents that took place during the *tehcir* (Ata, 2021).

While *Meclis-i Ayan* was discussing the immediate return of those who were previously subjected to *tehcir* to their homes and delivery of their properties to them, Damat Ferit Pasha objected using this word. He stated that those people were taken away forcibly under persecution. *Tehcir* was not meant for it, and *teb'id* should have

been used instead (MAZC, Cilt 1, 1918:3), which means driving from one place to another and expelling (Devellioğlu, 1984).

### 3.6. Deserter

*Firari* (deserter) is an Arabic word meaning *kaçak*, *kaçkın* (TLI, 2024) which covers deserter, fugitive or escapee in English. In this study, it is mostly used to describe deserters who left the army or did not return to their place of duties once their casual or military leaves were over. There were escapees as well among these *kaçaks* but to a limited extent.

The problem of deserters in the army was not peculiar to the Ottoman State though. Many countries experienced this challenge during WWI but the Ottoman State suffered even more (Yaşar, 2016). The reason to run away was not political as it was in the Russian army, but stemmed from a series of endless wars which caused huge territorial losses from the Balkans to Tripoli, Yemen, Libya and the Caucasia. These conflicts, coupled with dire economic conditions, hunger, lack of clothing and military equipment, as well as political instability and mistrust to the commanders since the Balkan wars due to the politicization of army officers compelled them to flee. It was estimated that 2,873,000 men were conscripted at the beginning of WWI. Yet, at some point, the number of deserters exceeded the soldiers recruited in the army (Tarım, 2004).

Many deserters had joined the National Forces (NF) or militias during the NS. However, deserters were still constituting an important problem to be dealt with by the TGNA. Until the Sakarya war, the number of deserters constituted almost half of the newly established national army. The TGNA passed the Law on Deserters and Treason

on September 11, 1920. According to Article 1 of the law, it was mandated that Independence Tribunals, consisting members of the TGNA, be established. These tribunals were tasked with trying individuals who escaped from military service, those who aided and abetted their desertion, whether on compulsorily or voluntarily, and those who were negligent in the capture and dispatch of the deserters. Thus, the tribunals took strict measures to prevent soldiers from desertion (Çankaya, 2018).

### 3.7. Millet

*Millet* is also of Arabic origin. Devellioğlu (1984) categorized its meaning into 4 types: i) religion or sect, ii) community name of all those who follow a religion or sect, iii) class or community, and iv) category.

*Millet* system, as a general administrative practice, was used to manage non-Muslim religious communities in the Ottoman State (Chatty, 2013). Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these communities were called as *cemaat* or *taife* rather than *millet* (Tas, 2014). This system was not ethnicity based. Three main groups in the *millet* system were Christians (*Hıristiyanlar*), Jews (*Museviler*) and Sabians (*Sabiiler*). Toynbee (1955) claims that this system was inherited from the “successor-states of the Arab Caliphate” which was originally depending on the classification made in the Holy Quran as People of the Book (*Ehl-i Kitâb*).

The categorization of *millets* depended on the religions and sects, thus Catholic Armenians and Gregorian Armenians were not under the same group (Budak, 2010). Until the *Tanzimat* Edict, this classification of Ottoman subjects according to their religion had continued. With the rise of nationalism, the system had also been transformed in a way that nation names took precedence over the sect names, for

instance an Orthodox Christian was referred to as “Greek” regardless of their ethnicity (Kale, 2014).

Through the *Millet* system, religious communities were allowed to run their educational institutions in their own language, design their own curriculum, have their own courts, self-govern themselves in terms of administrative aspects and internal elections, and even collect taxes and raise funds (Budak, 2010). They were not forced to live in specific towns or cities, and they were spread all over the Ottoman State until the ruling of the CUP Government. Compared to other empires of its time, it can be stated that the autonomy granted by the Ottoman State to religious minorities had been more liberal and humanitarian (Kale, 2014). During the *Tanzimat* period, as the equality principle out into effect, their autonomy decreased. With the CUP’s new settlement policies to deal with rising nationalism, the *millet* system lost its effectiveness which also contributed to the ethnic conflicts in Anatolia (Şeker 2002).

## CHAPTER IV

### MIGRATION MOVEMENTS

#### 4.1. The Armistice of Mudros and Situation Prior to Occupations

The death of Mehmed Reşad V on July 3, 1918, was a turning point that marked not only the end of his own reign but also that of the CUP Government. During his symbolic sultanate, all the political and economic decisions were under the CUP's control and Mehmed Reşad V was like an acting Sultan under the CUP's surveillance without having a role in shaping the internal and external policies of the Ottoman State (Alanoğlu, 2019). However, the new Sultan Mehmed Vahdettin VI had been known with his negative stance and thoughts towards the CUP (Yavuz, 2016).

In September 1918, following years of wars in many fronts that resulted in the defeat of Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungry and Bulgaria began armistice attempts to be signed with the Allied Powers. The last standing member of the Central Powers, the Ottoman State, had been left alone, and pushed back in Syria, Hejaz and Iraq. However, it is worth mentioning that, despite some depictions characterizing the Ottoman State as the “sick man of Europe”, the State was as stable as the other empires of its age which were also dissolved following WWI (Frary and Kozelsky, 2014). The war had already gone beyond the Ottoman State's economic and military capabilities. By 1918, of the 2,850,000 men who were conscripted, only 560,000 remained in the army. More than a half million soldiers had been deserters (Dyer, 1972). The total number of soldiers killed in the war due to clashes and epidemic diseases is estimated to be nearly 800,000 (Yavaş, 2022). The economic consequences were also severe, and

there was a growing risk in the Eastern Thrace. The Allied Powers could advance towards Istanbul yet the Ottoman army did not have enough forces and supplies to stand against them (Yavuz, 2016). The Ottoman State's allies had already withdrawn and been unable to provide weapons and ammunition. Thus, following the same path with the other members of the Central powers seemed inevitable.

The CUP's Talat Pasha Government, which was initially behind the declaration of war on the Allied Powers, was aware of the circumstances. Talat Pasha himself had visited Berlin, Austria and Sofia during September 1918 and witnessed the collapse of the Central Powers as well as their reluctance to support the Ottoman State (Dyer, 1972). Eventually, he resigned on October 7, 1918 to pave the way for ceasefire negotiations. Following unsuccessful attempts of his predecessor due to the CUP's objections, Ahmed Izzet Pasha was appointed as Grand Vizier to form a new government and to take the necessary actions with a view to signing an armistice (Yavaş 2022, 575). In the hearing of *Meclis-i Ayan* dated October 19, 1918, the members declared that the Ottoman State was ready to end the war with an honourable peace agreement. Damat Ferit Pasha's proposal to establish an Ottoman delegation that would negotiate the terms with the Allied Powers was also discussed in the same hearing (MAZC, Cilt 1, 1918:2).

An Ottoman Delegation consisting of Rauf (Orbay) Bey, Minister of the Navy, Reshad Hikmet Bey, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colonel Sadullah Bey, Military Adviser, and Ali (Türkgeldi) Bey, Secretary of the Delegation, was authorized to negotiate and to sign a ceasefire with the Allied Powers. Following the 4-day long negotiations, the Armistice of Mudros was inked on October 30, 1918 and WWI came to an end for the Ottoman State. In fact, its ramifications have still been enduring (Dündar, 2017). The day the agreement was signed was the day borders

of the homeland were drawn, and these borders were included in the National Pact (THS, 2022).

**Map 4.1.** Map Showing the Borders of the National Pact



The Armistice became also the main driving factor behind the national resistance movement of Turkish people due to its contentious provisions which would lead the occupations all around Türkiye in a very short period of time. It was “a total and unconditional” surrender (Shaw, 1977). The Armistice stated that Turkish straits were to be opened to the Allied Powers. All Armenians and Allied prisoners were to be freed. The Ottoman army were to be demobilized and surrendered to the nearest Allied commander, except a limited force to maintain security and order. Control of all the important forts, railroads, telephone and telegraph lines, harbors and tunnels were given to the Allied Powers. German and Australian naval, military and civilian officers in the Ottoman State were to be handed over. Most critically, the Allied Powers would



have the right to occupy any important strategic location in case there would be a situation considered as a threat to the Allies' security (Clause 7). In addition, they would have the right to occupy six Eastern provinces (named as six Armenian provinces in the Armistice's English version) in case of disorder (Clause 24) (Çilingir, 2007; Dyer, 1972; Shaw, 1977).

The provisions were barely negotiable and the Ottoman Delegation had no choice but to accept all of them. The Ottoman Delegation who negotiated the Armistice had believed that the Wilsonian Principles would have been effective. Article 12 of the Principles was stating that "the Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty" (USNARA, 1918). In response to these concerns, Allied Delegation guaranteed that there was not any intention to occupy Istanbul or any other location.

However, the very same Article stated that "other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development." While the Ottoman Government was interpreting this Article as a possible transition to the decentralized structure, the minorities saw it as the cornerstones of the road to an independent state.

The Ottoman Government, with decisions such as ensuring the repatriation of Armenians and Rums who were relocated and resettled during WWI, had tried to prevent the Allied Powers from using *tehcir* as a pretext or propaganda means to occupy the Ottoman provinces (Akşin, 1992). In preparation for any possible occupation, in a Circular sent to the above-mentioned provinces, the Government asked to be informed immediately about the demographic structure of each administrative region. With the very same reason, the Ottoman bureaucrats who had

been actively involved in the CUP's persecution policies against the religious minorities were dismissed from their duties, they were tried in the Martial Courts, executed or imprisoned (Ata, 2021).

It appears that President Wilson's Principles were seen as a light of hope among the Ottoman intellectuals and leaders. Wilson's Principles Society was established in Istanbul by well-known Ottoman journalists and intellectuals on December 4, 1918, and became a strong advocate of implementing the Principles to bring peace to the Ottoman lands. However, this hope never came to true, and the Ottoman lands had already been shared through "secret agreements and bargains" though some of them were "irreconcilable" (Armaoğlu, 1983; Dyer, 1972).

It is also worth mentioning that the broad and unfavorable interpretation of the Armistice clauses against the Ottoman State which ended in occupations sparked the NS. This was acknowledged later on by the report of Admiral de Robeck dated October 10, 1919, which was presented to the Allied Powers. The report stated that inappropriate policies implemented since the Armistice had caused the NS to strengthen and gain supporters (Yavuz, 2016). The provisions of the Armistice are also of particularly importance from the migration perspective as well, since they had become the main determining factors behind the migration decisions and movements of both sides during the first years of the Armistice.

#### **4.2. Occupations in the Southeastern Regions and Migrations**

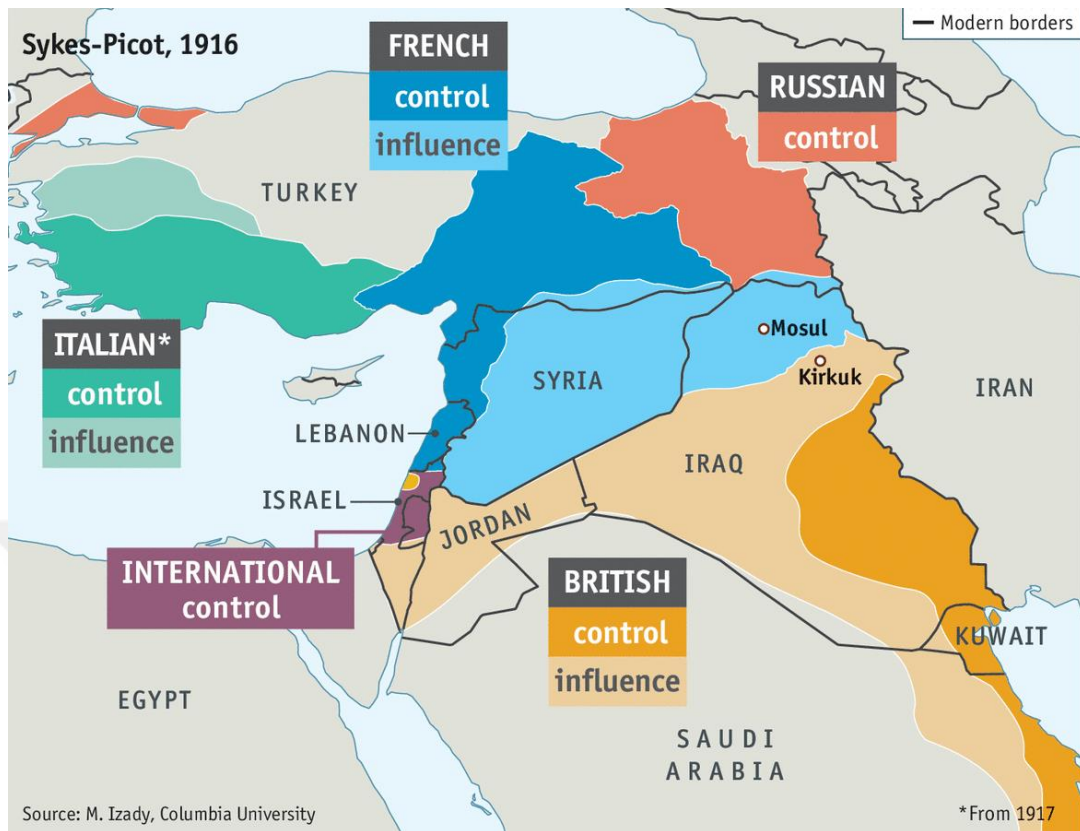
When the Armistice of Mudros took effect on October 31, 1918, the British forces began occupying Mosul from the Hamamalil town on November 1, 1918 on the grounds that the non-Turkish people in the region had supposedly been subject to

oppression and torture by the Ottomans (Kıslıklı, 1999). On November 3, invoking Article 7 of the Armistice, General Marshall of the British forces demanded that the Ottoman army evacuate Mosul and lay down all the weapons. Despite the objections by the Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army in Mosul Ali Ihsan (Sabis) Pasha, Grand Vizier Izzet Pasha ordered to obey the General Marshall's ultimatum stating that there would be nothing to do against the British forces (Esen, 2021). Eventually, Ali Ihsan Pasha withdrew the Ottoman troops from the region. His attempts to object the occupation, and warnings that it would not be limited to Mosul were neglected. His resistance did not prevent the occupations but angered the Allied Powers. He would be the first one to be arrested and exiled to Malta upon the British Commissioner's request once he arrived in Istanbul.

#### 4.2.a. The Sykes-Picot Agreement and First Invasions

There had been many deals and agreements among the Allied Powers to share the Ottoman lands. A significant example is the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 16, 1916, which partitioned Anatolia and the Middle East. This agreement had divided the "Ottoman homeland" into "new homelands" with artificial borders without considering the demographic structure or the region's geographical peculiarities. For instance, some parts of "Kurdistan" of the Ottoman era were shown under direct Russian control, whereas the southern parts of it were left to France. Syria and Northern Iraq including Mosul and Arbil, as well as the region from Southeastern provinces of Anatolia to Sivas covering Mardin, Diyarbakır, Urfa, Antep, Maraş, Antakya, and Adana would be under direct French control as shown on the map below:

**Map 4.2.** Partitioning of the Ottoman Lands in the Sykes-Picot Agreement<sup>1</sup>



In fact, occupation of the strategic Ottoman lands had been expected after WWI. People in those regions, as well as the Istanbul Government, preferred that it would be done by the French or British forces rather than Rums or Armenians. The reaction against the British occupation in the southern region was, accordingly, limited. The British commanders were cautious of this. Occupying soldiers were carefully selected from Britain's Muslim colonies to minimize the local resistance. Therefore, after the British forces left, reactions were mostly concentrated on Armenians, who were backed by French forces. Indeed, Armenians were believed to establish an autonomous region which included those provinces mentioned above, in line with the Wilsonian Principles.

<sup>1</sup> This map is the simplified version which was published on The Economist (Data Team, 2016). For a more detailed one including the provinces and towns, please refer to Izady (2006).

With the Sykes-Picot deal, once the “Supreme State” (*Devlet-i Âliye*), whose borders stretched all the way to Africa, was being limited to a small Türkiye surrounded by the occupying imperial states. However, its provisions could not be implemented due to changing conjuncture and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Promises to Italians were never kept either, Greeks were often preferred over them. Constant changing in the partitioning of the Ottoman lands with consecutive secret deals and trying to get the “lion’s share” by all parties led to discontent and mistrust among the Allied Powers, which also helped the NS to deal with each one of them separately and reach an agreement.

Despite this deal, the British forces occupied Mosul and surrounding regions immediately after the Armistice of Mudros. Mosul had been seen as a strategic location for “Imperial communication” and for Britain’s presence in the Middle East (Arıkanlı, 2010). It could neither be left to Ottomans nor to the French control. Even though it is within the borders of the National Pact, Türkiye would have to agree on the separation of Mosul. Following Mosul’s occupation, the region in the north of Aleppo and Iskenderun became on the spot.

Last battle of the WWI had taken place on this front, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Yıldırım Armies led by Mustafa Kemal won against the British cavalry and the Arab rebellions on October 26, 1918. It was a turning point since Mustafa Kemal Pasha understood that this line was the last defense, henceforth, Anatolia must be defended at all cost (Tarım 2004, 86-87). It was not a big surprise when the British Note asking the region to be handed over was received on November 4, 1918. Mustafa Kemal Pasha who had been appointed to the Commandership of all the Yıldırım Armies following the Armistice, resisted the occupation of Iskenderun. He gave the orders to fire against the British forces if they were to land before the evacuation of the Ottoman Army was completed.

In line with this order, a British military ship, conducting minesweeping activities without permission, was shot and sunk the very following day. The first resistance of the NS, therefore, was believed to start in Iskenderun (Canbolat *et al.*, 2022). Once the Yıldırım Armies were dissolved and Mustafa Kemal Pasha was summoned to Istanbul by the Government, the Allied Powers invaded Iskenderun on November 9, 1918. This was followed by the occupation of Mersin, Tarsus, Adana and other surrounding regions as of December 2018.

#### 4.2.b. Occupations in Adana, Maraş and the Adjacent Regions

The British-French forces invaded Adana on December 19 and Pozantı on December 27, 1918. To ensure the security of Mosul and its oil reserves, the British forces also occupied Maraş on February 22, 2019. It was rather symbolic indeed. The British forces of 600 troops were composed of Indian Cavalry Regiment led by Colonel Philip, and if there was to be a strong resistance, they would not be able to advance. Since Mosul was the ultimate target for Britain, the British forces would hand over the administrations in those regions to France in exchange for Mosul and Palestine (Fitzgerald, 1994).

French occupying forces came to Maraş on October 29, 1919. Composition of the French “Legion d’Orient” was a proof of Armenian interest in the cities: 1,000 French troops, 400 Armenians and 500 Algerians (Kalaycı, 2020). A telegram by the Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army stated that Armenians came with the French troops, they walked around the city shouting “Long Live the Cilicia Flag, damn Turkey”, and many people attempted to migrate towards Elbistan (Moroğlu, 2015). The incident known as the “Sütçü İmam” incident occurred when Armenians in French uniforms harassed the

public within a few days of their arrival. After this incident, the resistance movement against the attacks of the occupying forces strengthened.

Armenians' support to the occupation was a result of the deal between Armenians and France which would be the rebirth of Cilicia Armenian Kingdom (İlter, 1989). Following the occupation of Adana and Maraş, Armenians who were relocated during the *tehcir* policy to the other provinces began returning. However, during the 8-months long British occupation, the British forces established good relations with the Maraş people, thanks to the Indian Muslim soldiers in the regiment, and the limited Armenian gangs' intervention in the occupation. Muslim community in the region did not have any objection to British or French occupation, but rather to Armenians (Şeker 2002, 197). Until the French forces backed by Armenians came, there had not been a strong resistance towards the occupying forces in the region.

#### 4.2.c. “Kaç Kaç” Events in Maraş and Adana

Continuation of the harassments and raids towards Maraş people including women, the lowering of the Turkish flag in the castle, and the arrest of Maraş notables further increased the reactions of Turkish people and armed conflicts began. French occupying forces surrounded the city on January 21, 1920, and started artillery and machine gun fire. The attacks of Armenian and French soldiers against civilians had also accelerated. On January 29, 1920 women, children and elders who could not be able to fight were taken out of the city and the migration movement of civilians began. This was called the “kaç kaç” event (Moroğlu, 2015).

A bigger “kaç kaç” incident took place in Adana on July 10, 1920. It was triggered by 7,500 Armenian migrants who came to Adana. To settle them, French

forces wanted to force dwellers of the certain parts of the city to leave. In the early morning of July 10, the city came under heavy fire. People started to run away in panic to the surrounding villages and mobilized the villagers as well. At the same time, mass murders and raids were being committed by the Armenian gangs who were backed by French soldiers. French air forces bombed those civilians *en route* to the Toros mountains and thousands of casualties were reported (Çelik, 2008). It took 4 days until the evening of July 13. The city was almost completely abandoned. Some refugees ended in Konya and Niğde, while others sought refuge in the villages of Toros mountains. This day was declared the “Black Day” of Adana.

#### 4.2.d. Liberation, Withdrawal, Migration and Media

Strong resistance against the French forces in the cities and towns of the Southeastern Anatolia region proved that France’s presence would be very costly (Hatipoğlu, 1999). Finally, the Turkish people won victory in the ongoing guerilla war in Maraş, which was known as the first victory of the NS, with the support of the NF. The French forces had to retreat towards Islahiye on February 11-12, 1920 (Alpaslan and Bilmen, 2020). 3,400-5,000 Armenians were reported to withdraw with the French troops to Islahiye. The death toll in Maraş during the war included 4,500 from the Turkish population, 800-1,200 from French soldiers, and 4,000-4,500 from Armenians. From more than 20,000 Armenians who were in the city prior to the war, 9,700 remained. They also left the city under the surveillance of American charity and diplomatic missions later on, migrating to Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus (Yetişgin, 2004).

Against this backdrop, it could be stated that mass migration movements were mostly related with the advancement of the occupying forces. Some of the migrants did not even have travel documents. Among those groups, there were also Armenian



volunteers (*kamavur*) who would involve in the carnages, robberies and rapes committed against the Muslim population, noting that three of the six French Battalions that occupied the region were composed of volunteered Armenians. The total number of Armenian soldiers under occupying French commander was 10,150 (İlter, 1989).

Armenians ultimate aim was to establish a Cilicia Armenian State. To this end, it had been a priority to have the majority through migration, as well as to force the Turkish population to leave the region with intimidating policies, attacks, raids and persecution (Şeker, 2002). However, the European media turned a blind eye over the developments, and instead falsely claimed that the Armenians or Christians were being deliberately killed, again, by the Turkish people, as done previously during *tehcir*. Turkish resistance was pictured as an insurgent movement. Armenian casualties during the war in Maraş was reported as high as 20,000 by the European media. According to their reports, Armenians were the “real oppressed and victimized, massacred people” (Kalaycı, 2020).

Whereas, Turkish media was also revealing the news about the atrocities committed against the Muslim population including women and children, the looting of their fields and properties, and rapes by Armenians mostly. Haçın was one of the towns in Adana in which not even a single Muslim family survived following the Armenian gangs’ raids. Çıldırım village also shared the same fate, and appeals of Turks to the French forces to stop the massacres were not taken into consideration. It was reported that an Assyrian gang also raided Adana’s Yüreğir town and killed a large number of Muslims. The mass murder in Adana committed by the Armenian “Şişmanyar Gang” is also worth mentioning since this gang was reported to come from Caucasia (Yıldırım, 2022).

With the victories of the NF against the Greek army and the resistance shown to the French forces in Maraş and Osmaniye, the French policies previously supporting the Armenians began changing as of 1921. France's rapprochement to the Ankara Government concerned many civilian and armed Armenians who had migrated or returned to the region to establish the Cilicia Kingdom and they began to migrate even before the negotiations were completed (Şeker 2002, 210-214). Eventually, after the Turkish Army won Sakarya war on September 20, 1921, Ankara Agreement was signed between the Ankara Government and France on October 20, 1921. With this agreement, the Southern Front was closed, capitulations were lifted and Ankara Government was recognized for the first time by a Western power. French troops were to be withdrawn by January 1922. After the Ankara Agreement, Armenian civilians did not want to stay in the region and more than 130,000 Armenians migrated to French-controlled regions in Syria. 30,000 Armenians were estimated to migrate to Cyprus (İşlek, 2006).

#### **4.3. Occupations in the Eastern Ottoman Regions and Migration Movements**

The Eastern Anatolian region witnessed mass migration movements since the 1915-1916 Ottoman-Russian war. McCarthy (2022) described the wars between 1914-1920 in the East among the worst in human history in terms of civilian and military casualties. According to him, Ottoman weakness, Russian imperialism, and European intervention coincided with the Armenian nationalism ended in widespread destruction in the region (McCarthy, 2022). The CUP's demographic structuring should also be added among these contributing factors as well (Şeker, 2002).

Despite the prominence of the Armenian version of the incidents, as summarized earlier in Section 3.5, the Kurdish people had also endured great sufferings and were subjected to consecutive migration movements until 1918. Indeed, the first refugees of WWI were Kurdish tribes coming from Iran, numbering between 40,000 and 50,000, fleeing the Russian massacres. Some of them settled in the Nestorian villages or sent to the Mosul province (Dündar 2018, 145). The bitter events that took place in those years were called *muhâcirî* and were never forgotten by the Kurdish people (Hakan, 2016).

Kurdish tribes from Van, Erzurum, Bitlis and Iranian borders were relocated to the central Anatolian provinces mainly. Not only Kurds, but also Turkoman, Arab, Circassian, and Nestorian refugees had been among them. Some of them were settled in Maraş. Mosul was also one of the destination provinces of the said migration movements from Iran and Van. In addition to Kurds and Arabs, Assyrians in Bitlis were forced to migrate to Mosul on the grounds that they helped the Armenian committees during the war. Nestorians, who were densely populated in Hakkari, migrated mostly to Urumiyeh region of Iran (Hakan, 2016).

On March 3, 1918, the Brest-Litovsk Agreement was signed with the new Russian Government. Russian forces were withdrawn, and Kars, Ardahan and Batum were given back to the Ottoman State. Ottoman army, supported by the Kurdish regiments, took over the control of the region in April 1918. The Ottoman advance through the region was halted when the Armistice of Mudros was signed on October 30, 1918. Within 10 days, on November 11, 1918, the Allied Powers demanded the evacuation of *Elviye-i Selase* (Batum, Kars, Ardahan) based on Clause 11 of the Armistice of Mudros, stating that the Ottoman army was to evacuate its soldiers behind the pre-war borders if the Allies deem it necessary (Balistreri, 2016).

#### 4.3.a. Occupation in Kars and Surrounding Regions

While the evacuation was ongoing, the British forces led by General Walker occupied Batum, then Kars. Muslim people started to organize a congress with the concern that the region would be left to the Armenians. A Shura called National Muslim Assembly (*Millî İslam Şûrası*) was convened in by the end of November 1918 with the participation of 60 delegates from Kars and its adjacent regions. On December 1, 1918, the Shura declared the establishment of the Southwest Caucasian Democratic Republic (*Cenûb-i Garbî Kafkas Hukûmeti*) in Kars, Batum and surrounding regions (Balistreri, 2016). In the first months of 1919, the demands of the British occupying forces to lay down their weapons and to accept Armenian refugees to Kars were rejected by the representatives of the Republic. In response, the British forces occupied Kars (Şeker 2002, 88), raided the Parliament and exiled the community's leaders to Malta.

The Administration of Kars was handed over to Armenians on April 30, 1919. Armenians were reported to pursue a systematic persecution and intimidation policy against the Turkish and Kurdish people by imprisoning their leaders based on alleged espionage acts, looting their houses, imposing heavy tax burdens, and expelling them to the inner provinces. The main aim here again was making them migrate to take the majority (Şeker, 2002; Ural, 2004). Turkish and Kurdish groups took refuge in Erzurum. According to the telegrams sent to the Ministry of Interior by the Erzurum Governor Münir Bey, nearly half a million Muslim wanted to either migrate to the inner provinces or to Iran due to the Armenian persecution and torture (Yıldırım, 2020). Considering some of Governor Münir Bey's telegrams, which are based on hearsay, were later found to be exaggerated, it is advisable to approach this information with caution (Ural, 2004).

#### 4.3.b. Death, Despair and Demography around Migration Flows

It is hard to present specific statistics about Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Nestorian and Assyrian populations in the region in 1919. The desperate conditions of the refugees were explained in many telegrams and reports during the period. The reports of the Governor of Bitlis, Mazhar Müfit (Kansu) Bey, the Governor of Van, Haydar Bey, and the Governor of Erzurum, Münir Bey contain devastating observations. Haydar Bey, who was traveling to Van from Diyarbakır to take over Van's administration as the Governor, reported corpses, presumably belonging to people who died of starvation, and people gnawing on grass due to the lack of food. His consecutive reports also stated that 80% of Muslim refugees who had been sent to Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Mosul perished. Armenians and Nestorians either fled or were killed, and the remaining population could be only 7% of the original number from the pre-war period. Mazhar Müfit Bey also emphasized the devastation in Bitlis and dire conditions of its people. His reports show that not only the people of the region, but also the officers, gendarmeries and refugees were dying of starvation. According to McCarthy, 62% of the Muslims in Van, 42% of the Muslims in Bitlis, and 31% of the Muslims in Erzurum had perished (McCarthy, 2022).

<i>Province</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Armenian</i>	<i>Armenian Catholic</i>	<i>Protestant</i>	<i>Assyrian</i>	<i>Chaldean</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Bitlis</b>	38,701	18,650	89	384	350		<b>58,174</b>
<b>Ahlat</b>	10,190	9,501		207			<b>19,898</b>
<b>Hizan</b>	11,624	5,023					<b>16,647</b>
<b>Mutki</b>	12,462	4,110					<b>16,572</b>
<b>Siirt</b>	27,649	2,218		412	775	1,549	<b>32,603</b>
<b>Eruh</b>	22,677	1,890			714	954	<b>26,235</b>
<b>Pervari</b>	6,415	1,326				1,781	<b>9,522</b>
<b>Şirvan</b>	15,181	1,169			1,109		<b>17,459</b>
<b>Garzan</b>	14,541	4,225		107	1,044	72	<b>19,989</b>
<b>Genç</b>	24,467	1,603					<b>26,070</b>
<b>Çapakçur</b>	11,292	734					<b>12,026</b>
<b>Kulp</b>	15,252	3,573					<b>18,825</b>
<b>Muş</b>	30,254	33,087	2,699	530			<b>66,570</b>
<b>Bulanık</b>	16,372	14,662					<b>31,034</b>
<b>Sasun</b>	7,454	6,505					<b>13,959</b>
<b>Malazgird</b>	30,929	4,438					<b>35,367</b>
<b>Varto</b>	14,539	1,990					<b>16,529</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>309,999</b>	<b>114,704</b>	<b>2,788</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>3,992</b>	<b>4,356</b>	<b>437,479</b>

**Table 4.1.** Demographic Structure of Bitlis Province based on the 1914 Ottoman Census.

In June 1919, most of the Kurdish Biruki Tribe living in today's Karabakh, Nahcivan, Azerbaijan and Zilan Tribe migrated to Erzurum, Beyazid. They were reported to be around 6,000 people and demanded to be settled in Van. This demand was delivered to the representatives of the Allied Forces (Hakan, 2016). Those movements continued in the following years.

At the beginning of 1919, the Muslim population in Erivan had displaced many times but every time they returned to their homes with a hope to take back their properties, their numbers were seen to decrease. In September 1919, in the entire Armenian Republic, nearly 150,000 Muslims were estimated to have survived. They were not provided any help despite being in a dire situation, while the Armenians were getting external assistance. Those who managed to migrate to Anatolia sought refuge

in Kars. In November 1919, the refugees in Kars coming from Yerevan and other Armenian towns reached 25,000. Whereas the number of Muslim refugees fleeing the Armenian committees and arriving in Azerbaijan was around 60,000. Another migratory movement stemmed from the occupation of Ardahan by Georgians. Taking advantage of the immobilization of the Ottoman Army and weakness of the Government, Georgian forces advanced to the surrounding regions of Ardahan in April 1920. The survivors sought refuge in the inner provinces of Anatolia. Their numbers were limited compared to those fleeing from Armenian forces and committees (Yıldırım, 2020).

By 1922, the population of Kars and Artvin was estimated to be 317,703. Of them, 243,744 were refugee survivors who had come from Southern Caucasia. Adding the numbers of refugees born in Russia, there were 272,704 Muslim refugee survivors in all of the eastern Anatolian provinces. With a moderate approach, it means one third of refugees of Southern Caucasian origin were killed or died. The situation of those who survived internal migration in the Eastern Anatolia was even worse, almost half of them eventually lost their lives (McCarthy, 2022).

#### 4.3.c. Conflicts, Struggles and Claims

Occupying forces were not the only cause of migratory movements. The clashes between the Kurdish-Armenian and Kurdish-Nestorian had been severe. For instance, upon the killing of Nestorian leader Mar Şemun by the Kurdish tribe leader Simko Agha, Armenians and Nestorians were reported to attack their villages, looted their properties and killed whomever was left (Hakan, 2016). It was also reported that the British Authorities promised to establish an autonomous Nestorian region and to back them against the Kurds. Besides, stating the Kurdish populated provinces as “six

Armenian provinces” caused concerns among the Kurdish leaders. These policies also pushed the Kurdish people in the region to stay under the Ottoman rule in order to have the Government’s support against Nestorians and Armenians. In Alfred Frederick Rawlinson’s own words, a British Lieutenant-Colonel, after his observations in Kars in early 1919 (Rawlinson, 1923), he stated:

“It is to be feared that the policy, or rather the want of it, which distinguished the Allies’ actions subsequent to the Armistice has tended to destroy what little confidence the Kurds might previously have acquired in the justice and reliability of the Western powers”.

Those concerns were proved to be true during the Peace Conference hold in Paris on January 18, 1919 when the Head of the Armenian Delegation Boghos Nubar Pasha demanded Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Sivas, Erzurum, Trabzon, Maraş, Kozan and Adana to be given to Armenia. In response, as the Kurdish people’s representative, and President of Kurdish Forward Society Sherif Pasha, objected to the Armenian demands over the Kurdish regions, emphasizing that Kurdish forces would defend their freedom against Armenian and Allied Powers through starting a guerilla war. He also demanded an “independent Kurdistan” which would consist of the regions where Kurds constituted the majority.

Armenian demands were strongly protested by the Kurdish leaders in Van, Bitlis, Muş, Erzurum, Erzincan, Malatya and Şırnak. The Ottoman State had been indirectly supporting and encouraging Kurdish tribes in their fight against the occupied forces and Armenians, and orchestrated their protests as observed during the Peace Conference in Paris (Ertürk, 2007; Esen, 2021; Hakan, 2016). Kurdistan Forward Society had been among the establishments that took official support from the Istanbul



Government. Once the Society's relations with the occupied forces began improving, the Istanbul Government decided to mitigate the effectiveness of this Society while trying to get their support through awarding their leaders with medals and titles. The Ottoman Cabinet, gathered on June 18, 1919, discussed possible solutions to the Society's activities against the Government and took important decisions. One notable decision was related to the migration movements, allowing the Kurdish people and tribal leaders, who were relocated to Konya and Ankara during WWI to return to their lands (Beyoğlu, 1996; Ertürk, 2007). To this end, DGTM sent a letter to the Ministry of War on August 15, 1919 asking for help to the Kurdish tribes who had been gathered in Konya to return to their hometowns before the winter (Marttin, 2012).

However, Sherif Pasha and Boghos Nubar Pasha later agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding stating that each of them would respect the other's independent state and presented this agreement in the Peace Conference in November 1919 (Şeker 2002, 162-164). As for the borders, they would give their consents to the resolutions of the Conference whatever the outcomes. However, both Armenian and Kurdish people protested against this agreement. Leading Kurdish leaders presented their loyalty to the Sultanate while protesting against Sherif Pasha (Hakan, 2016), who resigned from his role as the Representative of Kurdish Delegation in April 1920.

Another community who had been subject to forced migration and persecution was the Assyrian population. In the aftermath of the Armistice, the Assyrian Patriarchy asked the Ministry of Justice for assistance in cash on the grounds that many Assyrians in Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ and Van were forced to migrate and their revenues were reduced significantly (Hakan, 2016). They had fled to Iraq from the beginning of the WWI, and till 1921, they lived in the British camps near Baghdad, and then moved into Mosul. Despite the support and promises of the British Government for political

autonomy, Assyrians were not able to return to their homelands within the Turkish and Iranian territories due to the resistance of the respective governments to resettle them (Müller-Sommerfeld, 2016).

#### 4.3.d. Repatriation of Refugees

Once the public order was restored in Bitlis, Van and Erzurum, reverse migrations waves were expected to begin. On April 10, 1918 the Talat Pasha Government decided to return Rum and Armenian refugees, as well as Arab refugees who were above 60 years old. To this end, 60 million Kurush were allocated (Atnur, 1994). On May 7, 1918, having stated that only 5.56 million Kurush left, another 60 million were asked to be allocated from the 1918 budget (Beyoğlu, 2004). Since daily allowances were paid to these families, to continue to receive the money, some Arab, Rum and Armenian families were reluctant to go back, even though their transportation expenses had already been covered.

İpek (2022) classifies these migrants into 3 groups: i) Turkish refugees who wanted to return to the liberated lands, ii) Previously relocated Arabs, Rums and Armenians whom would be allowed to resettle in their original towns and iii) Muslim refugees who needed to be resettled since they were requested to leave the houses once their owners returned. The fact was, nobody would find their fields, houses and properties as they had left. Some of them had to migrate again. Furthermore, those who set off in a hurry, without being prepared, to reach their homeland not only caused public order problems, but also perished on the routes. Therefore, the Ministry of Interior sent an instruction on August 15, 1918 prohibiting the transfer of refugees without getting permission from the Ministry, and stated that those who did not comply with the decision would be punished.

Implementation of the return decision began by the Ahmet Izzet Pasha Government before the Armistice was signed. Through a number of circulars starting from October 18, 1918, the Government ordered not to prevent the travel of the Armenians to their hometowns, to return their properties and fields, and to take necessary measures to ensure their protection. The returnees' travel expenses would be covered by the Ministry of War (Ata, 2021). DGTM was authorized to implement this decision on October 21, 1918 and required to present regular reports to the common commission comprising of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior (Ural, 2006).

Although Muslim refugees' conditions had been worse, DGTM prioritized the settlements of Armenians and Rums upon the Government's decision (İpek 2022, 192), starting from the Western Anatolian provinces. Those who would go to the inner provinces were sent by train, the others travelled by ships. By October 1918, Rum and Armenian refugees began to arrive in their hometowns with the assistance of the DGTM. Around 62 thousand refugees had gone back to their houses without asking any permission or assistance until December 1918. Total number of returnees reached 335,883 as of February 3, 1920 (Marttin, 2012) but there were still nearly 650 thousand refugees remaining across many provinces:

Province	Population
Adana	7,432
Ankara	122,228
Bolu	5,732
Canik	116,672
Diyarbakır	25,940
Eskişehir	20
Halep	26,740
Hüdavendigâr	1,006
Izmir	2,728
Karesi	16,520
Kastamonu	14,749
Kayseri	25,107
Konya	28,824
Elazığ	23,538
Maraş	14,711
Musul	67,900
Niğde	4,625
Sivas	94,163
Syria	279
Urfa	48,778
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>647,692</b>

Table 4.2. Refugees and Temporary Settlement Areas in May 1920 (İpek 2022, 197)

All the necessary needs of the Rum and Armenian refugees were met by the Directorate. Besides, they were exempted from most of the taxes and their previous tax debts were lifted (Atnur, 1994). On the other hand, Rums who had fled to Greece or other places because of various crimes they committed would not be allowed to return. In a Circular Note dated January 3, 1919, Ministry of Interior asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform Diplomatic Missions in Istanbul accordingly (BOA. 1995, 189).

Once their settlement was over, the DGTM only then took care of the Muslim refugees. However, 30% of the Muslim population in those areas were reported dead

due to hunger (İpek, 2022). The DGTM's policy was criticized in the sense that while Muslim refugees were dying of hunger and in desperate need of help, they were prioritizing and favoring Rum and Armenian refugees. However, return routes of Rums and Armenians had also been painful due to unfavorable weather conditions during winter. Transportation means and allocations were insufficient as well (Ural, 2006).

According to the DGTM's report dated May 24, 1920, the statistics of *muhâcirîn* and refugees in the Eastern provinces were as follows (Erdem 2018, 188):

<b>Province</b>	<b>Refugees during WWI</b>	<b>Refugees settled in or returned</b>	<b>Remaining refugees</b>
<b>Trabzon and adjacent regions</b>	324,848	208,788	116,040
<b>Erzurum and adjacent regions</b>	287,474	157,659	129,815
<b>Van and adjacent regions</b>	102,808	35,415	67,393
<b>Bitlis and adjacent regions</b>	128,222	48,070	80,152
<b>Batum and adjacent regions</b>	25,630	11,130	14,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>868,982</b>	<b>461,062</b>	<b>407,900</b>

**Table 4.3.** Refugees and Migrants in the Eastern provinces for whom the DGTM was responsible

Migration and resettlement issues were among one the most important issues to deal with by the First TGNA. On June 5, 1921, the TGNA published an instruction manual about resettlements stating that those who had sufficient financial means would be allowed to go. Children, elders and disabled people's needs would be covered by the Government. There were still 627,847 refugees at that time and casualties on the route had been more than 800K. By 1923, many of the refugees returned and nearly 24 thousand refugees left in temporary settlement locations.

<i>Province</i>	<i>Population</i>
<b>Aksaray</b>	2,743
<b>Amasya</b>	2,250
<b>Bolu</b>	1,671
<b>Kayseri</b>	2,166
<b>Kırşehir</b>	2,742
<b>Maraş</b>	3,112
<b>Sivas</b>	4,900
<b>Urfa</b>	789
<b>Karahisarışarki</b>	1,150
<b>Others</b>	2,313
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,836</b>

**Table 4.4.** Refugees and Temporary Settlement Areas as of 1923 (İpek 2022, 198)

#### **4.4. Occupation of Izmir and Population Movements in the Aegean Region**

Allied Powers had offered Izmir and surrounding regions (Asia Minor) to Greece to gain its support prior to their landing attempts on the Dardanelles Strait in 1915. However, the King Constantine I of Greece refused to enter into the war despite the Prime Minister Venizelos's insistence. Finally, after the military coup in Greece, Venizelos established a revolutionary government and declared war on the Central Powers (Armaoğlu, 1983).

During the Armistice negotiations, the Ottoman Delegation had requested support from the representative of Allied Forces to prevent Greek forces' occupation of Izmir and Istanbul particularly. General Harbord later promised in his letter to the Grand Vizier that only French and British soldiers would be in the Straits, and unless there was a disorder and threat to the Allied Forces' representatives in the city, Istanbul would also not be occupied. These promises were not kept either.

#### 4.4.a. Demographic Structure

Occupation of Western Anatolia did not begin immediately after the signature of Armistice. Anti-Greek sentiment in the region had already been very high due to the Balkan Wars. Almost one million *muhâcirîn* from the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia were resettled into the Western Anatolia. According to McCarthy (2022), Muslim population constituted 80% (3,771,000) of the Western Anatolian provinces of Aydin, Bursa, Balıkesir and Izmit, whereas the Rum population was only 14% (650,000) by 1912. By 1914, Ottoman population statistics show that there were 3,200,000 Turks, 532,000 Rums, 179,000 Armenians and 51,000 Jews living in the regions that were to be occupied by the Greek forces (İpek, 2022). In fact, “the predominance of the Turkish element over the Rum is incontestable” as revealed by the Report of Allied Commission in October 1919 (IACI, 1919). However, this could also be seen as the result of the CUP’s *tehcir* policy implemented on Rums of the coastal regions to increase the Muslim population (Şeker, 2002).

Indeed, the Rum population had been less than 14% in the region until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. While Muslim population were decreasing due to the conscription for wars or migratory movements stemming from economic conditions, population of other *millet*s increased. While *millet*s had been exempted from the army service, could get wealthier and establish bigger families, migratory movements from Greece and Greek islands had continued. According to British consular officers, only between 1860-1880, 200,000 Rum migrants arrived in the Western Anatolia (İpek, 2022). Balancing efforts by settling the Muslim refugees coming from the Balkans were not that much effective since they were moving to inner provinces.

#### 4.4.b. Socio-Economic Situation and Media

In the brink of occupation of Izmir, there had been public disorders caused by the deserters, as well as Rum, Armenian, and Circassian gangs. In addition, epidemic diseases such as cholera, typhoid and typhus caused the death of many people. Hunger and famine were severe. The army were also demobilized following the Armistice. Under these circumstances, it was assumed that the people of the region had no power to resist any occupation.

Despite these circumstances, the signing of Armistice was welcomed in the Izmir newspapers. It was stated that the occupation rumors were not true, even the Allied Powers' seizure of the control over the Turkish straits were temporary. They were pleased to announce that the wars and deaths that had been going on for 4 years would finally come to an end with the Armistice. The real struggle would be rebuilding the country, developing the economy and education after the devastating wars (Arıkan, 1989).

As the time passed, the positive atmosphere was replaced by pessimism and concerns. Mosul and Alexandria were occupied just a few days after the Armistice. There were rumors about a possible Greek occupation of Aydın following the Rum minorities' demonstrations supporting occupation in Istanbul and Izmir. Bringing hundreds of Greeks to Izmir by ships, hanging Greek flags all around the city, insulting and provoking the Turkish people were other indicators that the region was being prepared for the invasion (Arıkan, 1989). With these attempts, Greek forces aimed at forcing the Muslims in Asia Minor to migrate and seize the majority of the region (McCarthy, 2022).



#### 4.4.c. Greek Landing Operation and Occupations

Permission for the occupation of Izmir was given at the Paris Peace Conference (IACI, 1919). Italians also had interest on the region, but they had not been informed about the decision till the last day (Yavuz, 2020). It was decided that Greek landing would appear to be an action by the Allied Forces but the presence of British, French and Italian forces would be merely symbolic (Çilingir, 2007). On May 15, 1919, the landing began on the grounds that they would protect the Rum minorities against alleged Turkish atrocities. The Ottoman soldiers in the city were withdrawn upon the request of the Allied Powers. Although they had been informed about the occupation, they did not expect it to be carried out by the Greeks (McCarthy, 2022). Despite the fact that Greek forces did not encounter serious resistance except for a few isolated cases (IACI, 1919), they immediately started invasions and massacres in the city. On May 27, they captured Aydın, and then Nazilli on June 3.

Occupation of the region and atrocities committed by the Greek forces created outrage among the Anatolian people. This occupation was believed to be against the provisions of the Armistice as well as the Wilsonian principles. According to the many reports by the Allied Forces' representatives, disarmed Turkish people had been murdered, raped and tortured. Cities were burnt and destructed. Although they constituted a small part of the population, Jewish and Christian people also suffered from the Greek attacks (Kaya, 2008).

#### 4.4.d. Destructions, Escapes and Consecutive Migrations

Greek advancements and Greek-supported bandits caused large migration waves to the central Anatolian cities, to Istanbul and even to Bulgaria as the occupying forces

advanced (Çapa, 1994). *Tasvir-i Efkar* newspaper dated on July 9, 1919 stated that 40,000 *muhâcirîn* from Izmir arrived in Balıkesir whereas the total number who fled the Greek occupation reached 120,000. According to the DGTM figures, 157,217 refugees fled to Izmir, 57,506 of them were in need of food and their needs were being covered by the DGTM (Erdem, 2018). Temporary settlement of 107,983 of those refugees are as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Population</i>
<b>Adapazarı</b>	4
<b>Aydın</b>	13,000
<b>Bergama, Soma</b>	8,000
<b>Çine</b>	10,200
<b>Denizli</b>	10,000
<b>Dinar</b>	1,500
<b>Edremit</b>	1,389
<b>Gönen</b>	4,231
<b>Havran</b>	1,559
<b>Izmit</b>	3,010
<b>Karesi</b>	11,257
<b>Konakpınar</b>	20,915
<b>Kuşadası</b>	6,134
<b>Kütahya</b>	800
<b>Sandıklı</b>	1,068
<b>Söke</b>	8,134
<b>Uşak</b>	1,032
<b>Yenipazar</b>	5,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107,983</b>

**Table 4.5.** Refugees and Temporary Settlement Areas (Erdem 2018, 194)

Once Aydın was captured, 90,000 *muhâcirîn* had to migrate according to the figures of the Turkish Red Crescent Society as of August 1919. By 1921, 325,000 *muhâcirîn* migrated from Aydın. As the occupation expanded to Balıkesir, Izmit, and Bursa, new migration movements were triggered. In March 1921, there were 450,000

refugees in the country, consisting of 350,000 from Izmir and neighboring regions, 48,000 from Bursa, and 45,000 from the Eastern Thrace (İpek, 2022). As soon as the occupying forces headed towards other neighboring towns, *muhâcirîn* fled to the secure parts of Denizli, Aydın and Afyon. Indeed, some of them had escaped from the massacres and persecution after the Balkan wars, and settled in the Aegean towns then, but they were forced to migrate once again due to the Greek occupation (Yıldırım, 2020).

In the report prepared by Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry on the Greek Occupation of Smyrna and Adjacent Territories, a detailed account was provided of the incidents that occurred during the Greek military occupation. This included massacres, persecutions, violations and migratory flows, all of which began with the occupation of Izmir on May 15 and gradually expanded thereafter. The Commission was composed of the US Delegate Admiral Bristol, British Delegate General Hare, French Delegate General Bunoust, and Italian Delegate General Dall 'Olio. The report was presented to the Paris Peace Conference on October 7, 1919, but was not on the agenda until November 8. It was clearly stating that the safety of Christians had not been threatened, and the conditions of security in Aydın and Izmir did not justify the Greek occupation. In fact, the situation had worsened since the Greek landing (IACI, 1919).

Following the liberation of Izmir by the Turkish forces in September 1922, the Rum people fled to the Greek ports and islands. The number was estimated to be more than half million. Upon Mustafa Kemal Pasha's permission, except the men between 18-36 ages, refugees were allowed to leave towards Greece (Şeker 2002, 274-275). According to the census figures of Greek Government, there were 1,104,216 migrants coming from Türkiye to Greece following the Turkish NS. 626,954 of them were

coming from Asia Minor, 256,635 from Eastern Thrace, 182,169 from the Black Sea region and 38,458 from Istanbul (McCarthy, 2022). As for the casualties of the Anatolian Greek population, McCarthy (2022) stated that 300,000 Anatolian Rums perished between 1912-1922. As for the Turkish side, estimated number of casualties was nearly 640,000. In total, according to the Report by Ismet (İnönü) Pasha presented in the Lausanne Peace Conference, 1,500,000 million Turks were either killed or migrated during the Greek occupations in the Western Anatolia.

#### **4.5. Migrations in the Black Sea Region and Central Anatolia**

Black Sea region had been home to the Rum and Armenian *millet*s for centuries. In line with the CUP's policy "The Ottoman Empire for Ottomans", these *millet*s were also required to join the Ottoman army. However, during the Balkan wars, some of them deserted the army and joined the enemy forces. The total number of Rum military deserters who went to Greece had reached 163,975 (Bilgin, 2016; Mutlu, 2012). After the war, they formed armed gangs and began attacking the Muslim villages (Pehlivanlı, 1994). During the turmoil of WWI, the *tehcir* policy initially targeted Armenians and later included the Rums.

##### **4.5.a. Expansionism, Provocation and Migration**

The Russian Empire's interest in the region and the provocation of these *millet*s were effective in shaping the Ottoman Government's policy towards them. For instance, when the Sinop Governorship took precautions against the *millet*s who organized demonstrations during the mobilization years, the Russian Consul in the city intervened thereafter and declared that the Russian Government has the right to protect

Eastern Christians and to defend their rights before the Governorate. The Governorship rejected the intervention on the grounds that they were Ottoman subjects and reported the situation to the Ministry via an encrypted telegram on September 7, 1914 (Demir 2019, 448).

Those interventions raised concerns and required the necessary measures to be taken. Once the Russian army invaded Trabzon in 1916, the *millet*s in the adjacent provinces were expelled to the inner provinces in the fall of 1916 (Bilgiç 2011, 35). This decision did not include the entire non-Muslim populations. It was limited to those who were perceived as a threat upon the intelligence reports, revealing those who were allegedly engaged in espionage and separatist actions. Accordingly, those who lived in the coastal towns were relocated to inner provinces. Later, some *Rums* were allowed to leave these settlements to go to Istanbul (Demir 2019, 451).

Following the Russian invasion in the Eastern Black Sea provinces, there had been migration flows to the Western Black Sea regions fleeing the Russian army and Armenian gangs. These migration groups were settled in schools, mosques, as well as houses abandoned by *Rums* and Armenians (Tekir, 2016). As the influx continued, they were forwarded to Ankara and other central Anatolian cities.

During the Armistice period, in line with the Circular of the Ottoman Government that allowed the return of the *Rums* and Armenians (see Section 4.3), reverse migration flows began. As observed in the Eastern and Western Anatolia, most of the returnees' houses were not available. They were either populated by migrants who came from the East or they were destroyed due to the various incidents such as fire. When housing problems arose and the return of abandoned properties could not be implemented, some returnees were allowed to build new houses, and their expenses

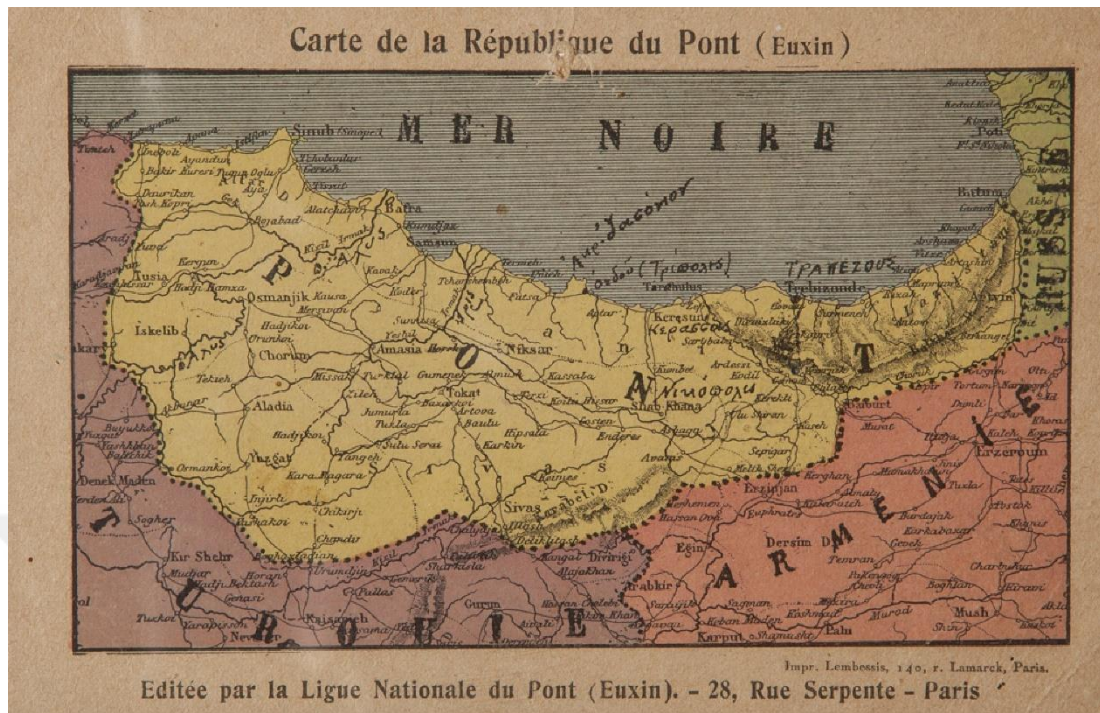
were covered by the Government (İpek 2022, 187-201). Commissions consisting of Allied officers, minority representatives and Ottoman officials were established to find solution to the disputed properties and goods (Demir 2019, 456; Özdemir 2007, 37).

#### 4.5.b. Demography and Attempts to Establish the Pontic Rum Republic

To date, there had been no consensus on the number of Rum refugees who were forced to migrate. According to the Rum lawmakers of Ottoman *Mebusan Meclisi* Yorgo Yuvalidis and Efkalidis Efendi, “up to 500,000 Rums” had been subject to *tehcir* (Ural 2006, 55). Trabzon Metropolitan Hrisantos’ figures during the Paris Peace Conference were 250,000, stating that some of them voluntarily left the region (Bilgiç 2011, 49-52). Whereas statistics based on the 1914 census revealed that 260,313 Rums were living in the entire region from Sinop to Rize (Pehlivanlı 1994, 367).

Prior to the Paris Peace Conference, the Rum population in the region began implementing their plan to establish a Pontic Rum Republic with the support of the Allied Powers. Metropolitan Hrisantos who attended the Conference on behalf of this new establishment, presented a Memorandum to the participants defining the boundaries of the Pontic Rum Republic with a map (CPC, 1919). As presented below, it was claimed that its capital was to be Samsun, and its borders were to be from Sinop to today's Artvin. Nearly 600,000 Rums were living in this area. Considering the Rum refugees in the Russian coasts and Caucasian territories, this number would have reached 850,000 (Bilgiç 2011, 48-55). Therefore, according to them, Rums should have been given the right to establish an autonomous Pontic Rum Republic under these circumstances.

**Map 4.3.** Imaginary Map of the Pontic Rum Republic Presented in the Paris Peace Conference



On the other hand, putting aside the historical claims, these population statistics were found exaggerated. It was even contradicting the demographic data given by the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos at the Paris Peace Conference, which was stating that by 1912, there were 477,828 Rums in the region (Ural, 2006).

Meanwhile, armed Rum gangs were deteriorating public order and security situation to pave the way for a possible occupation by the Allied Powers which would have eventually helped them establish the Pontic Republic (Sarı, 2015). A further attempt to implement this plan was increasing the Rum population in the region to gain majority through additional migration influx. Rums living in Russia were being transferred to the region by ships (Şeker 2002, 63). During the first 6 months of the Armistice, along with those who were originally from the region, around 8,000 Rums had arrived in Trabzon. It was reported that Prime Minister Venizelos would settle 200,000 Greeks in the Black Sea's costal region (Pehlivanlı, 1994). However, even

British officers were against these migration movements due to possible social disorder problems (Bilgiç, 2011).

#### 4.5.c. Measures by the Ankara Government and Another Tehcir Decision

To support these attempts, the Rum Migrant Society, which was established under the auspices of the Istanbul Rum Patriarchy, opened its branches in Sinop and Gerze. Greek Navy was sent to the Black Sea region in May 1919, to prevent transfer of arms and ammunitions to the Ankara Government. On June 12, 1921, Ankara Government who had been in preparations for the Battle of Sakarya, declared all the coastal regions of the Black Sea a warzone to secure the areas behind the front lines. The Central Army was formed in this regard, particularly against the Rum nationalism (Şeker 2002, 257-258). The Rum male population between the ages of 15-50 were to be expelled to the inner provinces. During their second *tehcir*, there had been many casualties particularly between June 16-25, 1921 due to the fire opened on Rum convoys. In September 1921, all Rums including women, elders and children were also expelled (Demir, 2019).

During the Lausanne Peace Conference, Greece and Türkiye agreed on exchanging populations, except Turks in the Western Thrace and Rums in Istanbul. All the Anatolian Rums including the ones in the entire Black Sea region began migrating. More than 200,000 Rums were taken to Greece, whereas 85,000 fled to Russia according to Greek figures (Pratsinakis, 2013).



#### 4.5.d. Migration in the Central Anatolia

Central Anatolia has geographically been an important migration hub over the history. Konya province, located on the migration routes, served as a transit point for the *muhâcirîn* and refugees coming from all regions including Southeastern, Eastern, Western Anatolia or the Black Sea region. Due to the ease of transportation and the availability of railway facilities, Konya province played a significant role in numerous government-directed migratory movements. This area constituted a *menfâ* (destination of exiles), welcomed the dispatched or mobilized troops, hosted *muhâcirîn* on its vast lands, and temporarily settled many refugees including Armenian, Arab, and Kurdish people.

After the armistice period, once the occupations began, Turks had fled from the violent attacks of the Greek forces and sought refuge in Denizli and its adjacent towns. As Greek soldiers advanced, they had to move forward, and arrived in Konya. Besides, some of the Arab refugees from Beirut, Damascus, Hama, Kirkuk, Medina, Yemen, Aleppo, Tripoli and Benghazi were settled in the abandoned houses of the Rum and Armenian minorities in Konya. These refugees consisted of the families of prominent Ottoman statesmen and notables. According to Kurtulgan (2012), these Arab families were called refugees by the Government since they did not know Turkish culture (Kurtulgan, 2012). Though the archive document, Kurtulgan (2012) referred to, belongs to the draft version of 1934 Settlement Law numbered 2510 and its regulation (BCA, 272-0-0-12/63-190-2).

#### 4.6. Migrations in Istanbul and Marmara Region

Istanbul has been both a destination and a transition hub for migrants and refugees for centuries. Particularly between the years 1915 and 1923, Istanbul had witnessed almost all kinds of migration movements and millions of migrants. Among them were Arab refugees from Yemen, Syria and Medina (İpek, 2022), Kurdish, Turkish, Circassian and other refugees from the occupied lands in the Eastern and Western Anatolia, Rum and Armenian refugees who were allowed to return from their temporary settlement locations, White Russians fleeing the Bolsheviks (Criss, 2005), *muhâcirîn* from the neighboring countries, army leftovers, deserters, foreign citizens or officers from Allied Forces or Central Powers, and finally Muslim refugees who were fleeing the NF in Anatolia (Şahin 2009, 63).

##### 4.6.a. Occupation of Istanbul and Migration Outflows

On November 13, 1918, the Allied Fleet arrived in Istanbul with more than 60 ships and 3,626 troops (Yavaş, 2022). Until March 16, 1920, their presence in Istanbul was regarded as *de facto* occupation, then turned into *de jure* occupation (Criss 2005, 14). First migration outflow was based on Article 19 of the Armistice, namely German and Australian officers of more than 10,000 would leave the Ottoman State immediately. They were gradually sent to their countries until March 18, 1919 (Şahin 2009, 6-8).

Supporters of the NS constituted the second group of outflows. As the Allied Forces took control of the city, they imposed travel restrictions. Those who did not have travel permit were not allowed to travel from Pendik to the East, or from Anadolu Feneri to the West (Criss 2005). All entrances and exits to the city were to be controlled. However, Italians were controlling Üsküdar and the Asian side of Istanbul.

They were in favour of the NS and remaining blind to arm smuggling from Istanbul to Ankara. As of 1920, French officers also began supporting the NS. On March 16, 1920, the arrest of Rauf Orbay and Kara Vasıf by British officers in *Meclis-i Mebûsan* became a turning point for the nationalist group. On March 18, *Meclis-i Mebûsan* held its last session and dissolved itself as a strong protest to the occupying forces' violation of lawmakers' immunities. Then, lawmakers and nationalists began migrating to Anatolia to join the NS. The CUP's underground resistance members were organizing these runaways.

There were 250,000 Rums and Armenians who transferred to Istanbul from Greece, Russia, and America as well (Mutlu, 2012). They were using Istanbul as a transit hub to go to the Eastern provinces, Black Sea region, Eastern Thrace or Western Anatolia with a view to constituting the majority of the local population.

Among other migration outflows, the resettlement of refugees and *muhâcirîn* from Istanbul to other cities, along with the relocation of Russian refugees, and exile punishments by the occupying forces should be mentioned. As these are previously discussed in their respective sections, they are not explained here.

#### 4.6.b. Migrants and Refugees

By January 24, 1919, before the occupations in the Western Anatolia began, the number of *muhâcirîn* and refugees had reached 704,905. 413,922 of them were Muslims. The Istanbul Government gradually tried to send them back to their hometowns and 83,153 of them had already been sent back by then (Çevik and Karakuş 2018, 278). Following the Greek occupation in Izmir and Aydin, this number increased dramatically.

A report by the DGTM dated May 24, 1920, gave more consistent statistics about *muhâcirîn* and refugees in Türkiye (Erdem 2018, 182):

<b>Migrant Group</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>Migrants</b>	413,922
<b>Refugees</b>	407,900
<b>Refugees from Izmir</b>	142,131
<b>Armenians and Rums</b>	300,000
<b>Arab Families and Civilian Captives</b>	13,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,277,553</b>

**Table 4.6.** Migrants for whom the DGTM was responsible in May 1920 (Erdem 2018, 182)

The Government had forbidden settlements in Istanbul during WWI, particularly for the refugees from the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia regions. However, migration inflows to Istanbul could not be prevented (İpek, 1999). In an interview on July 18, 1920, the DGTM Director Hamdi Bey said that number of the Western Anatolian refugees who arrived in Istanbul had reached 150,000 (Çevik and Karakuş, 2018). In addition to that, there were refugees fleeing Greek occupations in the Eastern Thrace. Once Edirne was occupied on July 25, 1920, the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps of the Ottoman Army took refuge in Bulgaria along with 10,000 refugees. The situation in Kırklareli was similar, very few came to Istanbul, and others went to Bulgaria.

In other parts of the Marmara region, namely Balıkesir, Bursa, Çanakkale, Izmit and Yalova, there were 28,000 refugees in November 1920. Of them, 12,000 were Rum, 10,000 were Turkish and 6,000 were Armenian refugees. Similar to the incidents in the Western Anatolia, they had been subject to carnage, torture and their properties were looted (Yıldırım 2020, 33-49). By January 1921, their numbers exceeded 42,000.

Some of them were resettled in Zonguldak and Inegöl upon the consent of the Allied Powers.

In March 1921, more than 1,000 *muhâcirîn* from the Batum arrived in Istanbul. There were Rum and Armenian refugees as well. As of October 1921, Eastern Anatolian refugees in Istanbul had reached 4,000 (İpek, 1999). The DGTM figures stated that, till July 1922, the total registered number of refugees exceeded 90 thousand. There were also more than 30,000 Turkish, Armenian and Circassian refugees fleeing from the regions under the control of the Mobile Forces and the National Forces. They had gradually come to Istanbul or were transferred by the Turkish Red Crescent Society (*Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*).

The Istanbul Government had a very limited budget to assist the refugees and migrants in Istanbul. The Ministry of Finance could not even pay the salaries of civil servants (Özkan, 2020). Thus, charity organizations and foundations tried to fill this gap. Among the leading charity organizations and societies were *Hilâl-i Ahmer*, Aid Commission for Muslim Migrants (*Muhâcirîn-i Müslimeye Muâvenet Komisyonu*), Amerikan Relief Mission, and the ICRC. There were also external aids, from the Muslims in the UK, America and other Muslim countries (İpek, 2022).

#### 4.6.c. Russian Refugees in Istanbul

After the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia had begun suffering from famine and epidemic diseases which were believed to cause more than 4 million civilian deaths between 1918-1920, and nearly 5 million between October 1921 and June 1922

(Goodwin-Gill, 2020). Millions were likely to migrate to find food to the neighboring countries which resulted in the spreading of epidemic diseases further (Sasson, 2016)<sup>2</sup>.

Nearly one million Russians left the country following the 1917 revolution which had been reported as one of the largest refugee movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Once Odessa was taken over by the Bolsheviks and Novorossiysk was evacuated in February 1920, White Russians outflow was accelerated. In November, the defeat of General Wrangel's army worsened the situation and hundreds of ships set out to sea to seek refuge in the neighboring countries including Istanbul (Yüceer, 1998). According to Russian studies, in November 1920, the number of White Russians escaping Crimea to Istanbul after the evacuation of the General Wrangler's army had reached 190,000 (Ağayev, 2012). Though General Wrangler himself stated that the total number of the Russian refugees in Istanbul were 167,000 (Baran, 2006).

Russian refugees were composed of White army members, displaced civilians, and those fleeing from conflicts or food shortage (Adams, 1939). However, their conditions in Istanbul, as well as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were dire and created many problems in the host societies. Turkish people in the city were migrating to unoccupied lands of Anatolia while foreign influx was continuing. Russian refugees' arrival in Istanbul made the conditions even worse. Staple food products including sugar were not available in the market. Rents had dramatically increased and housing shortages had become evident.

The wealthiest Russian refugees went to Europe in a very short time. Mainly poor soldiers and their families, as well as Cossacks stayed in Istanbul (Lykova, 2007).

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<sup>2</sup> A similar population movement was observed between 1856-1864 when up to 900,000 Muslim Crimeans and Caucasians left Russia for the Ottoman State in 8 years, escaping from the Russian cleansing operations (Fisher, 1987). Circassians migrated from Russia in the years 1862-1870, their estimated number varied between 1.2-2 million according to Karpat's (1997) figures.

Russian people who stayed in the city needed jobs to support themselves but they faced economic turmoil and high inflation in the city. Some of them entered into the night life and entertainment clubs, others began to engage in illegal activities. Prostitution became very common among the Russian women, including the notables. Russians took control of the restaurant, concert, and night club businesses. The city was still under the control of the Allied army but public order began to deteriorate rapidly.

Upon the request of relief agencies who could handle the issues, the League of Nations appointed Dr. Fridtjof Nansen as the High Commissioner for Russian Refugees (Holborn, 1939). Dr. Nansen served as the High Commissioner for the Prisoners of War who were suffering from cold, disease, and malnutrition. Dr. Nansen had worked on repatriation of 427,886 prisoners of war from 1920 to 1922 in collaboration with the ICRC, national relief societies, and Russian and Eastern European authorities (Goodwin-Gill, 2020).

A special office of the League of Nations was established. With the help of funds amounting to USD 250,000, their urgent needs were met and nearly 25,000 Russian refugees from Istanbul were settled in 45 different countries (Holborn, 1939). On the other hand, reverse migration had also begun. Those who had not engaged in revolutionary acts began to return to Russia. Till February 1921, nearly 5,000 refugees went back to Russia, and by November 1922, the estimated number of the Russian society was below 30,000. Within 8 years, it was to be as low as 1,400 (Baran, 2006). The Office had also helped the resettlement of Armenian and Rum refugees who were fleeing from the conflicts in other regions of Anatolia. 156,000 Rum people were evacuated from Istanbul while 10,000 Turks were evacuated from Greece.

## CHAPTER V

### MIGRATION POLICIES

#### 5.1. Overview

There is no doubt that confusions in the migration key concepts also apply to the migration policies. While reviewing the literature, it has been observed that settlement and integration policies are sometimes understood as migration policies. However, settlement and integration policies differ from the migration policies, particularly for the scope of this study. Migration policies focus on controlling the migratory movements. These movements can both be consequences of settlement policies or shape the settlement policies. Considering the driving factors, decision makers either prevent migration movements or encourage them. These policies may vary depending on the migrant group, the period in question, as well as internal and external developments (İçduygu and Aksel, 2013; Kale, 2014).

Dündar (2021) states that there are four main pillars of the migration policies in the Ottoman State and the Republic of Türkiye. These are religion (identity), state (politics), *mülk* (homeland) and *millet* (nation). According to him, concerns about homeland and nation were decisive on the migration policies towards refugees between 1912 and 1923. Whereas by 1923, these pillars were replaced by nation and state (Dündar 2021, 25-33). Öksüz and Küçükler (2019) also come up to this view by asserting that migration policies during the last years of the Ottoman State and the first years of the Republic of Türkiye were in line with the nation state and identity forming process.



Upon the discussions in previous chapters on migration movements around the key concepts, it is clear that the perception of homeland had shaped migration policies following the Balkan wars. During the Armistice of Mudros, these concerns were intensified. As *millet* understood the value of their “old” homelands once they were lost, the next and the last homeland of Turks, Anatolia, appeared to be the last glimmer of hope to continue to exist (Criss, 2005; Karpat, 2010). Thus, at all cost, it must be defended and liberated. How else could one explain, otherwise, the undeniable contribution of the CUP cadres to the NS? Even as they dissolved the Party and went underground, they put their organizational capabilities and communication network at the service of the NS (Criss, 2005; Shaw, 1977). Although well-aware that the NS leadership had been against, or at least would not be acting in their favor (Demirbaşı, 1999), the CUP cadres were patriots who prioritized the homeland above everything (Akşin, 1971).

## **5.2. Migration Policies in the Armistice Period**

Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s landing on Samsun port on May 19, 1919 constituted the first step of the NS. He was appointed as the inspector of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army to restore order and security, to ensure the demobilization as envisaged in the Armistice and to prevent resistance acts against the Government in the Eastern and North Anatolian regions. However, his real mission was just the opposite (Shaw, 1977). Once Mustafa Kemal Pasha arrived in Amasya on June 19, he wrote the Amasya Circular in collaboration with Rauf Bey, Refet Bey, Ali Fuat Bey, and took the approval of Kazım Karabekir Pasha as well. This Circular was distributed to all civilian and military units in Anatolia on June 22, 1919.

The Circular was a turning point for the establishment of the principles of the NS. It also shed light on the pillars of the migration policies explained above. Clause 1 stated that the “unity of the homeland and independence of the nation” was in danger (Akşin 1992, 423-435). The independence was to be won by the “nation’s determination and decision” as Clause 3 stated. The first national Congress would be convened in Sivas with the participations of Turkish Delegations from all over the country to decide its fate.

Yet, prior to Sivas, a Congress in Erzurum was held from July 23 to August 7, 1919 to discuss the protection of the Eastern Provinces. During this Congress, the integrity of the Ottoman territories including the Eastern provinces were emphasized again and a Representative Committee (*Heyet-i Temsiliyye*) was established. A critical decision was taken in the Congress with regard to migration movements, leaving the lands, for whatever the reason, was forbidden until further notice (Akşin 1992, 481). This meant there should not be any internal migration movements. Migration would only be allowed within the territories of Eastern provinces in necessary cases (Yıldırım 2014, 76). This decision of the NS leadership would apply till the end of the war. In fact, the first decision forbidding migration was taken in a similar Congress of the Society for the Defense of National Rights of Eastern Provinces (*Vilâyât-ı Şarkıya Müdâfaa-i Hukuk-ı Milliye Cemiyeti*) on June 17, 1919 (Şeker 2002, 97).

On July 8, 1920, Mustafa Kemal Pasha ordered the Commander of the Western Front to prohibit migration, establish order to ensure the peace and security of the people. The same order was sent to the Governorates of Bursa the day before. In another telegram in the same year, Mustafa Kemal Pasha ordered the Urfa Governorate to prevent local people from migrating and ensure their safe stay in the province by taking necessary measures (Mutlu, 2013). Despite the orders, local people, and

vulnerable groups in particular, continued to flee the Greek occupying forces in the Western Anatolia, and the attacks of the Armenian committees in the Southeastern Anatolia. These movements would not come to an end until the liberations of the occupied lands and establishment of the public order.

During the same period, the Istanbul Government was also trying to take measures to prevent internal movements of Muslim refugees within the Ottoman territories. The Government, led by Ferit Pasha, was under the control of the occupying Allied Powers. The Ottoman Cabinet took certain decisions stating that although the settlement of refugees and migrants could be considered in Istanbul, those who chose to migrate due to Greek advancements should return to their hometowns at the earliest convenience to ensure the majority of the Muslim population (BOA. 1920, 220/211). Migration Prevention Committees (*Men-i Muhacerat Heyeti*) were also established in this regard, noting that there were Greek and British officers among the Committee members. Members of the Committee were sent to Bursa and surrounding regions in August 1920 (Özkan, 2020), to try to convince migrants and refugees to return or not to migrate again. The Government also sent investigators to make migrated people return and resettle by a Restitution Committee named as *İade-i Muhâcirîn Heyeti* (Şeker 2002, 123), and allocated budget accordingly (Yıldırım, 2014).

These decisions were found outrageous by the migrants on the grounds that without securing their lands, forcing people to return to occupied towns was unacceptable. This decision could not be effectively implemented and was consequently cancelled by the Ali Rıza Pasha's Government. Returns could be made possible only after the liberation of the occupied lands in 1922, in coordination with the TGNA and *Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*.

### **5.3. Reasons behind Anti-Migration Stance**

According to orders of the Istanbul Government to the Governorates of the occupied provinces, as well as the telegrams of the Representative Committee, there were four main reasons behind the efforts to prevent migration during the Armistice period (Çerçinli, 2018; Yıldırım, 2014).

Firstly, maintaining Turkish population's dominance in the regions occupied by Rums or Armenians was considered crucial in order to prevent their potential ascendancy as per the Wilson Principles, and to prevent any further occupations. This was also the main rationale of the Ankara Government's anti-migration stance as explained previously (Mutlu, 2012).

Secondly, uncontrolled mass movements were causing many troubles including finding shelters, food and preserving public order. For instance, housing shortage in Istanbul had turned into a crisis. Irregular migration waves were also helping spread many diseases and threatening the public health (Çevik and Karakuş, 2018; Şahin, 2009).

Thirdly, as more forces would be needed to defend the homeland against the occupying forces and to stop their advancement in certain regions, the NF and MF must keep their positions on the frontlines. However, without the Turkish people's support behind the lines, this would not have been possible (Yıldırım, 2014).

Fourthly, from the economic perspective, abandoned fields would have caused famine and inflation due to the lack of supply, and worsen the situation which had already been dare. Because of the unexpected migration movements, tax collection could not be carried out effectively and revenues had been decreasing, which caused a huge increase in the budget deficit (Criss, 2005).

After its establishment, one of the most important issues on the TGNA agenda was related to migrants and refugees. Particularly 238,228 Kurdish refugees, known as Refugees of the Eastern Provinces (*Vilâyât-ı Şarkıya Mültecîleri*) were living under desperate conditions in Konya, Ankara, Sivas and surrounding provinces. On May 2, 1920, Ministry of Health and Social Assistance was established primarily to help *muhâcirîn* and orphans. The DGTM was also established on the same day under the Ministry of Interior similar to that of the Ottoman Government (Özkan 2020, 498). On June 5, 1920, the TGNA published an instruction regarding the management of migrants and refugees, and allowed their return (İpek 1999, 210). On May 15, 1921, the DGTM was separated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and attached to the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. By May 1921, with the assistance of the TGNA, 71,668 of the *Vilâyât-ı Şarkıya Mültecîleri* returned to their hometowns. There were other decisions to help the return of migrants once the occupied regions were liberated (Özkan, 2020).

After the proclamation of the young Turkish Republic, during the early years, Turkish migrants or those who shared Turkish culture were given priority. The aim through this policy was increasing the Turkish population and ensuring ethnic homogeneity in the country. Exchange of minorities was also encouraged to this end, which strengthened the Turkish unity and increased homogeneity so that in 1935, Turkish people constituted 88% of the total population in the country. However, this welcoming policy only applied to migrants coming from Greece. According to a decision taken in 1923, migrants from countries other than Greece were not to be allowed until the settlements of them were completed. Therefore, refugees from Bulgaria for example would not be accepted (BCA, 272-0-0-12/40-41-7). As per this

decision, the Republic did not accept migrants from Kirkuk and Western Thrace (Dündar 2021, 29), effective until 1925.





## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The Armistice of Mudros marked the beginning of a new transition period in Türkiye's history. In a short period of time, Türkiye underwent a vast transformation from a multi-ethnic structure to a nation state during which key concepts were redefined. Migration flows had been at the center of this process, reshaping the demographic and political structure not only of Türkiye but also of its surrounding regions.

This study helps understand the development of these key concepts with a genealogical view to be aware of the arduous path followed from the Armistice of Mudros to the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. As the decision makers' approaches to these concepts changed, targets and outcomes of migration policies have differed. Internal and external developments, occupations, legal regulations, military measures, and diplomatic attempts reflect the changing mindsets in this period. The directions, types and inclusiveness of migratory movements have been affected accordingly. Today's modern Türkiye and homeland perception have emerged as a result of all these movements and policies. Thus, the last homeland blended with migration belongs to and is the homeland of all Anatolian people regardless of their religion and ethnicity as stated in the 1924 Constitution. Migration serves as a continual reminder of the importance of inclusivity and of taking advantage of its potential benefits.



This study contributes to the literature in terms of discussing migration movements around the concepts and events of the period without being restricted to the regional or ethnic approaches. Another valuable contribution of this study, given the significant gap in existing literature, could be highlighting the lack of extensive research in this particular area. It emphasizes the perpetual necessity for further studies and underscores the continual room for exploration and advancement in this field.



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