

In Pursuit of Answers to Difficult Questions:
A Long Story Narrated by Two Journals
of the Jewish Community, *La Boz de Oriente* and
La Boz de Türkiye

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Abstract

“In Pursuit of Answers to Difficult Questions: A Long Story Narrated by Two Journals of the Jewish Community, La Boz de Oriente and La Boz de Türkiye”

Gül Banu Kayır, Master’s Candidate at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2017

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This thesis examines the solutions that the Jewish Community in Turkey came up with in response to growing problems that developed in the period of the 1930s and 40s. Spreading nationalism, the ideal of homogenous state and simultaneously increasing anti-Semitism were among these vital, rapidly developing issues the effects of which were inevitably felt by Jewish communities around the world, including the Jews in Turkey. The work focuses on two specific journals of the community, La Boz de Oriente (1931-1939) and La Boz de Türkiye (1939-1949), to determine the process of thought that led to a particular solution regarding these suffocating problems. The thesis studies the issue of Palestine, the process of establishing a national state and the creation of a national history as parts of said solution. To understand the particular way that the answer was formed, the study examines articles published in the journals over the years and select ones that construe a meaningful whole. Consequently, with the help of the community’s own publications, this study interprets the endeavors of the Jewish minority in Turkey in subjects of creating a solution to the critical problems and emancipation process.

40,000 words

Özet

“Zor Sorulara Cevap Arayışında: Yahudi Cemaatinin İki Gazetesinin Anlattığı Bir Uzun Öykü, La Boz de Oriente ve La Boz de Türkiye”

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Prof. Dr. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Tez Danışmanı

Bu tez çalışması, 1930 ile 40’lı yıllar arasında belirginleşen sorunlara yanıt olarak Türkiye’deki Yahudi cemaatinin ortaya koyduğu çözümü incelemeyi amaçlıyor. Yalnız Türkiye’deki Yahudilerin değil, dünyadaki bütün Yahudi cemaatlerinin etkisini kaçınılmaz olarak hissettiği bu sorunlar arasında milliyetçiliğin yayılması, homojen devlet ideali ve eşzamanlı olarak artan anti-Semitizm faaliyetleri başı çekiyordu. Çalışma, bu boğucu sorunlarla ilgili belirli bir çözüme ulaşan düşünce sürecini ortaya koymak için cemaatin iki dergisini; La Boz de Oriente (1931-1939) ve La Boz de Türkiye’yi (1939-1949) incelemektedir. Tez sözü edilen çözümün bir parçası olarak Filistin meselesi, ulusal bir devlet kurma süreci ve ulusal tarih yaratma süreci üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışma bahsi geçen gazetelerin sayfalarına taşıdığı çözümün yıllar içinde nasıl oluştuğunu anlamak için söz konusu dergilerde yayınlanan makaleleri inceleyerek, anlamlı bir bütün oluşturması mümkün olanlar üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Kısacası bu tez özünde, Yahudi azınlığın "özgürleşme" süreciyle ilgili çabalarını, Türkiye’de ve dünyada büyümekte olan sorunlara getirdikleri çözümü kendi yayınlarının sunduğu ürünler aracılığıyla yorumluyor.

40.000 kelime



To my family and friends

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Acronyms

JTA Jewish Telegraphic Agency
TJC The Jewish Chronicle



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Introduction

On the eve of the 1930s, the Jewish community in Turkey, which consisted of almost eighty-two thousand people at the time,¹ was experiencing a perplexing situation. On one hand, following the fall of long-living empires, the desire for homogenous states was threateningly ascending, creating a problematic atmosphere for minorities all over the world including the Jewish community in Turkey. On the other hand, there was a particular ill that began to rise, which was specifically concerned the Jews: anti-Semitism was spreading at an unprecedented pace.

This thesis explores the answer of Turkish Jews to these growing problems with the aid of two journals of the community. *La Boz de Oriente* (Voice of the Orient) was founded by prominent figures of the Jewish community: Isaac Algazi, Moiz Dalmedico, Albert Kohen, Leon Israel, and David Fresco in 1931.² *La Boz de Türkiye* (Voice of Türkiye) was founded in 1939 by Albert Kohen after the close of *La Boz de Oriente* that same year.³ This research relies on these two sources for two reasons. First, both journals were unique with respect to their relatively long publishing life, which ultimately allowed them to

1 A. A. Pallis, "The Population of Turkey in 1935," *The Geographical Journal* 95, no.5, (May 1938): 443.

2 *Jewish Journalism and Printing Houses in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, ed. by Gad Nassi (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001) 34.

3 Naim A. Güleriyüz, *Türk Yahudi Basım Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Gözlem, 2015), 89.

establish their own literary tradition. During the period these two journals were active, they were the only ones published by the community that managed to stay in print more than few years. Doubtless, there were other publications that emerged between 1931 and 1949 such as *La Tyenda de Yaacov* (1931-1933), *Şabat* (1947-1950), *Atikva* (1947-1948), *Or Yeuda* (1948), and *Or Israel* (1949); however, these did not last enough to give a steady source to portray the approach of these community papers to the growing problems of the time. Secondly, *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* had the advantage of a shared link. Not only Albert Kohen participated in the publishing process of both the Journals, but possibly as a consequence, the journals shared a similar form and choice of subjects to the degree that *La Boz de Türkiye* seemed like a continuation of *La Boz de Oriente*.

This research examines the articles printed in these journals over the years and determines the possible connections between these articles to explore whether there was a consistent narrative that can be revealed. The study argue that the existence of a consistent narration might be taken as an indication of a political and ideological stance. A particular worldview could also provide the impetus for the repetitive, persistent ideas commonly seen in these journals. Furthermore, a continuous narrative can also give us a collection of opinions, which the community was in the habit of addressing when they encountered with problems.

Accordingly, the first chapter of this thesis presents a historical background describing the political atmosphere and marking the turning points for the community. The study explores topics deeply related to the community. Early events such as structural changes to the chief rabbinate or to community schools are the first issues to examine. Historical events of vital importance such as Thrace Incident and the wealth Tax appear chronologically and are discussed accordingly.

The second chapter explores the intellectual background; it introduces concepts that were actively questioned at the time such as anti-Semitism, belonging and otherness, migration, and identity. The very ideas that occupied the minds of many that were concerned with the Jewish Question. The study looks at the writers on both sides who brought forward and shaped the question and those who tried to formulate an answer in response. Among those,

the work notes both foreign and local anti-Semitist writers and inquires the possible interactions among them, revealing the common ideas they shared. The research also studies the opinions of writers who tried to offer solutions to rising anti-Semitism. Zionism and multiculturalism, in particular, were two grand solutions that were debated.

The third and last chapter of this work discusses the framework of *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye*. It studies the particular advantages and disadvantages that these Ladino⁴ newspapers had and explains how the journals navigated and used these to shape themselves as political mediums. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes these journals as a combined consequence of the material and intellectual circumstances introduced in the first and second chapters. The thesis looks at the narrative of the journals as a meaningful whole to understand the solutions that Turkish Jews once produced as a response to the suffocating problems growing around them.

4 Ladino or Judeo-Spanish is a language derived from medieval Spanish. The Jewish people who were exiled from Spain took Ladino along and introduced it in the Ottoman Empire. Ladino remained the language of the Jewish community, and despite its current vulnerable status as a dying language, it continues to exist to this day.

The Historical Background

We are Turks, we are Turkists, and we will forever remain as such. (Calls of Bravo! calls, accompany thunderous applause). For us, Turkism as much an issue of blood as it is a matter of conscience and culture. (Calls of Bravo! accompany applause). We are not the kind of Turkists that belittle and dwindle away, but we are Turkists who expand and multiply and will forever work in that direction!

–Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Official Report of the 77th Session of Parliament, 5 August 1942.

This chapter takes a brief look at the circumstances surrounding the Jewish community before and around the time *La Boz de Oriente* was published. Believing that certain incidents shaped the material and intellectual lives of the community, the research looks at unsettling changes that occurred in the early years of the republic. In order to introduce the historical background in an articulate, clear way, the study lines the incidents up chronologically. Nevertheless, from time to time events will be presented in an intertwined fashion due to their complex nature and inevitable associations between occurrences.

§ 2.1 The Rabbinate

The Ottoman state was based on a pluralistic society, organized around the recognition of different ethnoreligious groups. The principal behind this notion was shaped by the Islamic concept of *dhimma*: Islam recognizes Christianity and Judaism as earlier examples of the same religious tradition which were perfected by the introduction of Islam. It perceives their followers as *ahl al-Kitab* (people of the book) and labels them as *ahl-al dhimma*. From the Muslim perspective, dhimmis are basically placed in the middle social caste. They were not unbelievers, yet, they had not accepted the perfect version of the revelation offered by Islam.¹ This status required a particular organization. Well before the Ottoman Empire, Muslim communities established the roots of this arrangement, defining the rights of *ahl-al dhimma* and designating their responsibilities vis-à-vis the Muslim administration.²

The *millet* system of the Ottoman state developed from this foundation. Different ethnoreligious groups lived under the same rule, but all these groups

-
- 1 Although Islamic law required a particular ritual while slaughtering animals including invoking God's name before starting the process, some Muslim jurists allowed Jews to perform the work, on the grounds that they were ahl-al Kitab. Sephardic Jews were able to sell meat to Muslims and conducted business in Palestine with the help of this understanding. Matthias Lehmann, "Rethinking Sephardi Identity: Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no.1, Sephardi Identities, (Fall 2008): 93.
 - 2 C. E. Boshworth, "The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam" in *Christians and Jews In The Ottoman Empire* (Great Britain: Holmes&Meier, 1982), 37-51. K. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in The Post Ottoman State" in *Christians and Jews In The Ottoman Empire*. (Great Britain: Holmes & Meier, 1982), 42-46. The Constitution of Medina (622 CE) was taken as the origin of Jewish people who were granted certain rights in Islamic lands. Gordon Newby, "The Jews of Arabia at the Birth of Islam" in *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations*, (UK: Princeton University Press, 2013), 48-49. The tradition was continued by the Pact of Umar. The Pact was developed around the time of the Abbasid Caliphs, and gave Jews (and Christians) rights to own property, hold jobs, and worship in accordance with their own religion. Loyalty towards the Muslim authority and paying the Jizya was expected. Charles Parker, "Paying for the Privilege: The Management of Public Order and Religious Pluralism" in *Two Early Modern Societies*, *Journal of World History* 17, no.3, (Sep 2006): 278

were left to maintain different internal systems shaped by their particular cultural, religious, and ethnic codes.³ This did not imply a sharp separation between groups; indeed, Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbors interacted in different spheres, from legal to commercial to social.⁴

The state offered an interesting middle ground for the dhimmis. While they had the right to practice their religion and preserve their religious identity, the actions of the dhimmis in society were limited. Their appearance in public, for instance, was regulated. The Jews of the empire, like others who were not Muslim, were prohibited from wearing certain colors such as green and white, and their shoes had to be black, unlike Muslims who wore yellow shoes.⁵ They were estranged from military service, banned from carrying weapons, and they could not testify against Muslims in criminal cases.⁶ However, they had the right to govern their own community and enforce their religious laws for their own people.

Indeed, the Ottoman state accepted religious posts, such as the Armenian and Greek Orthodox Patriarchates and the Chief Rabbinate, as semi-autonomous administrative elements and addressed them as the representatives of their communities.⁷ These semiautonomous administrations accepted the general rule of the empire; however, the relationship between them and the

-
- 3 The millet system was accepted as a latter-day institution by some historians; Najwa Al-Qattan accepted the notion of the legal autonomy of the dhimmis and has yet to be contradicted but signifies the lack of direct administration of the dhimmi communities by Istanbul. This is considered a sign that the roots of the millet system were not deep rather but it was a new concept. Najwa Al-Qattan, "Dhimmis in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no.3, (Aug 1999), 431.
- 4 Charles Parker, "Paying for the Privilege: The Management of Public Order and Religious Pluralism" in *Two Early Modern Societies*, *Journal of World History* 17, no.3, (Sep 2006), 280.
- 5 Ed. By Esther Juhasz, *Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire: Aspects of Material Culture*, (NY: The Israel Museum, 1990), 122.
- 6 Charles Parker, "Paying for the Privilege: The Management of Public Order and Religious Pluralism" in *Two Early Modern Societies*, *Journal of World History* 17, no.3, (Sep 2006), 282.
- 7 C. E. Boshworth, "The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam" in *Christians and Jews In The Ottoman Empire*, (Great Britain: Holmes&Meier, 1982). K. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in The Post Ottoman State" in *Christians and Jews In The Ottoman Empire*. (N.Y: Holmes & Meier, 1982).

empire did not consist solely of these hierarchical, regulatory ties. Indeed, a community usually needs a process of progress to continue its existence and generally this would require more organic relationship, beyond strict regulations and obligations. The Jewish society had ties that could be used to this end, and the order of the empire allowed this continuous process within limits. This meant that a grand vizier could be asked to play an intermediary role to allow necessary renovations to synagogues to be done in several cities⁸ or to loosen restrictions on clothing after a bargain was struck between the officials of sultan and the Jewish community. (Thereafter their shoes could be red and white.)⁹ These developments were obviously tied to establishing the necessary connections and having sufficient material and social power to reach them; yet, it also meant an open door that could supply necessary tools for change and progress.

After the dissolution of the empire the fixed categories that gave autonomy and protection to different communities were reduced to an undetermined position. This uncertainty damaged the possibility of bargaining for change. Renovation of these power structures would be possible under the new regime; however, this was apparently not a part of the government's plan. At best the incoming period could be described as anticlimactic for the Jewish community. The disappointment of the community coincided with the formation of a new administration. A key player in the community, former Chief Rabbi of the empire, Rabbi Hayim Nahum was not elected to the Assembly.¹⁰ Rabbi Nahum had played a role in the Lusanne Treaty as a mediator between Turkey and other countries.¹¹ Naturally the community expected him to be in the new assembly as the voice of the community, which came to naught in the end.

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- 8 Istanbul: BA, Adliye, no:968: R-1216/1801 in Karmi, Ilan, *The Jewish Community of Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century: Social, Legal and Administrative Transformations*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996, p.30. The Jews and their ability to use the vakif institutions as investment tools exemplifies the limited openness of Ottoman society. Gerber, Haim, *Crossing Borders: Jews and Muslims In Ottoman Law, Economy and Society*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2008, p.159-180.
- 9 Ed. By Esther Juhasz, *Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire: Aspects of Material Culture*, (NY: The Israel Museum, 1990) 122.
- 10 "Oppressed, Jews Prepare to Flee Turkey, Report" JTA, Jul 31 1923.
- 11 Rifat Bali, *Devlet'in Yahudileri ve Öteki Yahudi*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004), 22

This starting point was enough to create a resentment within the community. Although the government made reassuring statements to the Jews in Turkey from time to time, the new regime was not genuine with respect to reinforcing the community's place in the country.¹² The subsequent period accordingly offered even more reasons for a self-defensive and controlled withdrawal of the community from the political or social spheres which would last for a long while.

The novice republic came with rash solutions in tow to shape anew the old system. Secularism was accepted as the vital future for the new regime. Since Jewish identity was tightly bound to religious codes, this new approach was perceived as a potential threat that could ultimately leave the community without the means of maintaining their identity. Anxieties were aggravated by the calculated silence of the government about the Chief Rabbinate's status.

The rumors about the abolishment of the Chief Rabbinate began to spread.¹³ The government did not abolish the Chief Rabbinate; instead it quietly left it in legal limbo. The new regime in Turkey did not renew the regulatory law of the Rabbinate, the *Hahambaşılık Nizamnamesi*, originally ordered in 1865. By leaving the position of the rabbinate legally undefined, the government was intentionally stirring up change in the community for the purpose of easing the process of Turkification. Correlated with its shaky legal status, the Chief Rabbinate lost its usual financial sources; its right to stamp kosher meat, for instance, was revoked.¹⁴ The Chief Rabbinate thus began to suffer serious financial difficulties.¹⁵

These deliberate steps of the government with respect to the minorities were closely watched by the foreign Jewish press. While they also covered positive developments in the community, such as reassuring meetings between

12 "Turks Love Jews, Says Angora Leader" JTA, Apr 11 1923.

13 "Turkey Will Abolish Grand Rabbinate, is Rumor," JTA, 13 Mar 1924.

14 Rifat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni 1923-1945*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000) 55.

15 "Jewish Community, Impoverished, Reduces Salary of Grand Rabbi," JTA, 1 Jan 1924.

the community and Atatürk, they were generally pessimistic about the situation.¹⁶ There was anti-Semitic frenzy in the close vicinity of Turkey: Jewish students were being barred from classes, and Jewish schools and synagogues were closed in the Ukraine, pogroms against Jews had become ordinary incidents in Bessarabia, and words like “pitiless extermination” were spreading in Vienna.¹⁷ Despite the occasional announcements about the well being of the community, the overall attitude of Turkey’s government approach to Jewish citizens was to fuel the fears, which already reached a terrible level given the ongoing anti-Semitism around the world. Furthermore, after the violent separation vis-à-vis the Christian population, concerns about the well being of the Jewish society in Turkey came under question.

While the community in Turkey was reluctant to share their fears, the Jewish community worldwide did not possess the same reasons to withdraw said doubts. The dark suspicions about the government policy regarding the Jewish population already began to be expressed in the outside sources.¹⁸

In this atmosphere, the attitude of the government with respect to the Chief Rabbinate only worsened the issue further. The new administration ordered a reorganization of the Chief Rabbinate asserting that it needed modernization; until this modernization process finished, a commission would take over the duty of the administration the affairs of the Rabbinate.¹⁹ While the process of de-authorizing the Chief Rabbinate was running in the background, the authorization to make decisions regarding community-related issues was taken from the Chief Rabbinate and given to governors, both as a part of the new secular approach of the Government and as a reminder of the Government’s control.²⁰

16 “Kemal Would Embrace Faithful Jews,” JTA, Feb 8 1923.

17 “Jews Barred From Czernowitz University” JTA, Jan 2 1923. “Private Synagogues Ordered Closed in Ukraine” JTA, Jan 2 1923. “Pogroms Spreading to Bessarabia” JTA, Jan 2 1923. “Threaten Pitiless Extermination of Vienna Jews,” JTA, Jan 1 1923.

18 “Jews Persecuted in Turkey: An Anti Semitic Campaign,” The Jewish Chronicle, 18 Jul 1923.

19 “Turkish Jews Modernize Grand Rabbinate,” JTA, Jan 1 1924 (Jun 14).

20 Rifat Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000) 55.

§ 2.2 The Treaty of Lausanne and Minority Rights

İsmet Pasha, at a dinner with the Colony of Turkish Jewry during the Lausanne Conference, announced the strong ties of Turkish Jewry to their country: how they truly accepted Turkey as their country and, furthermore, how they should be taken as an example.²¹ Nevertheless, shortly after, the Government's approach to this excellent example became openly distressing. Because of its past actions and generally amenable stance, the Jewish community in Turkey was expected to be an example for other minorities in Turkey. This meant being the first community to give up rights that were recognized by the Lausanne Treaty.²²

Especially Article 42 of the treaty provoked resentment of the government. The article stated that in the case the Turkish Government fails to solve the problems of its minorities, European lawyers would be chosen to arbitrate a suitable solution for both parties. The Turkish government agreed to work on the measures regarding the protection of non-Muslim minorities with the help of chosen representatives from these communities. Indeed, Article 42 contradicted with government policy. Turkification was built on the principles of homogenizing culture and forceful denial of external influences. Regulations in the Lausanne Treaty were perceived as external intervention and an attempt to weaken the newly founded regime. After recent wars with the leading powers of the world and following discussions of mandate administration, extreme sensitivity began to grow in the government and in Turkish society, leading to caustic reactions from the government towards any dictates coming from international or foreign sources. Turkey's feelings regarding the issue were perceived along those lines by the foreign sources themselves during the conference. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes reflected this idea in a letter to the American Mission in Lausanne in 1922.

21 Avram Galante, *Historie des Juifs de Turquie*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1) 157 in Rifat Bali, *Toplu Makaleler-I: Tarihin Ufak Bir Dipnotu Azınlıklar*, (Istanbul: Libra, 2013), 64.

22 *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000) 84.

The Turkish feeling is that the presence of these people has offered most of the pretexts in the past for the political inroads of Western Powers and further inroads of this sort are abhorrent to the newly awakened ideals of Nationalism in Turkey.²³

The expression “these people” specifically referred to the Greek and Armenian Minorities, as mentioned a sentence earlier in the letter. The Jewish community did not have the same historical background as the Armenian and Greek communities. The reactions towards these were backing up with the ongoing issue of the external support that these communities drew for their causes and its destructive consequences. Naturally, the problem was neither new nor first encountered by the republic.

Indeed, the view of the former administration regarding the issue was clear and indicated the origins of the perception of the republic. In the words of the former vice president of the Council of the Ottoman State, Mehmet Mansur, “[Some enemies of the Ottoman state] *depending on the support of their co-religionist states, aim at establishing their own government on a piece of land snatched away from the Glorious Ottoman State; while others definitely aspire to realize changes in the administrative principles of the Supreme Ottoman government and shape these to the advantage of their own cause.*”²⁴

This particular perception of the issue was inherited by the new government and directly affected its policies, which in turn fed the fear and hatred, of cultural and religious minorities in the war years. Suspicion about the intentions of minorities immediately infected views about the Jewish community. The community, historically, lacked supportive ties in Western states.²⁵ In fact, they could abstain from being the target of fear and hatred since their

23 Library of Congress, Manuscript Section, Washington D.C, Conference on Near Eastern Affairs (1922-1923: Lausanne Switzerland) File MMC-0608, Cited By Rifat N. Bali, *Azınlıkları Türkleştirme Meselesi: Ne idi? Ne Değildi?* (Istanbul:Libra, 2014), 212

24 Ottoman Archives: Yıldız Collection-The Armenian Question, Vol.3, Ed. E. Zekai Ökte, (Istanbul: The Historical Research Foundation, 1989), 279. Written By Mehmet Mansur, Department of General Staff, ‘Memorandum’ 26th February 1893.

25 Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*, (New York: Oxford University Press 2014), 6.

situation was unique, contrasting that of other minorities that were struggling for independent lands. The only visible and influential tie of the Jewish community in a world characterized by deeply-rooted, rapidly spreading anti-Semitism, was with the Alliance Israelite Universelle.²⁶ Former politician and Minister of Education, Dr. Rıza Tevfik, maintained a similar belief in a speech in 1929: “The Jews have never shown any attempts at political independence, unlike the Greeks and the Armenians. For that reason they have never suffered at the hands of the Turkish government.”²⁷ However, in practice this tended to be forgotten in the face of the rising tide of nationalism. Hence, government policy with respect to the application of the principles of the Lausanne Treaty where the Jewish community involved was no different than two other communities. In fact, they were chosen as the first ones to give up their rights, as mentioned above.

In the process, the community suffered from both internal and external pressure. The government was not only suggesting the denial of rights but was forcing it on the community in a clandestine manner using provocative rumors. On 18 February 1926, popular newspapers such as *İkdam* and *Cumhuriyet* produced a message allegedly sent from the Jews of Turkey to those of Spain, celebrating Columbus’ discovery of America. According to the unproven rumors, three hundred Jews signed the message, claiming their loyalty and affection towards Spain.²⁸ As the press in Turkey spread the anti-Jewish propaganda, the Chief Rabbi immediately denied that the community had sent such a message. The Jewish community of Izmir published a statement protesting the charges, and the Jewish community in Ankara petitioned for

26 Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU), a Jewish organization founded in Paris in 1860 to support emancipation and enlightenment process of the Jewish people.

27 “Turkish Jews Most Fortunately Situated Minority,” JTA, Mar 21, 1929.

28 Rifat Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), 77. Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 71. “Turkish Press Starts Agitation Against Sephardic Jews,” JTA, Feb 23, 1926.

the removal of the false accusations regarding the loyalty of the Jews of Turkey.²⁹ Shortly afterward, a delegation of Turkish Jews moved to Ankara to express the loyalty of the community, but in the process, the community accepted the denial of rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne.³⁰ The government, in return exonerated the community of charges of disloyalty to their country.³¹ The identity of the three hundred signees was never revealed, and after a while the unrest ceased, but not before an anti-Jewish riot took place in İzmir.³²

The community's decision to give up their rights was not well-received by foreign sources and the wisdom of the decision was widely questioned.³³ President of the American Jewish Committee, Louis Marshall, condemned Turkey's Jewish community, saying that "it has been intimated that they have feared the consequences of adherence to the treaties. So far as I am concerned, I would rather die ten thousand deaths than to show myself so lacking in manly courage as to sell my birthright of liberty and equality for temporary safety."³⁴

When asked about Marshall's criticisms, Chief Rabbi Bejarano stated that the decision of whether to demand the given rights or give them up belonged to the Jewish community along and they neither desired nor approved of meddling from outside. It is unknown whether Marshall carefully considered the overall situation of world Jewry at the time he made these statements or understood the severity of the situation which the Jewish community in Turkey was faced. However, both the Chief Rabbi of Turkey and the Jewish delegation sent to Ankara were obviously aware of the strained atmosphere in Turkey.

29 "Turkish Press Continues Anti-Jewish Agitation, Exploiting Charge of Loyalty to Spain," JTA, Feb 28, 1926.

30 "Turkish Jewish Leaders Urge Government Inquiry into Charge of Disloyalty," JTA, March 3, 1926. *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), 84-90.

31 "Turkish Government Exonerates Jewish Communities of Charge of Disloyalty," JTA, March 9, 1926.

32 "Smyrna Jews Complain Against Anti-Jewish Riots," JTA, April 7, 1926.

33 "Turkey," TJC, Sep 3, 1926.

34 "National Minorities Rights Are Same As Rights Guaranteed by United States Constitution, Lous Marsha," JTA, Aug 25, 1926.

The Chief Rabbi compared these rights to a golden watch during an interview. With this comparison in mind, it might be suggested that dropping the watch would be understandable when the carrier of it cannot sleep at night because of its valuable possession and the danger it created. Unfortunately, the idea of the Jewish community as the possessor of many watches was taking root in many minds, and in time, their giving up one of them would not be seen as enough.

§ 2.3 The Schools

After the Balkan Wars and the World War I, cultural homogeneity began to be viewed as a cure-all for diverse problems that had developed under the administration of the Ancien Régime.³⁵ The republic suggested a rapid nationalism process to cure the ills that it believed were inherited from the Ottoman Empire.³⁶ The local execution of nationalism was realized under the name

35 The republic did not invent the solution of cultural homogeneity; the desire for homogeneity was argued in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, as well. It seemed a possible solution for the critical issues with which the empire faced. Reşat Kasaba, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kimlik*, Ed. By. Sibel Bozdagan and Reşat Kasaba, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 23.

36 Nationalism movement did not occur for the first time in the republic period, rather it showed itself in the reign of Abdulhamid II. However, there were serious differences regarding the perception of the notion of nationalism. Indeed, nationalism followed various tracks and greatly changed between the period of Ottoman Empire and the Republic. The Empire advertised Ottomanism and Muslim nationalism, both were abandoned with the new Republic. Ottomanism suggested inclusive type of Ottoman citizenry and defended that under this notion variety of ethnic and religious elements would be ruled peacefully. Turkish nationalism similarly began with broad definitions, Pan-Turkism movement suggested the unification of Turkic communities. Later Turkish nationalism developed a narrower definition and focused on local goals, in time cultural nationalism seemed to lose its importance and beginning with 1930s the notion of race became more of an issue. Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey*, (NY: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 148-149, 215-217. Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013), 94-96. Ahmet Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene: Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), 185-190.

Turkification. Aside from the name, Turkification was not much different from other nationalist movements occurring at the close vicinity.³⁷ Turkification, at least in theory, unified the society under a supra-identity. It's practical realization highlighted the Turkish-Muslim hegemony. The new regime acted generously while applying this formula of homogenization in various spheres. Schools immediately became the primary fields for its exercise.

As early as 1923, the future path that the government would follow was obvious: to rely on internal forces and shun everything external. As expected, what constituted the external had a fluid character. Other countries naturally considered as external and were usually viewed as potential threats to the country's sovereignty, and given the bloody encounters that resulted in the loss of empire's lands, the sentiment is easily understood. The slippery definition of external, however, was neither so easily understandable nor reliable. The Greek and Armenian elements of the empire were considered external - or at least not sufficiently internal - as they were thought to be linked to foreign countries. The Jewish community of Turkey, on the other hand, noticeably lacked these direct, influential links; furthermore, the community openly chose to be on the side of the empire until the very end. Considering them as an external element indicates that categorization as external was not tantamount for the republic when it specified the sides. What mattered was the narrow definition of internal, and internal was comprised of precise combination of the elements of Turk and Muslim. By nature, this strict categorization was extended to every spear that might be expected to have an impact on society. The matters of education and schools were prominent among them, and the changes in these areas that government rashly began to practice drew the attention of both internal and external sources.

37 It is undeniable that Turkish nationalism had its own characteristics; some of its different traits were caused by its relatively late emergence. Others depended on local dynamics. When we claim that there were similarities between Turkification and other nationalist movements we refer to common nationalist features (the desire for homogeneity in culture, religion, and language) that were shared by almost every nationalist movement. Taner Akçam, *Türk Ulusal Kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 1995), 35-50. Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*, (UK: Polity 2001), 11.

The change we mentioned occupied a few sentences in a gloomy article in London-based journal, *The Jewish Chronicle*. The journal summarized the issue: “A formal order from Angora compels the Jewish schools to engage Mussulman professors for the teaching of Turkish and to dismiss those now employed, although they are under Turkish supervision, and have studied in the state high schools.”³⁸ Hiring these Mussulman professors was not only an obligation, but they were expensive. Their salaries were triple the standard teacher salaries of the time.³⁹ Even though the community paid their share of taxes like all other citizens, the government did not consider these schools as a fundamental necessity but rather an issue of choice. In the eyes of the government, there were Turkish schools to which any child could go, which meant that choosing a community school was optional and outside of the state’s field of duty. Considering the financial struggles of the community, adding this burden to the school budget was just another, slower way of shutting down their schools.

Nevertheless, if developments had been limited to these obligations, the schools might have survived. However, when closing a school down was not an option, the state tended to totally transform them to the point of assimilation.

The Ministry of Education changed the curriculum and teachers were appointed by the Government, taking away the right of school committees to choose the teachers that would teach in the schools.⁴⁰ Not long after, even these changes would not be enough. The Government ordered the closing of non-Turkish schools; affecting 14,000 students, among them the children of the Jewish community.⁴¹

Developments concerning community schools did not appear all of a sudden. Before the republic was founded, similar arguments were still in use. In 1919, Rabbi Haim Nahum wrote on familiar concerns; the closing of French-

38 “Jews Persecuted in Turkey: An Anti Semitic Campaign,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 18 Jul 1923.

39 El Tyempo, Sep 14 1923 in Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 38.

40 “The Position of the Alliance Schools in Turkey; Statement by the Alliance”, JTA, Mar 8, 1924.

41 “Order Closing Non-Turkish Schools Affect 14,000 Pupils in Turkey”, JTA, Jan 1 1924.

language schools, the abolishment of lessons given in French, and a generally negative attitude towards the French on the streets. However, he also asserted that when the order came to close the community school in Hasköy, he protested the decision by threatening to shut down the synagogues.⁴² Only a few years later, the atmosphere in Turkey was so different that when asked about the abolishment of the community institutions (the Chief Rabbinate among them), the new Chief Rabbi Chaim Bejarano said that they were unnecessary since there were Turkish schools and all kinds of Turkish institutions to which anyone could go.⁴³

The words of Rabbi Bejarano were not said without a struggle. Ensuing statements indeed reflected the conflicted position the Rabbi was in. A week later, the Chief Rabbinate gave an interview about the rising anxieties over the undecided fate of community schools. Rabbi Bejarano still declared that closing non-Turkish schools in Turkey would not affect Alliance Schools.⁴⁴ The Alliance not only gave typical language and culture-oriented classes, but produced artisans that could work in different branches of crafts and commerce.⁴⁵ Losing the schools would have a great impact on the community, and the community and the Chief Rabbinate hoped, until the end that would not occur. Which of course what exactly happened. The community gave up on education in French and accepted a standardized education that suggested different cultural codes and educational priorities.

42 Esther Benbassa, *Son Osmanlı Hahambaşısının Mektupları: Alyans'tan Lozan'a*, (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1998), 191.

43 "Grand Rabbi Declares Religious National Institutions in Turkey Superfluous", JTA, Jan 1 1924.

44 "Turkish Government Will Not Abolish Grand Rabbinate, Says Grand Rabbi", JTA, March 28, 1924.

45 Abraham Galante provides statistics about artisans in different lines of work received their education from the Alliance. Abraham Galante, *Rôle Économique des Juifs D'Istanbul: Extrait de l'ouvrage Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul*, II, (Istanbul:Imprimerie Hüsnütabiât, 1942), 57.

§ 2.4 The Issue of Language

Where various cultures existed together, language is inevitably a cardinal aspect of the homogenization process. Indeed, Turkey was home to many cultures: Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Bosnians, Albanians, and others shared the country. Multi ethnicity was perceived as a problem by the new cadre of the republic and their predecessors. Fortunately for them, ethnicity seemed to be a malleable concept -even reducible to a major identity. In 1923, Ziya Gökalp, one of the leading figures of Turkish nationalism, mentioned in his essay *My Nationality* the issue of this variety as a bad habit coming from the old belief of matching ethnicity and where they live (or at least used to live) and naming them accordingly. Those who lived in Iraq before the collapse of the empire were called Arabs, while those who were living in Eastern Anatolian provinces were identified as Kurds. While asserting the superficiality of these identities, this point of view suggested that it was acceptable to replace them with a more inclusive one.⁴⁶ The key to the change was the matter of the language. According to the 1927 population census, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek, Ladino, Circassian, Armenian, Albanian, Bulgarian, French, English, and Persian languages spoken in Turkey in addition to Turkish.⁴⁷ All these languages symbolize different cultures and different ethnicities; the homogenization process of the Turkification movement was intended to collect and unify these various identities.⁴⁸

“Purifying” the language of foreign words was perceived as part of the emancipation process. In the words of Mustafa Kemal: “The Turkish nation,

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- 46 Ziya Gökalp, ‘Millet Nedir?’ *Küçük Mecmua*, 28, (1923). Mentioned in Niyazi Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 43.
- 47 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, 28 Teşrinievvel 1927 (Population Census of 28 October 1927). Ankara: Türk Ocakları Merkez Matbaası, 1929, 62-74.
- 48 It was generally accepted that Turkish language preserved characteristics of Turkish nation, consequently, the language was an imperative part of the Turkish identity. These notions also meant that those who could not speak Turkish did not possess the characteristics of Turkish nation and were not worthy of being Turkish. Soner Çağaptay, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, 4, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002), 247.

which knows how to establish its government and its sublime independence, must also free its language from the yoke of foreign words.”⁴⁹

The language issue became a central question over the years, later resulting in the “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” campaign. The campaign developed around 1928, it first took action with the suggestion of the Student Association.⁵⁰ The campaign insisted on Turkish as the only language in public domain. There were warnings of violence and verbal threats and the efforts of the community to compromise did not work.⁵¹ Prominent figures in the community such as Abraham Galante argued that a transition of language could not be realized so quickly and asked for time, yet this demand was ignored. The pressure on the community and other minorities that spoke languages other than Turkish only increased in time.⁵²

The government invented creative loopholes to avoid applying the Lausanne Treaty as it was impossible to refuse it. The language issue was no exception. According to Article 41 of the treaty, Turkey agreed to recognize the right to education in one’s mother tongue in primary schools; however, when it came to realizing this, the government considered Hebrew as the native language of the Jewish community.⁵³ The community had used Ladino in social life for centuries, and it was a public knowledge that Ladino was the true “mother tongue” in the community, while Hebrew was used for ritualistic meanings at large and had no daily function. The administrative framework was obviously aware of this distinction, Hebrew was considered as mother tongue because of the impossibility of its usage in daily life.

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- 49 Sadri Maksudi Arsal, *Türk Dili İçin*, (Ankara: Türk Ocakları İlim ve Sanat Heyeti, 1930) in Yılmaz Çolak, “Language Policy in Early Republican Turkey”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40, no.6, (Nov 2004), 75.
- 50 Uriel Heyd, “Language Reform”, 30 in “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40, (May 2004), 93.
- 51 “Language Question Takes on Acute Form in Turkey”, JTA, Apr 19, 1928.
- 52 “News Brief: Patriots, Speak Turkish,” JTA, Dec 23, 1928.
- 53 “Turkish Government Recognizes Hebrew but Bars French from Schools” JTA, January 1, 1924. Rifat Bali, (1999). *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1999), 188.

The major problem in this process may be in the government's choice to ban the French from these schools. The leaders of the community insisted on French as the language of education in their schools as long as they could.⁵⁴ At the time, French was the language both of intellectual and commercial occupations and knowledge of it was a great advantage for the children of the community in their adult lives. Even the lectures of David Fresco (1853-1936), a well-known journalist and a remarkable figure in the community, were published after being translated into French because while the young, literate population of the community could not read Ladino, they understood French.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the importance of French in the life of the community was clear. The banning of languages other than Turkish in schools that would later be closed was part of the taking away the financial advantages of the minorities. These schools had given them the chance of working with foreigners, and being active in commerce, and closing them meant taking these advantages from the Jewish community.

§ 2.5 Thrace Incidents

After the violent separation with the Christian population of Turkey, suspicions about the fate of the Jewish population grew. Long before the Thrace Incidents, fear of a disaster regarding the Jewish population was discussed in the pages of the foreign press. *The Jewish Chronicle*, for instance, bluntly reminded the cold fate of Greek and Armenian populations while speculating about the future of the Jewish community in Turkey.

Having persecuted and expelled all the Christians of Thrace and Anatolia, they are adopting the same measures against the Jews. Anatolia has been three quarters destroyed, and is nothing but a vast desert. At Smyrna and at Broussa, the presence of the Jews, the only non-Muslim element, gave to those districts a certain amount of vitality. It

54 "Jewish-Turkish Leaders Insist on French Instruction in Jewish Schools, Jan 1, 1924.

55 David Fresco, "Lettre Preface" in *Lecture: Edifiante de Morale Juive*, (Istanbul: Ekspres Matbaası, 1929), 6.

seems that Angora is determined to exterminate this vital element, and to abandon the whole country to misery and distress.⁵⁶

As feared and expected, the Jewish community was faced with disaster not even a decade later. In addition to the various developments we mentioned that readied the stage, the roots of the Thrace Incidents and also found in the 1934 Resettlement Law No. 2510.⁵⁷ The law generally limited the places of settlement of those who 1) did not subjected to Turkish culture, 2) did not speak or had forgotten the Turkish language. Originally, the law mostly about concerns the Kurdish population and breaking their resistance after in light of in Eastern Turkey.⁵⁸ However, the description also fitting other minorities and was interpreted accordingly. Anti-Jewish propaganda in Thrace, where there was a concentrated Jewish population, began just after the enactment of this law. Later, the incidents would be explained by the government as a misinterpretation of the Resettlement Law by the local officials.⁵⁹

This misinterpretation caused violent assaults on Jews in Edirne, Çanakkale, Uzunköprü, Kırklareli, and Babaeski⁶⁰, and at least three thousand Jews escaped from their homes to Istanbul, leaving behind their estates to be pillaged.⁶¹ People headed to a safer place. Those who had money reached their destination by train; those who did not walked and camped in the open air

56 "Jews Persecuted in Turkey: An Anti Semitic Campaign," TJC, 18 Jul 1923.

57 Avner Levi, "Alınamayan Ders", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 151, Jul 1996, 13.

58 Exiling rebel leaders or forcing relocation of the community as a whole was an Ottoman tradition that the Turkish government immediately adopted. After the Koçgiri and Sheikh Sait Rebellions, the forced movement of Kurdish populations was only a matter of time. Robert Olson and William Tucker, "The Sheikh Sait Rebellion in Turkey (1925): A Study in the Consolidation of a Developed Uninstitutionalized Nationalism and the Rise of Incipient (Kurdish) Nationalism", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 18, no. 3, 1978, 206. Robert Olson, The Koçgiri Kurdish Rebellion in 1921 and the Draft Law For a Proposed Autonomy of Kurdistan, *Oriente Moderno*, 8, no.1, 1989.

59 "Clearing Up the Expulsion Mystery," TJC, Jul 18, 1934.

60 Rifat Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945*. (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000) 247.

61 "The Expulsions-And After:Government's Stand Against Anti-Semitism, Possibilities For Future Understanding "TJC, Jul 27, 1934.

when necessary. The Jews who remained and chose not to escape had to hide. Bakers refused to sell bread to these people, or when they sold bread to them, the price was multiplied.⁶²

After the incidents, President İsmet İnönü denied accusations of anti-Semitism, saying that notion was not a product of Turkish culture.⁶³ Upon the order of İnönü, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Şükrü Kaya moved to Thrace to investigate the issue with a group of officers. The unrest died away with the announcement of martial law in the region, but not before killed a gendarme who was trying to protect the citizens of Turkey.⁶⁴ The Government announced that any attempt to create hostility or coerce any class of citizens would not be allowed in future. Newspapers with an openly anti-Semite character were ordered closed, and the rest of the press adopted a milder manner.⁶⁵

Despite the Government's denial, there was suspicion that the Government was directly involved in the incidents. JTA asked how Turkish soldiers from surrounding areas joined in the attack, if the Government had not allowed it.⁶⁶

There were two dominant reasons behind the Thrace Incidents. The first was financial. Jews in Thrace dominated the market and possessed the majority of the businesses in the area, which was undesirable for the process of economic Turkification.⁶⁷ The second reason was related to the atmosphere of war and the geographical importance of Thrace. The Government had no desire to leave the area to untrusted minorities.⁶⁸ The intervention of the Government

62 "Turkish Government Sanctioned Thrace Pogroms, Report Hints" JTA, Jul 24, 1934.

63 "Clearing Up the Expulsion Mystery",TJC, Jul 18, 1934.

64 Levi Avner, 1934 Trakya Yahudileri Olayı: Alınamayan Ders, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 151, (July 1996), 16.

65 "The Expulsions-And After:Government's Stand Against Anti-Semitism, Possibilities For Future Understanding "TJC, Jul 27, 1934.

66 "Turkish Government Sanctioned Thrace Pogroms, Report Hints" JTA, Jul 24, 1934.

67 Rifat Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945*. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), 252-254.

68 Halûk Karabatak, "Türkiye Azınlık Tarihine Bir Katkı: 1934 Trakya Olayları ve Yahudiler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, 146, (Feb 1996), 70. Bali, Rifat, Yeni Bilgiler ve Trakya Olayları-1, *Tarih ve Toplum*, Jun 1999, Vol.31, No. 186, 51.

into similar events planned in Izmir at the last minute - while allowing the incidents in Thrace to proceed - is a sign of the second reason.⁶⁹

Indeed, although İsmet İnönü stated that the Jews who had escaped to Istanbul were free to go to home, the damage was already done.⁷⁰ The community in Thrace suffered both financially and emotionally. Their homes were pillaged and their already vulnerable sense of safety was robbed.

According to Avner Levi, twenty thousand Jewish people were affected by these incidents. More than ten thousand had to leave their homes and move to Istanbul.⁷¹ This internal movement was actually a practice of the external movement, which took place a few years later.

§ 2.6 Struma and the Roots of the Disaster

The infamous Struma disaster can be considered an independent tragedy that could occur anywhere in a world where ongoing war is capable of disturbing even impartial countries not directly involved. However, the events that underlay the disaster and the aftermath of Struma are key to understanding the delicate atmosphere in Turkey at the time. The Struma began its disastrous voyage because of the expansion of anti-Semitism, that thrived in harsh conditions of dictatorships. In Romania, from which Struma sailed, malicious anti-Semitism had grown to a point of no return under the dictatorship of Ion Antonescu. However, it would be mistaken to think that Antonescu and his policies were the main influence behind the anti-Semitism. It is true that Romania's stance on the issue became absolute only after Nazi forces seemed to become permanent, but even before the 1940s the way to the pogrom was being paved in Romania. Far right movements like the Iron Guard were spreading anti-Semitic ideas more than a decade before the disaster.

69 *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni: Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri 1923-1945* (Turkish Jews in the Republican Years-An Adventure of Turkification). Istanbul: İletişim, 245.

70 "Clearing Up the Expulsion Mystery", TJC, Jul 18, 1934.

71 Avner Levi, 1934 Trakya Yahudileri Olayı: Alınamayan Ders, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 151, (July 1996), 10.

The desperate people who bought tickets for the Struma were running away from long standing cruelty. According to Matatias Carp, the roots of anti-Semitism in Romania were much older than the twentieth century, the official campaign actually began in 1867.⁷² In 1866, the Constitution of United Romania stated that “only Christians can become citizens of Romania.”⁷³ To get a clear picture of the results of this statement, it is crucial to remember that, even in Romania (where Germany did not militarily invade therefore the situation was not grave as some other countries in Europe) the Jewish People faced with such a disaster That 300,000 people remained alive after the war seems a miracle. When Carp was writing the cost of Holocaust he was actually using the word miracle, without forgetting to add that at least the same amount of people had died through murder, hunger and massacre in the country till the year 1944 came.⁷⁴

In 1941, the Struma sailed from Romania under these grim conditions with 761 passengers. After three days, the boat reached Istanbul and remained there for two months waiting for permission to proceed to their final destination: Palestine.⁷⁵ The reason the boat was not permitted to proceed on its predetermined route and its travel was hindered in Istanbul was lying in this final destination.

Long before the Struma disaster occurred, a short yet enormously important text announced that Palestine was the national home for Jewish people. By all means, Struma’s disastrous end was the product of complex decisions from many sources, but the one that started the chain reaction occurred in November 1917: the short but vital announcement called the Balfour Declaration which in essence promised the Jewish people a place to settle.⁷⁶ The problem, of course, lay in the fact that Palestine was already established; it was

72 Matatias Carp, *The Black Book: The Sufferings of The Jews From Romania 1940-1944*. 2. (Bucharest: Dacia Traiana National Publishing and Graphic Arts Society, 1947), 6. http://survivors-romania.org/pdf_doc/black_book_2.pdf Date Accessed: 07.02.2017.

73 “Rumania To-Day 1: The Jewish Position, Dangers Ahead,” Jul 13, 1934, *TJC*.

74 *Ibid.* Vol.3. 5-8. http://survivors-romania.org/pdf_doc/black_book_3.pdf Date Accessed: 07.02.2017.

75 Bülent Gökay, “Belgelerle Struma Faciası” in *Tarih ve Toplum* 20, no.116, (Aug. 1993), 106.

76 What Went Wrong in Palestine? in *the Journal of Palestine Studies*, 18, no. 1. (1988), 71-82.

not an unsettled land to be given away to people desperately in need of it. Indeed, from the moment the declaration was announced to the public, conflict between all three sides was inevitable.

With the continuous migration of Jewish people, the Arab population of Palestine became restless. In the year that the Struma disaster took place, the estimated Jewish population in Palestine had reached almost half a million (492,458), roughly three times more than ten years prior (in 1931 the population was 176,468). Considering that the Muslim community's population had only increased an estimated 50 percent (the total went to 1,004,989 from 777,403) in a ten-year period when the Jewish population had rapid risen by 250 percent the change in demographical structure was apparent.⁷⁷ Aside from the gross, the proportion of Muslims was dropping sharply. In 1931 their share was 75.53 percent while by 1941 this had dropped to 61.29 percent. Meanwhile the Jewish population's share was dramatically increasing: in 1931 it was only 16.69 percent whereas by 1941 it was 30.03 percent.⁷⁸ Considering the demographic change in the third major population in Palestine, Christians, occurred in a slow pace, it can be determined that the change was mostly occurring among Jewish Population. The Christian community in the same period was signaling a similar drop as their Muslim neighbors: in 1931 they were comprised of 93,029 people, but by 1941 the figure was only 129,260, (from 8.80 to 7.88 percent of this population).⁷⁹ The demographic balance was altering quickly. In the light of this, fear among the Arab population about the rapid culture change in Palestine is understandable.

The social structure in Palestine had already changed enough to galvanize a revolt by the time Struma was prevented from reaching its destination and adding 761 people to Palestine's population in 1941. The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 shook the British Mandate for this restless ground. While Britain opted for military solutions to suppress the boiling issue such as destroying buildings

77 Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population Statics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 35.

78 Ibid. 36.

79 Ibid. 36

in the area of the revolt, rendering 6000 Palestinians without a home, the revolt also made Britain careful about the further establishment of a Jewish population in Palestine.⁸⁰ The Struma was full of desperate people trying to reach Palestine without permission due to the suspension of migratory movements. Indeed, out of 761 passengers, only five had permission to enter Palestine and could leave the Struma before the boat's awful end arrived. The sole survivor of the disaster, David Stoliar, was even arrested after his recovery in hospital due to the fact that his travel to Palestine was unpermitted.⁸¹

The importance of the Struma is not related just to the singularity of the disaster. During World War II, many ships followed the route to Palestine through Turkish waters. As a matter of fact, the Struma was not the only boat to undergo this adventure, nor it was the first or last to meet with an ill-fated end. The Mefkure, another boat, would suffer a similar disaster only two years later. Indeed, the boat sailed from Romania in 1942 just like its poor sister had, but received a quicker end at the hands of a Russian submarine in the middle of the night.⁸² The Salvador met with a different but similarly bitter end. The boat sank in 1940 due to bad weather conditions, only 122 passengers survived.⁸³

The case of the Struma was important because of the long period of time over which the disaster occurred. It gives a clear picture of the deadlock that Jews were in at the time. Other boats sunk rapidly, so it could be argued that there was no time to save them, allowing authorities and society to agree on the sorrowfulness of the situation without taking responsibility. With the respect to the Struma, on the other hand, authorities have months to figure out

80 Matthew Hughes, "From Law and Order to Pacification: Britain's Suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine 1936-1939" in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no.2, (2010), 10.

81 Bülent Gökay. "Belgelerle Struma Faciası" in *Tarih ve Toplum* 20, no.116, (Aug. 1993), 108.

82 The Mefkure was one of the three boats undertaking the journey and was the only one attacked. Later it was suggested that the Mefkure was smuggling soldiers and was attacked for that reason. Esra Danacıoğlu. "Unutulmuş Bir Trajedi: Karadeniz'de Batırılan Mefkure" in *Toplumsal Tarih* 44, (August 1997), 8. It has similarly been argued that this was the main reason for the disastrous end of the Struma.

83 Esra Danacıoğlu. "Struma, Salvador, Mefkure: Yahudilere Mezar Olan Gemiler" in *Popüler Tarih*, 2, (July 2000), 61-61.

a solution and ultimately left it to its horrible end, again, showing the dreadful conditions of Jewry in the world.

§ 2.7 The Wealth Tax

On 11 November 1942, the government of Turkey took an irreversible step and introduced a wealth tax. The tax was carrying a problematic quality. Law 4305 was established on weak and arbitrary grounds, moreover, it was exclusionist by nature. The tax was justified by high wartime earnings that could not be taxed by the government.⁸⁴ These untaxed accumulations required special regulation, and the law specifically stated that the tax was nonrecurring -limited to one occurrence.⁸⁵ Its devastating nature indeed was lying behind this unique quality. The extraordinariness of the tax allowed for unruly execution, which caused stress and suffering and then distrustfulness of the government and society.

Article 9 of Law 4305 suggested a period of fifteen days in which a commission must determine the level of payment to be paid by a taxpayer. If the commission could not complete this work in the predetermined time, they would be replaced by another.⁸⁶ This decision was made to prevent money from flowing abroad if the process were dragged on, and Prime Minister Saraçoğlu argued that the reason for this hastiness was to prevent bribery.⁸⁷ Apart from the government's reasons, fifteen days for the determination of the tax level inevitably meant rash calculations and imprecise results. The hurried nature of the action increased the potential for grave mistakes. Whether these "mistakes" were calculated before the execution of Law 4305 is another question.

If the rashness of the execution was one problem, the predictive essence of the tax, which was linked to this hastiness, was the other. The process of determining the required payment of taxpayers was handled in an amateurish

84 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam 1938-1950 2*, (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1991), p.233

85 "Article 1" in *Varlık Vergisi Hakkında Kanun*, (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1942), 2.

86 *Varlık Vergisi Hakkında Kanun*, (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1942), 5.

87 "Ayın Tarihi 1224," (12.30.1942), 3 in Okutan Çağatay, *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, (Istanbul:Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), 276.

fashion, and it was even impossible to hope for a result within the limits of reason. Furthermore, the problems that came with the tax were more than mere bankruptcy. Failing to pay meant leaving everything behind to serve in labor camps. While suggesting a civilian service as a form of payment for those who could not pay the tax, Article 12 spared women and men older than fifty-five years in some cases.⁸⁸

This exclusive nature of the law that spared women and old did not operate when it came to the possessions of the targeted populace. The tax not only included the taxpayer but also the wealth of his or her spouse, parents, children, and siblings who shared the same household.⁸⁹

In theory, the tax targeted a group of people that had made quick money by taking advantage of the extraordinary atmosphere. Considering the reasoning behind the tax, it is reasonable to expect that the process of its execution would be balanced. If the sole goal of the administration was the taxation of war profits, including suspected profiteers on the list of taxpayers would be logical and necessary. Indeed, when the list of taxpayers was first introduced, and saw wealthy Muslims saw that their debts were minimal, they sacrificed animals as a way of showing their gratefulness God had spared them from this trouble.⁹⁰ Given such gratefulness, they must have been waiting to pay serious amounts. The probability that minorities would be targeted was suspected, and there were many signals to justify this suspicion, but only after the lists were announced did it register that the tax specifically targeted minorities.

There was an ongoing argument about the wealth of the Jewish community. When the Jewish community wanted financial assistance from the government in 1924 given the distressed situation in which they found themselves, their request was considered astonishing in the Turkish newspaper *İkdam* which argued absurdity of the demand. Since the Jewish people were the ones who greatly profited from the war, and became even more rich after the war,

88 "Article 12" in *Varlık Vergisi Hakkında Kanun*, (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1942), 6.

89 "Article 14" in *Varlık Vergisi Hakkında Kanun*, (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1942), 7.

90 Faik Ökte. *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, (Istanbul:Nebioğlu Yayınevi), 12. in Çağatay Okutan, *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları*, (Istanbul:Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları), 2009, 278.

how dare they approach the government with such requests? According to *İkdam*, the community dominated many markets in Turkey without paying the proper taxes in the end.⁹¹ This particular, bitter feeling turned out to be a stepping-stone for the acceptance of the wealth tax disaster. While Muslims sacrificed animals when the calamity left them unharmed and perished another, the problems that their neighbors and business partners faced were rationalized to overcome the fear of being witness to irrational, dangerous cruelty. These exact thoughts asserted in *İkdam* were part of the rationalizing process for the society in general.

A related, but not exactly matured version of these problematic assumptions was promoted by political representatives of the society in no time. Before the implementation of the law, Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu openly said in a group meeting: “This law is also a law of revolution. We are faced with an opportunity that will win us our economic freedom. Thusly, we will eliminate the foreigners that dominate our markets, giving the Turkish market to the Turks.”⁹²

The case of Taranto-Bezmen perfectly exemplifies of this notion and how the wealth tax achieved its goal in the end. Mensucat Santral was a paint factory, established in 1930, the shares of which were shared between the Taranto and Bezmen families. With the wealth tax this organization of the factory administration radically changed. The wealth tax billed the Taranto family highly; the commission ordered 207,000 lire from the Taranto family as their tax share from the factory. Then another 320,000 lire for Bedi Taranto as an individual factory share-holder followed by 320.000 for Bedi and Mithat Selim Taranto, and 160,000 for Leon Taranto, and another 155,750 for Leon and Mithat Selim for their individual shares. The total amount reached 1,162,750 lire. The family paid the 207.000 lire immediately, half of the original 414,000 lire billed to the factory. Payment of the other half, the share of Bezmen Family

91 “Constantinople Jewish Community Asks Turkish Government for Assistance”, JTA, Aug 15, 1924.

92 Faik Ahmet Barutçu, *Siyasi Anılar, Hürriyet Yayınları*, 1997, p. 263 in Ali Sait Çetinoğlu, *Varlık Vergisi 1942-1944: Ekonomik ve Kültürel Jenosid*, (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2009), 84.

was never requested.⁹³ Another 70.000 lire was paid by member of the Taranto family for individual shares of the tax, but these were not paid so easily. Accordingly, the Taranto family failed to pay all their taxes and were forced to go to the labor camps. The Bezmen family, on the other hand, without the burden of such a tax bill, bought and assumed the shares of the Taranto family.⁹⁴

The problem with which the Taranto family and others were faced was not only paying the tax, but paying it in a limited time – which is to say, finding a bank or buyer to which to sell properties to collect asufficient amount to pay the tax. That, of course, meant unfavorable or hopeless, bargaining in which both seller and buyer knew well that there was no choice but to sell the assets. The limited time meant that any buyer was better than no buyer at all, which gave way to selling off valuable properties for a pittance to willing buyers. In the case of Taranto family, in their words in court, this meant selling their shares of the factory for less than a tenth of the real value of it.⁹⁵

From the beginning, the goal was never to collect the tax in a balanced manner. When asked whether the arbitrary nature of the tax would scare Turkish capital patrons, Hakkı Tarık Us, one of the owner of the newspaper *Vakit*, refused the possibility, relying on information from “reliable sources” and adding that Turkish patrons would be protected.⁹⁶

Stocking, price speculation, and leaking information regarding economic matters were condemned by the government but were common, even among parliamentarians. There were rumors that some members of parliament were stocking precious materials, such as sugar.⁹⁷ Even though, Turkey did not directly participate in World War II, it had to adapt to the general atmosphere, which meant preparing for a possible war and sparing an important part of the resources of the country for war preparations. The natural result was a

93 *Varlık Vergisinin Neticelerinden: Taranto Bezmen Davası*, (Istanbul: Tan Matbaası, publication year was not indicated), 5-6.

94 *Ibid.* p. 6-8.

95 *Ibid.* p. 8.

96 Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, p.236-237 in Ali Sait Çetinoğlu, *Varlık Vergisi 1942-1944: Ekonomik ve Kültürel Jenosid*, (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2009), 85.

97 *Cumhuriyet*, (1, 31,1942) in Rıdvan Akar, *Varlık Vergisi: Tek Parti Rejiminde Azınlık Karşıtı Politika Örneđi*, 36.

narrowing of the general resources available to the whole population.⁹⁸ Given that there was already a paucity of workers in industry because men were being in the army, this resulted in famine and corruption. The government took administrative precautions, but they were not sufficiently effective.⁹⁹ There was a need to compensate expenditures and prevent the famine from going any further. As an answer to the crisis, the government chose to impose the full burden on a particular part of the society. However, the notion and execution of the law was insufficiently founded so excuses for it had to be added in time. The law was not enough to justify following developments on its own; morality and fairness of it were still in question. If the law had been enough, the ensuing excuses to vindicate it would not probably vary in time.

A few words from a conversation between Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, the president of the industrial investigation committee, and prominent figures of the Jewish Community such as Avram Galanti exemplified the rich pretexts not mentioned when the law was passed much less in the original text of Law 4305.

Galanti Efendi, I said. You are a historian, you must understand such matters: We Turks have been at war for centuries, we've never found time for (establishing) industry, money and capital accumulation. You minorities, you've done this. Sometimes you didn't even pay taxes. You brought all commerce, industry, imports and exports, money and capital under your control. These things were done at the price of the blood we spilled for centuries...¹⁰⁰

Turks as a warrior race with not enough time for commerce was an all-familiar narration; taking compensation for said spilled blood is also not so original. These well-worn statements were obviously not enough to explain or justify

98 Rıdvan Akar, *Aşkale Yolcuları Varlık Vergisi ve Çalışma Kampları*, (Istanbul: Mep Kitap, 2006), 42-47.

99 Nevin Coşar, "Varlık Vergisi Konusundaki Yolsuzluk Söylentileri," *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 58, no.2, 2003, 3.

100 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam 2*, (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1991) 235-236 in Rifat Bali, *The Varlık Vergisi Affair: A Study on Its Legacy, Selected Documents*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press 2005), 57.

the abnormality of the wealth tax, especially considering its capricious and singular structure.

In short, the government did a calculatedly horrible job of facing financial crisis. The wealth tax was no independent development that occurred due to the financial crisis Turkey was experiencing at the time. The background for it was a mix of rising nationalism, financial struggles, the goal of financial Turkification, and age old bigotry that was still alive with respect to minorities. The tax, indeed, went beyond the expectations of its designers and resulted in a massive emigration from Turkey, it created a fear hard to prevail in the hearts of former citizens of Turkey.¹⁰¹

§ 2.8 Emigration From Turkey

The emigration of the Jewish population was not a novel development in Turkey; it had been brewing for a long time partly as a consequence of the subjects mentioned earlier. Even at the dawn of the new regime, there were rumors about plans for the community to migrate.¹⁰² Long before the foundation of the state of Israel, the estimated number of Jews who emigrated from Turkey to Palestine between the years 1923 and 1948 was 7,308, almost ten percent of the whole of the Jewish community indicated in the 1927 census.¹⁰³

Even in 1932, the Jewish community was aware that failing to adapt to new social quotas would result in serious consequences such as leaving the country all together. The president of one assistance associations, Liga de Pas, announced in a meeting of coreligionists that “the unique aim is to open up greater opportunities in public life for Jewish leaders. “Failing this,” (proving

101 Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue commented that the tax affair prepared the foundation for the massive emigration process in Turkey. Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Türkiye ve Balkan Yahudileri Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), 378-379.

102 “Oppressed, Jews Prepare to Flee Turkey, Report” JTA, Jul 31 1923.

103 W. F. Wieker, *Unseen Israelis: The Jews from Turkey in Israel*, (London: The Jerusalem Centre of Public Affairs, Centre for Jewish Community Studies, 1988), 19 in Şule Toktaş, “Turkey’s Jews and Their Immigration to Israel,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.3, (May 2006), 507.

the usefulness of the Jewish business to Turkey) he declared, “we shall have to emigrate.”¹⁰⁴

It is doubtful that the Jewish community really failed to adapt to the new social structure or that they had not genuinely tried. However, the mass migration that consumed in 1948 was a combination of both internal problems and hope for a new homeland. Not taking the foundation of Israel into consideration while considering the migration of Jews from Turkey is a mistake. Nonetheless, notorious developments such as the wealth tax triggered the migration process. Between 1943 and 1944, almost 4,000 Jews emigrated from Turkey, leaving their country behind.¹⁰⁵

Aside from the many mistakes of their home country that had resulted in the suffering of the community, there was now a new country in the stage of history, and it was inevitable that many felt its pull. Even in 1948, when Israel was yet a newly emerging and highly problematic country, it accepted 108,828 migrants from around the world.¹⁰⁶ In 1949 this figure doubled, reaching 239,076, and an important percentage of them, one in twenty-four came from Turkey.¹⁰⁷ Between 1948 and 1951, 34,547 Jews emigrated from Turkey to Israel.¹⁰⁸ The majority of these chose to stay in Israel and were faced with different problems than those they suffered in their home country, but others returned to Turkey after a while and continued to live with the persistent problems of the past and still new problems were on the way.

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- 104 State Department, 867.4016 JEWS/3. George (Izmir) to the State Department (Washington), 13 Dec. 1932 in Soner Çağaptay “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (May, 2004), 94.
- 105 A. W. Liberles, “The Jewish Community of Turkey” in *The Balkan Jewish Communities: Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (N.Y: University Press of America, 1984), 127-70 in Şule Toktaş, “Turkey’s Jews and Their Immigration to Israel,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.3, (May 2006), 507.
- 106 *Immigration to Israel: Total Immigration by Year*, Jewish Virtual Library, Date of Access: Mar 6, 2017.
- 107 Dov Tibbon, Immigration Statistics, *The American Jewish Year Book* 52, (1951), 397.
- 108 State of Israel, Statistical Abstract of Israel 2002, (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics) no.53 in Şule Toktaş, Turkey’s Jews and Their Immigration to Israel, *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.3, (May 2006,) 508.

The Intellectual Background

The Jew had no homeland. With each passing day he became more estranged from his former native land and memories of it became merely symbolic. Nature had denied him the gift to blend with other people, to assimilate. He continued to reject their religion, and resisted their customs, traditions and way of life. He was able to deceive his oppressors in everything, but not in his desire to be a Jew and to remain one. His charter was a lasting challenge of and manifestation against the “unclean” among whom he lived. He was a typical foreigner to them and remained one until today; and yes, his exclusive Judaism, as we shall demonstrate in what follows, shows itself even more today after his emancipation, than it did in earlier times.

–Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Judaism Over Germanism*

The problems that the Jewish community had to face in Turkey was neither unique nor were the basic components of its problems unprecedented. While Turkey struggled with its own issues, the rest of the world was playing similar or worse tunes. Long standing cultural, social, and political problems resurfaced, as ancien régimes disintegrated and new, nationalist states followed them. Doubtless, the transition was turbulent for everyone witnessed it. However, as discussed in detail by many researchers, the process of nationalization in the particular case of the Jews created especially incessant sorrows. Jews lost useful lands of the empires that had given them a range of motion in a multi cultural setting. With no state of their own to which to escape as a last resort they were left hopeless in rapidly homogenizing countries.¹

The Jewish Question arose under these circumstances, and discussion of the matter gradually spread. Some suggested that “The Jewish Question was indeed a Jewish question” and because of its narrow character did not necessarily attract interest from outsiders.² Although this approach had its own logic, the rich literature of the Jewish Question as far back as the eighteenth century actually suggests otherwise. Considering the massive movements at the time, it is to be expected that the matter could be altogether lost in the background if it really remained as a possession of only one, particular group.³ The Jewish Question occupied so many minds because it brought together unsolved, disorderly, and distinctly standing issues such as the definition of being a “true” citizen, exclusion from the society, otherness, the individual’s right of possession, and reliability of it. Where the Jewish Question was included, there was a crystallization of ongoing problems. Owing to this characteristic, the question had a broad, universal character, and because of that looking at any

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- 1 Enzo Traverso, *Yahudi Modernitesinin Sonu: Muhafazakâr Bir Dönüm Noktasının Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Ayrıntı, 2016), 16.
 - 2 Eugen Weber, *The Jews in Modern France*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), 8,16 in Ronald Schechter, “The Jewish Question in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no.1, Nationalism, 1998, 85.
 - 3 Ibid. 85-86. There are contradictory opinions about the origins of anti-Semitism. Some researchers claim that anti-Semitism existed even before Christianity. E.R Bevani suggested that anti-Semitism in literature began in the era of Ptolemies, a Hellenistic kingdom in Egypt dating to the third century BC. E. R. Bevani, *The Legacy of Israel*, (Oxford, 1972), 32 in Mark H. Gelber, “What Is Literary Antisemitism?” *Jewish Social Studies* 47, no.1, 1985, 1.

region in isolation misses the complex character of the subject. Bearing this in mind, the second chapter of this thesis looks into common discourses around the world on the Jewish Question and related matters. The discussion shows the common links between Turkey and the rest of the world regarding the subject. Labeling the major questions will allow the reader to clearly see and grasp the answers that *La Boz de Oriente* and the Jewish community in Turkey gave in response.

§ 3.1 Anti-Semitism

Any research that focuses on the intellectual and social developments in Jewish history in any part of the world one way or another must address the anti-Semitism issue. Anti-Semitism is possibly one of the largest and hardest challenges that the Jewish people have faced in history. The origins of hatred against Jews stretch back to early Christianity.⁴ One of the earliest and heaviest charges against Jews was that they were the murderer of Jesus Christ, a charge that spread to incoming generations through Bible verses claiming their responsibility.⁵ According to said verses, when Pontius Pilate asked about his wrong-doings, the crowd replied only: “Crucify him!” Pilate agreed with their desire to avoid a riot, but said that the responsibility was theirs alone.

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- 4 Recent works on the subject suggested that anti-Semitist opinions were already present at the Hellenistic-Roman period. Furthermore, certain views regarding the Jews, such as their wealth, exclusive communal ties or their otherness were widespread even in the earlier days. We took early Christianity as the point of emergence of anti-Semitism, considering that there were still doubts as to the extent of the active hatred towards Jews in Hellenistic-Roman period and whether anti-Semitism had a universal character at the time. Jerry L. Daniel, “Anti-Semitism in the Hellenistic-Roman Period”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98. no.1, 1979, 46-47 and H. I. Bell, “Anti-Semitism in Alexandria”, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 31, 1941, 2-5. The Jews and Muslim world had a different shared history. Although there was prejudice and visible practices of segregation vis-à-vis the Jews, the overall attitude could not be framed as anti-Semitism in the earlier periods of Islam. Bernard Lewis, “The New Anti-Semitism: First Religion, Then Race, Then What?”, *The American Scholar*, 75, no.1, 2006, 30.
- 5 Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Anti-Semitism: The Dark Side of the Church*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2.

They replied; “His blood be on us and on our children!”⁶ Hence, the responsibility of the Jews, included the past and future generations. St. Augustine assumed that the Jews did what they did because they failed to see the divinity of Jesus, which was milder than charging that they had led him to death out of envy, which was also suggested. The interpretation of the roots of their act was discussed and changed over time; the answer had to be re-organized to accommodate living side by side with Jews in the same society, a situation which arose repeatedly.⁷

The world, of course, did not stay in the same place for long. National, economic, and secular movements ultimately changed social structures. The hatred of Jews changed along the way as administrations that relied on religious doctrines transformed into more secular ones. The hatred of Jews altered over time and adapted to different societies. It abandoned religious justifications and turned to the racial ones.⁸ It began to be discussed under the term anti-Semitism in nineteenth century Germany after an anti-Semite, Wilhelm Marr, coined the term in his works.⁹ However, its origins in various societies still derived from similar questions that focusing on social, economic, and even daily aspects. It also gave rise to similar, devastating results.

As mentioned above, anti-Semitism has a fluid, adaptable character, that can be seen in various anti-Semitic movements that developed in different

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- 6 The Holy Bible (KJV), Matthew 27:23-24-25, (Cambridge: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1970), 1006-1007.
- 7 Jeremy Cohen, “The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, From Augustine to the Friars”, *Traditio* 39, 1983, 8-22.
- 8 While the roots of Anti-Semitism shifted, this did not mean that racial prejudice about the Jews did not feed off archaic enmity with a religious basis. Religious bigotry mixed with racial bigotry from time to time. The depiction of an Aryan Jesus perfectly exemplifies this odd mixture. Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*, (Leiden: Leiden, 2009), 2 Another scholar, Gudrun Krämer draws attention to the interaction between the European and Arab worlds with respect to anti-Semitic views, pointing out the dynamism of opinions and practices. Gudrun Krämer, “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World”, A Critical View, *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 46, Issue 3, (2006), 255-259.
- 9 Moshe Zimmerman, “Introduction” in *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), x.

parts of the world. Yet this variety does not mean there were no essential constants. Indeed, there are surprisingly many parallels among the anti-Semitismisms that fermented in different social atmospheres and ages. The narration of the common characteristics of the Jews, for instance, were interestingly similar. These collective defects of the Jews concentrated on few vital subjects related to government and society. The most common of these is the accusation of being an imperium in imperio.¹⁰

The Jews were generally accepted as the possessors of a hidden power, and the vulnerable place of Jews in society was generally justified by this thought. The Jews, according to this idea, had an established influence over the government. Because of that, equality among citizens had been spoiled from the beginning. As a result, the question could not be to give equal rights to the Jews, but instead to deprive them of those rights in order to restore the balance. In 1779, François Hell, an author of a pamphlet about French Jews, underscored this feared, obscure power of the Jews: “[The Jews are] a nation within the nation... a small powerful state.”¹¹ The threat of invisible sources participating administration process was exacerbating the fears. The invisibility was particularly offending, since it was perceived as an insidious attempt to take away society’s newly found power, this was especially meaningful for the newly democratic states.

The attention to the book *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Turkey might be seen as a local example. The protocols were first published by a Turkish newspaper, *Hareket*, which was directly related to the government (the editor

10 Anti-Semitic accusations were not only used knowingly to influence public opinion. These claims had real power over people such that even governmental channels had the dangerous tendency of believing them, which in turn created the possibility of their influencing world politics. Regarding the belief of a state in a state, the case of Sir Gerard Lowther (1858-1916), the British ambassador in Istanbul at the time, is an interesting example. Lowther had a strong belief regarding ties between the Young Turks and Freemasonry. According to him, the invisible government of Turkey was actually the freemasons. Elie Kedourie, “Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7, no.1, 1971.

11 François Hell, *Observations d'un Alsacien sur l'affaire presente des Juifs d'Alsace*, (1779), 66 in Ronald Schechter, “The Jewish Question in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no.1, Nationalism, (1998), 87.

was a member of the parliament). It was later presented in book form.¹² The translator was Sami Sabit Karaman (1877-1957), a military man who had retired after serving as a member of the Military Supreme Court. Karaman, in the preface, voiced similar beliefs and accusations with respect to the Jews. While talking about the inevitable rise of the Nazi forces in Europe, he suggested that how the sinuous powers of “the cashboxes of the world” conspired against these movements. These conspiring cashboxes of the world were the Jews, as the following sentences signaled: “We read from the newspapers that, in 1937, the Jewish Congress in Basel announced boycott towards Germans. The war started before we understood how this could affect the German economy.”¹³

Karaman was not denying the suffering of the Jews. He was aware of the pogroms or forced migrations, but added: “All these aside, the incidents affected the world greatly do not still under the secret influence of this stateless tribe more or less even today?”¹⁴ This echoed the eighteenth century’s fears. Like François Hell, Karaman was asserting a belief in secret power, but there was an important difference between the two. Despite rumors that Turkey’s government was actually governed by Jews, Karaman, unlike Hell, chose not to mention these conspiracy theories. Hell’s Jews were active agents in France. Karaman’s Jews had universal power, but their work in Turkey was an unknown or unmentioned matter. This careful approach might be a direct consequence of rumors being circulated at the time mostly by the supporters of the old regime. According to these rumors, the regime change in Turkey happened because of some secret agenda of crypto-Jews working for the benefit of international Jewry.¹⁵ Karaman was a soldier who was active in the republican years and naturally could not afford to open the door in these rumors. In

12 “Anti-Semitic Tide Rises in Turkey,” JTA, June 25, 1929.

13 Yahudi Tarihi ve Siyon Önderlerinin Protokolları, trans. By. Karaman, Sami Sabit Karaman, Ankara: Yeni Cezaevi Matbaası, 1943, 3.

14 Ibid. 4.

15 Marc David Baer, “An Enemy Old and New: The Dönme, Anti-Semitism, and Conspiracy Theories in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 103, no.4, 2013, 533-534.

the end, he settled on a warning to Turkish intellectuals about the obscure power of the world Jewry.

The protocols drew the attention of others in Turkey who had developed a taste for anti-Semitic ideas. Cevat Rifat Atilhan (1892-1967), an Istanbul-born writer with a fierce tendency towards anti-Semitism, was probably the most interesting among these. What was fascinating about Atilhan was his vulgar writing style that revealed shocking content with an utterly banal language. Doubtless, his devotion to banality made him a good candidate for covering popular anti-Semitic ideas without self-censorship.

Atilhan's protocols were not a translation, but more of an adaptation. The book even had a different name -*Secret State and the Evil Program*- and added chapters with a hyperbolic narrative. However, in essence Atilhan's claims were not far from Karaman's. Atilhan believed that "the Jew, more or less turns out to be the master of the world now." He ended the book with a warning: "Even if we [Turks] sleep; the enemy never sleeps. So, we have laid out for you their true identity and the perils that are to come."¹⁶ Atilhan gave the same warning and defended the same idea throughout his pages that Karaman did in just a few words in the preface of the previous version of the protocols.

Another related, general accusation about the Jews was the impossibility of their assimilation. The belief that Jews were a state within a state was also interpreted in this manner. According to Wilhelm Marr's thesis, in his book 1862 *Der Judenspiegel*, "the Jews are a state within a state and preserve their nationality by means of the ghetto, by means of religion alone, but they nevertheless want to have equal rights in a non-Jewish state."¹⁷ Marr was directing the same accusation at the Jews -being a state within a state- but he clearly meant something different. Without a doubt, where and when Marr delivered his thesis shaped his opinion. When Marr presented his thesis, he was aware that the Jews (with the aid of democrats) were trying to gain equal rights as their Gentile associates had in Bremen."¹⁸ This struggle to gain equal rights

16 Cevat Atilhan, *Gizli Devlet ve Fesat Programı*, (Gün Matbaası, 1955), 86-87.

17 The commentary about the thesis of Marr belongs to; *Zimmerman Moshe, The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 47.

18 *Ibid.* p.43.

probably led Marr from the assumption that Jews are secretly mighty to another assumption. Marr was aware of the vulnerable position of the Jews and he chose to use the expression, “state within a state”, to stress their indirect, secret power, but to assert their isolation from broader society. The whole point of this statement was to point out the unchangeable differences of the Jews and the impossibility of their assimilation. Because assimilation was viewed as key to integration into society and the creation of a peaceful country, this preconception was a clear invitation for even more problematic solutions.

Just as the thoughts on assimilation vary, the dilemmas created by its extension also shows variety. The assimilation question came to the fore in Turkey in a different way with the case of the crypto-Jews. Crypto-Jew was a term usually used for Sabbataists, a small body of people who accepted Sabbatai Sevi - a 17th century Rabbi - as the messiah, who later converted to Islam in light of the government and public view that Sevi was a false messiah. But actually they maintained their original belief.¹⁹ Crypto-Jews inspired fear because of their secret status, which created anxiety over their existence within the Turks. Rıza Nur, an important politician who attended the negotiations of the Lausanne Treaty, wrote; “The disastrous aspect of the situation is that they [the Crypto Jews] seem just like Turks. Greeks and Armenians are better than them; at least we know that they are Greeks and Armenians.”²⁰ They were a secret group who seemed to have assimilated and seamlessly adapted when actually they preserved another identity. They made real assimilation impossible because of their feigned assimilation. The secrecy of their existence also played into the shared fear of the obscure workings of the Jews and their secret powers over nations.

There were other, common accusations that were more concrete than being the possessors of secret power. The accuser in these cases could at least be sure of their claim within limits. Not joining the army belonged to this clearer area and was a wide spread claim. In 1946, Sartre mentioned this issue as part

19 Moşe Grosman, “Preface,” in Abraham Galante, *Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetaycılarının Gelenekleri*, (Istanbul: Zvi-Geyik Yayınları, 2000), 10.

20 Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım* 3, Istanbul: Altındağ Yayınevi, 1967, 1081 in Rifat Bali, *A Scapegoat for All Seasons: The Dönmes or Cypto-Jews of Turkey*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2008), 24.

of his anti-Semitist arguments: “They [the Jews] have committed no crime against France, nor in any way betrayed her. And if anyone asserts that he has proved that the proportion of Jewish soldiers in 1914 was lower than it should have been....”²¹

The low figures of Jews in the army was, indeed, a common topic in a common debate. Turkey was familiar with this argument; furthermore, it provided a practical instrument for Turkey. Portraying Jews with their unfamiliarity to the military was possibly providing a background for the failings of the adaptation of the Muslim Turks in the market. As mentioned in the first chapter, when Şevket Süreyya Aydemir explained the wealth Tax, he was addressing this exact issue. He attributed the success of the Jews in the market as a side effect of their abstinence from the military. On the other hand, Turks were heavily involved in military affairs and, accordingly, did not have enough time to find a footing in the market.²²

One of the most common accusation about the Jews was the degree of their devotion to wealth and earthly possessions. The caricature of the Jew as a wealthy banker, cruel moneylender, or ruthless merchant was not even new when Shakespeare was writing.²³ In Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock was hated for his Jewishness and endless greed for money, the key factors that defined him. Shakespeare (probably) wrote his play in 1596, yet incoming descriptions of Jews have not drifted much from his portrayal of Shylock.

Sartre’s anti-Semite allowed willingly the Jew to gain all the wealth he desired because Jewishness was enough of a fault to turn all possessions of him null: “Are not the Jews brokers of the nation? They are allowed to have all that intelligence or money can acquire: but the net result is unsubstantial as air.”²⁴ Sami Sabit Karaman’s sinuously powerful, cashbox Jews were dangerous. The

21 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, trans. by Erik De Mauny, (London:Secker & Warburg, 1948), 10.

22 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. *İkinci Adam 2*, (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1991), 235-236.

23 William Shakespeare, “Introduction” in *The Merchant of Venice*, (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 15.

24 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, trans. by Erik De Mauny, (London:Secker & Warburg, 1948), 20.

power and peril they had were directly related to their wealth. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's Jews had to pay for their untaxed, undeserved wealth since they did not fight enough for it. François Hell's Jew deceived the benevolent Christian with the offer of money.

Anti-Semitism was not something static to be contained inside country borders, nor did it desire containment. The identical character of the stereotypes signal the great mobility of the idea. The book *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* gives a clue about this mobility. The book was first published in Russia by Sergei Nilus in 1905, and before Turkey's encounter with the book in the 1940s it had already been translated into English, German, and Arabic.²⁵ till Turkey's encounter with the book in the 1940s, it already translated into English, German and Arabic. Once anti-Semitic literature appeared in a country, as in the case of the protocols, others would translate, copy, or adapt the original. The mechanisms that enabled this process was varied greatly. Foreign students who studied in Germany, for instance, later published these views in their own language. Barid al-Sharq, a journal that spread anti-Semitic views between 1939 and 1944 was an interesting example of this phenomenon. A former journalism student who studied in Germany published Barid al-Sharq. It was even sold in Spanish Morocco in addition to some European countries, and was circulated among exiles coming from Arab countries.²⁶ Another example regarding the intertwined sources was a Catholic journal published in Palestine, it issued the first Arabic translation of an anti-Semitic publishing, and translated the protocols in Arabic.²⁷ In Turkey, Sami Sabit Karaman translated the book from the French version. Another example of its circulation was in Cevat Rifat Atilhan's articles. In his periodical *Milli İnkılâp* (National

25 Avram Galanti, *İki Uydurma Eser: Siyon Önderlerinin Protokolları ve Beynelmilel Yahudi*, (Kağıt ve Basım İşleri: İstanbul, 1948), 6. Gudrun Krämer, "Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World, A Critical View," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series 46, Issue 3, (2006), 257.

26 Peter Wien, "The Culpability of Exile, Arabs in Nazi Germany," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 37, (Jul-Sep 2011), 339.

27 Gudrun Krämer, "Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World, A Critical View," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series 46, Issue 3, (2006), 257.

Revolution) Atilhan directly copied the content from German sources.²⁸ What's more, one of his books was translated back into German, feeding the original source.²⁹

Although anti-Semitic beliefs needed local agents to take root in new countries, these agents did not need to rely on local rumors about the Jews. In Turkey, Cevat Rifat Atilhan claimed the role himself, as mentioned above. Atilhan perfectly exemplified of how common anti-Semitic beliefs spread without needing local myths. Indeed, most of the non-fiction books Atilhan wrote focused heavily on the incidents that occurred beyond Turkey's borders. He felt no special need to concentrate on Turkey while narrating the horrors created by Jews. He saw no need to mention local cases when there was an already known, universal Jewish character that could be found in every Jew. From this perspective, incidents that occurred at the far corners of the world were equally credible, since Jewishness was an evenly distributed evilness more or less present in the same amount in every Jewish psyche.

Indeed, Atilhan's Jews were not flesh and bone people with a worldly passion for power and money. They were near mythological creatures that could sacrifice children to their God in a coldblooded fashion. In his book, *A Needle-Studded Barrel* Atilhan returned to ancient rumors about the murderous rituals of Jews. According to these allegations, Jews kidnapped and killed especially small children to use their blood for Passover rituals.³⁰ Similar blood libel accusations were already spreading in the Muslim world at the time.³¹ In

28 Atilhan reprinted caricatures originally published in a Nazi publication, *Der Stürmer*. Marc David Baer, "An Enemy Old and New: The Dönme, Anti-Semitism, and Conspiracy Theories in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 103, no.4, (2013), 536.

29 Rifat Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008), 61-72.

30 The myth of the human sacrificing Jew harkened back to Ancient Greece. J. Rives, "Human Sacrifice Among Pagans and Christians," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85, (1995), 70-72. The accusation of the ritualistic murders of Christians at the hands of Jews also had a long history. These rumors usually caused public upheaval and attacks on Jews. Robert Weinberg, "The Blood Libel in Eastern Europe," *Jewish History* 26, no.3/4, (2012).

31 "Blood Libel Attempt in Palestine: Arab Executive Organ Reports Alleged Kidnapping of Arab Children," *JTA*, March 3, 1931.

addition to horror stories originating in Europe, Atilhan took advantage of the rising trend and narrated incidents from nearby lands such as Damascus or Izmir. In a cheap thriller fashion, he recounted these supposed murders committed by Jews around the world in every age.³²

Curiously the shared flaws of the Jews were so widely accepted that even those who fought anti-Semitism seemed to accept them. Social activist and one of the early members of the NAACP, John Haynes Holmes (1895-1972) is representative of this complex stance.³³ In his writings, remarks on classical accusations with respect to typical Jewish traits were accepted but Holmes gave fair quarter when he wrote about these traditional faulties. The categorical separation between Jews and others was recognized, although there was a desire to do away these categories altogether.

According to Holmes, Jews were the victims of the cruelty of the Gentiles. They had no any meaningful agency because of this forced and unbalanced relationship; therefore, the obvious mistakes and infamous traits of the Jews were not be their fault.³⁴ In this vein, Holmes argued that

it is true, of course, that the miseries of Israel through the centuries before as well as after the Christian era have not always led to the development of these nobler qualities of soul. If the Jew is aggressive, cunning, unscrupulous, materialistic, worldly, it is largely because his Gentile persecutors have made him so.³⁵

This view, of course, did not work in favor of Jews in practice. On the contrary, treating Jews as if they had shared flaws, evoking ideas about other, exceptional Jews who did not possess these faulties, and suggesting self-criticism to

32 Cevat Rifat Atilhan, *İğneli Fıçt*, (Istanbul: Ahmed Said Matbaası, 1958).

33 The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909, by white liberals after race riots occurred in the country against black people. NAACP discussed ways of providing justice and equality for blacks and other minority groups in the United States.

34 John Haynes Holmes, *Through Gentile Eyes: A Plea for Tolerance and Good Will*, (NY: Jewish Opinion Publishing Corporation, 1938), 7.

35 *Ibid.*, p.10

the Jews in the middle of the pogroms and concentration camps. The Romanian-born writer Maurice Samuel (1895-1972) claimed that some Jews advocated a regeneration - a purification of manners - to stop anti-Semitism. According to them, once Jews abandoned criminal habits and undesired traits, the anti-Semitist wave would cease to exist.³⁶ Doubtless, this remark justified anti-Semitism or at least suggested that anti-Semitism was an inevitable result of the flaws of the Jews and fed existing biases.

Before leaving the issue of anti-Semitism, there is one other aspect we briefly bring into the discussion. Thus far, the authors mentioned generally referred to men when they were talking about the Jews. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the Jew in the anti-Semitic mind was man and a man only. Did anti-Semites think of Jewish women more benevolently or assume a difference between women and men? As far as we know, the answer is negative. Anti-Semitism sporadically touched on the issue of Jewish women, creating a wholly other portrait of her.

When discussing this portrait, Sartre mentioned well-known Jewish women characters in French literature and commented on the characterization of Jewish women: "There is a very special sexual signification in the words of - a beautiful Jewess -, one quite different from that contained in the words - Beautiful Greek - or - Beautiful American -. This phrase carries an aura of rape and massacre."³⁷ In Turkey, Jewish women were portrayed in daily periodicals as coquettish, slender girls with modern haircuts and high-heeled shoes.³⁸ Cevat Rifat Atilhan drew a portrait close to the remark of Sartre to describe her.

Atilhan was interested in Jewish women and he reserved a special place for her in his fictional works. These stories followed almost identical tracks

36 Maurice Samuel, *The Great Hatred*, (London:Victor Gollanz, 1943), 122.

37 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, translated by: George Becker, (NY: Shocken Books, 1995), 48-49

38 The portrayals of the Jewish women were not richly varied. As far as we know there were two typical characters: the young, beautiful women mentioned above and the older, hook-nosed, married one. Son Saat, Sep 26, 1929 and Karikatür, March 13, 1937 in Rifat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni 1923-1945*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), 220-279.

and had common themes. Jewish women from Atilhan's perspective had no moral compass but an ultimate goal. She was seductress, but not for the sake of carnal pleasure; she had an agenda. She was a faithful believer in Zionism and she fought for the interests of the Jews. In Atilhan's mind, the real danger was not the violation of etiquette by these women. Atilhan was not a moralist, but in fact a true anti-Semitist. His imagined Jewish women were dangerous not because they were immoral in a sexual way; she was immoral for the sake of treachery. The Jewish woman shared the deceitful character of the Jewish man. She had a hidden goal in her mind that she would not reveal until the end. The common fear was once again focused on the secret Jewish agenda.

Other than the common element of a hidden agenda, Atilhan's books *Suzi Liberman* and *Syria's Mata Hari Simi Simon* (also known as *The Spies on the Palestinian Front*) were different from his other stories. When writing about the Jewish men, Atilhan never considered looking at the aspect of sex. In a man's world, issues revolved around power, war, violence, and money. If women appeared in these stories, they were often there to play the role of the innocent victim of the bloodthirsty Jew.

These two books focused on Jewish women. While war and violence still existed in it, there was an added sexual dimension. These stories had identical cliché structures to the degree that they might be confused with one another. The main female characters of both *Suzi Liberman* and *Syria's Mata Hari Simi Simon*, for instance, were honey traps for military officers and acting remarkably similarly.

In these stories, Atilhan pictured Jewish women as young, beautiful spies who had no care for decency. His portrayals were colored with erotic imagery, locations, and language arranged to hint this suggestive atmosphere to the reader. In *Simi Simon* he wrote "Madame Sara was captured while sleeping in her home. When Turkish officers came upon the slightly older but still beautiful Jewish woman, they saw that she was sleeping and had a golden emblem

of Zionism on her pale neck.”³⁹ Or in *Suzi Liberman*: “The Jewish girl answered the question of the young officer with a rose-colored face and seductive body language.”⁴⁰

Atilhan’s language can be taken as the natural continuation of his taste for cheap thrillers. The Jewish women in these stories were the ultimate honey traps: they stole military information, set their lovers up, and cooperated with the enemy. In the last act, they acted in the same way as Jewish men. Atilhan’s portrayal of Jewish women reveals the inner working of his anti-Semitism. Any cliché offence assumed for any group of people (cowardice and miserliness for men, adultery for women, for fraud for mercenaries, for instance) was transforming into a greater sin after being distilled with the Jewish essence. The stories always ended up at the same conclusion: treason for the sake of a hidden agenda.

While fictional Jews, men and women alike, committed horrifying crimes openly or secretly, real Jews were occupied with the fallout of the fictional Jews’ sins and defects. The anti-Semitic writers seemed to think alike regardless of where they originally came from. The problems on which they focused were almost the same. The Jews, on the other hand, varied widely with respect to their answers to these attacks. Some believed that only natural thing to do was to found a Jewish state where Jews could be at ease among their brethren. Others refused the idea, believing that cosmopolitanism was vital for Jewish culture and that this was the more suitable option to continue the true spirit of Judaism. The work briefly looks at both of these views that rose to the surface as a result of anti-Semitism and became the key components that would long occupy the minds of Jews and others.

§ 3.2 Zionism and Palestine

David de Sola Pool (1885-1970), a London-born rabbi who later immigrated to the United States and became the Rabbi of the Congregation Shearith Israel in

39 Cevat Rifat Atilhan, *Filistin Cephesinde Yahudi Casusları: Suriyenin Mataharisi Simi Simon*, (Istanbul: Üstün Eserler Neşriyatı, 1947), 42.

40 Cevat Rifat Atilhan, *Suzi Liberman*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Türkiye Matbaası, 1935), 6.

New York City, wrote that “the whole expression of Judaism in the Torah is unintelligible without reference to Palestine.”⁴¹ According to him, Palestine was a place, with everlasting ties to the Jewish people; it was inalienable from the people to which it was promised. De Sola Pool took the returning journey to the Promised Land as the beginning of Jewish national history.⁴² The defining factor, for the Rabbi and others who thought alike was the land itself. And because of that, returning to Palestine was not a choice but an imperative.

In fact, De Sola Pool’s opinion about the land coincided with one popular movement. The idea of returning to the homeland was the central thought of the Zionist view. Zionism, at least as a named movement, was fairly new. The term was first used in 1892 by the Jewish nationalist Nathan Birnbaum (1864-1928).⁴³ The thoughts that shaped Zionism, on the other hand, were much older. The Zionist belief in the necessity of returning to the ancient homeland of the Jews had been expressed since the fifteenth century.⁴⁴ However, in a real sense, the movement only began after the French Revolution and the spreading of modern anti-Semitism.⁴⁵

With worldwide anti-Semitism, the first pogroms broke out in Russia in the nineteenth century. This was the first trigger of the process of the colonization of Palestine. The first settlement in the city was established in 1882. At the time Palestine was far from being the land of milk and honey; pioneers lived in dire conditions until Baron Edmond de Rothschild decided to help and sent subsidies to Palestine. The movement took shape only after the first conference of Zionist Organization realized in Basel in 1897.⁴⁶

41 David De Sola Pool, “The Jewish National Home: Palestine-Its Central Place in Jewish Life and Thought” in *The Jewish National Home 1917-1942*, ed. by Paul Goodman, (London: Temple Press Letchworth, 1943), 132.

42 Ibid. 133.

43 Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, (U.S: Holt, Rinehart and Watson, 1972), xiii.

44 Jacob Katz, *The Forerunners of Zionism in Essential Papers on Zionism*, (London: Cassel, 1996), 37.

45 Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, (U.S: Holt, Rinehart and Watson, 1972), xiii.

46 James Parkes, *The Emergence of the Jewish Problem 1878-1939*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1946), 4-5.

In the twentieth century, Palestine became a hub of constant migration; however, the process was still met with suspicion for quite some time. There were serious questions about the unfavorable condition of the land. Historically, Palestine was not perceived as attractive as it would later it become. According to the first president of Israel, Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), “a Jew returning to Palestine was looked upon as a sort of religious maniac.”⁴⁷

The religious belief which Weizmann referred -in the Promised Land -was an old part of Judaism.⁴⁸ But the realization and vital importance of it was for a long time generally limited to a marginal segment of the Jewish people. After the Zionist movement, twentieth century Jewish thinkers began to blend this narration with the nationalist movement. In 1922, American born philosopher Horace Mayer Kallen (1882-1974) wrote that “Zionism is simply today’s phase of the unyielding effort of the Jewish people to make good the Promise of the Promised Land.”⁴⁹ Entering to Palestine, being forced to leave it, and returning to it were the corner-stones of the Jewish narrative these were the key thoughts that could not be cast aside.⁵⁰

Still, hesitation about Zionism and Palestine were common. While the Zionist movement began to flourish, some writers approached the issue of the land in a more practical way. They foresaw a danger in obtaining a small state among powerful neighbors. In 1897, Achad Ha-Am(1856-1927), a Ukrainian-born Zionist thinker, wrote about what he saw as flaws in the future Jewish state:

After two thousand years of untold misery and suffering, the Jewish people cannot possibly be content with attaining at last to the position of a small and insignificant nation, with a state tossed about like a ball

47 Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, (Great Britain: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), 315.

48 Bible mentioned the Promised Lands in Exodus 6:8 as: “And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.” The Holy Bible (KJV), (Michigan: Zondervan, 2010).

49 Horace Meyer Kallen, *Zionism and World Politics: A Study in History and Social Psychology*, (NY: Daoubleday, Page & Company, 1922) 6.

50 Ibid. 7.

between its powerful neighbors, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favored fortune.⁵¹

Ha-Am's criticism of Zionism was limited to practical aspects. According to him, the assimilation of the Jews had created a degree of spiritual degradation, to which Zionism might actually be the solution. After all, Zionism did not solely consist of the idea of returning to the homeland. It, in essence, aimed for the emancipation of the Jews. The true agenda of Zionism was to free the Jews from their inner slavery which was only possible through national unity. Consequentially, Ha-Am was not opposed to the creation of a Jewish state. Rather, he was being practical and realistic when he stated the problems of the future homeland. Even if the Jews managed to survive economically in such arid lands, the Jewish state could not accept all the Jews, Ha-Am suggested. There would always be ones scattered all around the world.⁵²

Ha-Am was criticizing Zionism because of its limited structure. He argued that the Jews had to rely on a different basis than land, a basis that the Jews carried with them for centuries when they did not have even an acre of a land for themselves. Ha-Am was talking about religion, culture, and their greater importance. In the words of the Ludwig Lewisohn: "In the first half of the millennium of the Christian era, amid darkness, confusion, the conflict of creeds and the downfall of classical civilization, the Jews learned the lesson of being a nation by the force of the spirit alone, by cleaving to an idea, a tradition, a faith."⁵³ Ha-Am and like-minded thinkers, evoked these essential bases under Jewish existence and took them as a priority. Obtaining land was not of equal significance and was definitely not without problems.

Others shared the sentiments of Ha-Am and Lewisohn. David Fresco, an Istanbul-born journalist and prominent figure in the Jewish community, had similar views about Judaism and its universal character. However, his position on attaching the land to the issue of Zionism was absolute. He had no doubts

51 Achad Ha-am, "The First Zionist Congress" in *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. by Leon Simon, (London:George Routledge & Sons, 1922), 26

52 Achad Ha-am, "The Jewish State and The Jewish Problem" in *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, translated by Leon Simon, (London:George Routledge & Sons, 1922), 38.

53 Ludwig Lewisohn, *Israel*, (NY:Boni & Liveright, 1925), 32.

on the issue and did not discuss it as Ha-Am had in his articles. Indeed, Fresco was opposed to the idea and saw no benefit. In 1909, he wrote clearly: “By making the possession of a land intimately attached to the religious faith, Zionism, it seems to me, does the gravest insult towards Judaism.”⁵⁴ Fresco argued that the attachment of land to was a regression for the Jewish religion; this attachment to land signaled a more primitive phase of the Jewish religion. Territorial possession was an obstacle -an aspect of the past that hindered the future development of Judaism. Fresco believed that the Jewish religion was developing a more universal character which was free from territorial boundaries and was humanitarian in its essence.⁵⁵

Fresco gave the examples of other monotheist religions and stated they did not depend on finite territories. He wrote, “Christianity and Islam never tolerate being religions of race and nation. These religions maintain the idea that they belong to the Humanity as a whole.”⁵⁶ Fresco believed that geography was trivial in the face of a greater scheme of the religion. For him, territory was an accidental feature, whereas the predetermined role of the Jewish people on the world stage was sacred and deliberately and gradually manifested in the long course of history.⁵⁷

In Ha-Am’s articles, the land was perceived as an insufficient solution. A Jewish land could be established but could not be asserted as the complete answer to the problems with which the Jewish world was faced. Fresco, on the other hand, argued that belief and the desire for the land were directly contradictory –that attachment to the land was harming the essence of Judaism. To him, Zionism was leading Jews away from their mission in this world. He expressed this fear in following words:

54 “Le sionisme me sembe faire au Judaism l’insulte la plus grave en essayant de faire corire que la foi religieuse est intimement attachee a la possession d’un lot de terre.” David Fresco, *Le Sionisme*, (Constantinople: Impremiere Fresco, 1909), 22.

55 Ibid 22.

56 Ibid. 23.

57 Ibid. 16.

It seems to me Zionism today wants to pull the torch from the hands of the Israelite people. It says to him: Cease the mission of being a preceptor of the people. For more than two thousand years, you have not been able to do anything with your work and you will not be able to do anything in the future.⁵⁸

Fresco perceived Zionism as a dangerous deviation; it had a limited nature that sought an isolated place for the Jewish people. The Zionists perceived this as a necessity. Albert Hyamson, for instance, saw the issue in a positive light. "Being a Jew in Palestine was different from being a Jew in England or elsewhere, in Palestine the Jew was the norm, where in other places he/she was only an exception."⁵⁹ Henry Mendes Pereira (1852-1937), an American-born Rabbi, on the other hand, asserted that Palestine was necessary not because Jews could not blend in in other countries, but because they were fundamentally different from the others.

He [the Jew] became a model citizen as soon as citizenship was granted to him.... He sheds his blood in the ranks of his country's soldiery; he helps to build that country's commercial prosperity and scientific honor.... But still he is always a Jew; there is something, which keeps him so. His religion, his spiritual pabulum, his ideals, all seem to be different from those of his fellow-citizens.⁶⁰

Both Hyamson and Pereira were thinking the Jew as an immiscible in essence; consequently, this separate element needed its own separate place. Fresco, on the other hand, considered this idea as the undoing of the precious work that had been done in the past by those who carried Judaism and Jewish culture within themselves to the far corners of the world.

58 "Le Sionisme de nos jours me semble vouloir arracher ce flambeau des mains du peuple israélite. Il a l'air de lui dire: Cesse la mission de précepteur des peuples. Tu n'as pu rien faire avec ton travail de plus de deux mille ans et tu ne pourras rien faire dans l'avenir." Ibid. 21-22.

59 Albert M. Hyamson "The New Palestine" in *Zionism, Problems and Views*, ed. by Paul Goodman and Arthur Lewis, (London: T Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1916), 145.

60 Henry Mendes Pereira, "Zionism," *The North American Review* 167, no.501, (Aug 1898), 200.

Fresco was not alone; there were others in Turkey who did not favor Zionism. Thessalonica-born, Turkish philosopher Munis Tekinalp (also known as Moiz Kohen, 1883-1961) did not reject the idea of Jewish migration to Palestine, nevertheless, he was considering the realization of this process under Ottoman Rule. Kohen did not approve of the foundation of a Jewish state since that would spell the end of Ottoman rule over the land.⁶¹ In a way, Tekinalp's position was similar to that of another Jewish thinker, Bodrum-born Abraham Galante (1873-1961). Galante criticized Herzl's Zionism. Furthermore, he defended the idea that "every Jew had to be loyal to the host country." Accordingly, when Istanbul was occupied by Allied powers, Galante refused to welcome foreign troops. His approach to the issue continued under the new regime: Jews must remain loyal to the countries into which they had settled.⁶² Consequently, Galante focused on internal issues rather than seriously considering Zionism and or the foundation of a Jewish state. Tekinalp similarly argued that if the Jews needed a homeland, Ottoman lands could be their home.⁶³

This mode of critical thinking regards to Zionism was not new in Turkey. Chief Rabbi Nahum's approach, to the Jewish state, for instance, was similar.

The Jewish people, thousands of years after the destruction of their political existence, had no cause to review a Jewish state. The Jews should unconditionally consider themselves as nationals of the states in which they are domiciled and endeavor to identify themselves with their countries' interests. This was the basic principle of Ottoman-Jewish policy.⁶⁴

61 Moiz Kohen, Ebüzziya Tefik Bey'e, *Yeni Tasvîr-i Efkâr* 155, (November 1909), 1-2, in Rifat Bali, *Bir Günah Keçisi: Munis Tekinalp*, 2, (Istanbul: Libra, 2012), 82-83.

62 Albert Kalderon, *Abraham Galante: A Biography*, (NY: Sephardic House, 1983), 47-49.

63 Jacob M. Landau, *Tekinalp: Bir Türk Yurtseveri (1883-1961)*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 1996), 92.

64 Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism: 1897-1918*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1977), 292.

The criticism of Zionism frequently came from prior national ties that Jews possessed, as in the case of Turkish Jews.⁶⁵ The Jewish people had lived around the world for ages when there was not even a word about a future Jewish state. They grew accustomed to the culture of the countries they settled and they carried their own culture to those lands. These reciprocal and culturally-rich ties ingrained themselves within Jewish culture. Many objected to Zionism because of the current state of politics in their current homelands, but others genuinely feared that the unique essence of it would be harmed and the work of the diaspora would be lost under the influence of Zionism.

§ 3.3 Diaspora and Cosmopolitanism

The loss of national independence was perceived by many as the origin of the sufferings of the Jewish people. The idea that Jews underwent a constant social segregation in every society in which they lived since the day that the Jews had lost their national independence was common.⁶⁶ David de Sola Pool's remarks complimentary: only after the Jewish tribes of past consolidated their tenure of the land did they gain the opportunity to freely develop their own social and spiritual production.⁶⁷ This particular, shared belief inevitably led to a particular conclusion: gaining freedom would only be possible again with the formation of a Jewish state. However, there were different approaches. Abram

65 Emmanuel Berl, a journalist born in France, expressed the power of his national ties in a book in 1925, which caused estrangement from his Jewish origins. "I was perfectly happy to marry a young girl who was not Jewish. I abhor Zionism. I do not even understand this problem, considering myself as I do: a Frenchman and a man...My memory, in any case, does not extend further back than France." In Emmanuel Berl, *Méditation sur un amour défunt*, (Paris: Grasset, 1925,138-139), in Lothar Kahn, *Mirrors of the Jewish Mind*, US: Thomas Yoseloff, 53.

66 S. Abram Isaacs, *What is Judaism?*, (NY: The Knickerbocker Press, 1912), 2.

67 David De Sola Pool, "The Jewish National Home: Palestine-Its Central Place in Jewish Life and Thought in The Jewish National Home 1917-1942," ed. by. Paul Goodman, (London: Temple Press Letchworth, 1943), 133.

Isaacs (1851-1920), an American-born rabbi and professor at New York University, approached the issue differently.⁶⁸ The key, he suggested, was a particular characteristic of the Jewish people possess: cosmopolitanism.

Indeed, after commenting on the prevailing ignorance of Judaism and the Jew, Isaacs defined their prominent characteristics, to show the essential features that truly make a Jew. Cosmopolitanism, of course, was one of the traits that found a place on this list. "Because Judaism is so broad and progressive, adapting itself to each new environment, the Jew has survived and his original Semitism has developed into a cosmopolitanism that makes him a citizen of every land which assures him civil and religious liberty".⁶⁹ Isaacs even stated that the real history of Judaism began when Jews were forced to make the world their home, unlike in early days in which they lived in Palestine.⁷⁰ Isaacs was reversing the Zionist belief. While Zionists associate Palestine with the beginning of Jewish history, Isaacs took the starting point as Exodus –the away journey from home-. Unlike the suggestion that Palestine was the center of Jewish identity, Isaacs made cosmopolitanism the centre of the Jewish experience.

Another critical issue is hidden in the aforementioned sentence of Isaacs, considering the existence of a condition for the realization of the citizenship of the Jew –namely, acceptance from the country in which they had decided to live. Cosmopolitanism could only work in places where Jews were granted rights so that their identity could survive. Isaacs was aware of this issue, but still did not suggest the creation of a material homeland for the Jews in his book. Rather, he foresaw that a universal foundation was in the process of being laid that could bring together different groups of people and give them a space without compelling them to assimilate. This foundation relied on universal human virtues such as honesty and purity.⁷¹ With this foundation, the Jews could remain where they had already taken root.

68 S. Abram Isaacs, *What is Judaism?*, (NY: The Knickerbocker Press, 1912).

69 Ibid. 164.

70 Ibid. p.165. Abram also stated that "in losing Palestine, he gained the universe." S. Abram Isaacs, Ibid. 68.

71 S. Abram Isaacs, *What is Judaism?*, (NY: The Knickerbocker Press, 1912), 205.

In 1909, David Fresco expressed the same belief when writing about the universal values that had left Judaism to survive for ages.

The marvelous, vital force of the Jewish Doctrine - the reason that this doctrine succeeded in sprouting in antiquity and continues to seduce the people of today is: the passionate love of justice and peace that Israel has always manifested during its long existence, and the preponderant role it plays in modern times among civilized nations.⁷²

Fresco did not believe that Jews had to acquire a certain land to thrive or survive. In the past, they proved that the contrary was possible. Furthermore, Fresco believed that the Jews were predestined to accomplish a sacred mission in the world.⁷³ This mission could not be continued while leaving the lands where other cultures remained. Accordingly, the cosmopolitan character of the Jews was not only part of Jewish tradition and past, but the future was also shaped by this specific feature.

Thorstein Veblen, a prominent American-born economist, wrote about this particular approach. Believing that Zionism would violate the conditions of the creative force that caused the critical thinking of the Jewish people, Veblen addressed the particular factors that created their inquiring mind. Veblen stated that the Jewish community had an outstanding intellectual heritage by the virtue of their mixed heritage and cosmopolitan existence. This mix ground, according to Veblen, provided variation, and created diversity in the range of endowments of the Jewish people; -providing them the flexibility to overcome various difficulties. Even more interestingly, Veblen thought of the diaspora as a condition for the creativeness of the gifted Jew. Only after the Jew was compelled to leave the binding ties of national allegiance and was drawn away from that familiar environment could he become a vanguard of

72 “La merveilleuse force de vitalité de la Doctrine juive, le fait que cette doctrine a réussi à se réprendre dans l’antiquité et continue toujours à se reprendre parmi les peuples d’aujourd’hui; l’amour passionné de justice et de paix qu’Israel a toujours manifesté durant sa longue existence, le rôle prépondérant qu’il joue dans les temps modernes, parmi les nations civilisées.” David Fresco, *Le Sionisme*, (Constantinople: Impremiere Fresco, 1909), 15.

73 Ibid. 15.

himself. The inquiring mind of the Jew depended on his particular status, and his success in science hinged on this condition.⁷⁴ Zionism and its territorial character was a danger to this process.



74 Thorstein Veblen, "The Intellectual Pre-Eminence of Jews in Modern Europe," *Political Science Quarterly* 34, no.1, (March 1919), 36-38.

La Boz de Oriente/La Boz de Türkiye and Its Messages to Existential Question

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if not now, when?

–Hillel the Elder, Pirkei Avot 1:14

L*a Boz de Oriente* came to life in 1931 when anti-Semitism was much alive. It entered a heated atmosphere where discussions of Zionism and the diaspora were circulating the world in search of a solution to relieve the Jews of their absolute distress. It would be a stretch to claim that *La Boz de Oriente* had a clear, unequivocal voice regarding these debates. What *La Boz de Oriente* and later *La Boz de Türkiye* (published in 1939 as a continuation of the former) did was to create a channel that fed on the Jewish writers and thinkers of Turkey, inevitably revealing certain thoughts they had regarding particular topics.

The journals originally intended to focus on local issues. Their aim regarding the wider world was supposedly limited to spreading the word of Turkish Jewry's prosperity and peace. Indeed, *La Boz de Türkiye* announced in its first issue that its mission was to publish the evidence of the loyalty of Turkey's Jewry to the homeland and to introduce its culture in a genuine way. After this

statement of its main goal, it added its dedication to promoting the community's favorable situation in Turkey to the world.¹

There is no reason to doubt the honesty of *La Boz de Türkiye*'s claim. The journal was designed to ease the cultural transformation of the Jews and to provide counter-proof of the doubts presented in the international press regarding the community's situation in Turkey. Both reasons were linked to Turkey's attitude towards the community. From its early days, the government announced that the relationship between Turkey and its Jewish citizens depended on one condition: loyalty. According to the government, if Jews were faithful to the new regime in Turkey, they would be embraced in return.² Consequently, from the early days of the republic, a tendency developed within the community of proving that Jews were indeed faithful to the government and its policies.

A journal was a convenient medium for a soft transition process, and it was easy to present it later as material proof of the community's good intentions. This logic influenced the editorial direction of *La Boz de Oriente*. However, the journal did not remain limited to this agenda, though it gave significant space for these kinds of articles and news, it developed a distinct style. Either *La Boz de Oriente* nor *La Boz de Türkiye* were confined to playing the role of blunt instruments of the government. First, the government was not overly concerned with their existence even if, doubtless, *La Boz de Oriente* was under governmental pressure and subject to inspection like other publications. It was anyway a problematic time for the press in Turkey. In 1925 the Law for the Maintenance of Order (Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu) went into effect. Following this development, several newspapers were closed and the journalists that had worked for these papers were severely punished. This process had already created fear among journalists. The government took a stern approach towards the freedom of expression. In this atmosphere the papers that remained quickly entered the government's orbit.³ Yet *La Boz de Oriente* targeted a marginal audience who spoke Ladino, and probably because of that it had slightly more freedom than other, mainstream journals.

1 Naim A. Güleriyüz, *Türk Yahudi Basını Tarihi: Süreli Yayınlar*, (Istanbul: Gözlem, 2015), 90.

2 "Kemal Would Embrace Faithful Jews", JTA, Feb 8, 1923.

3 Hıfzı Topuz, *100 Soruda Türk Basını Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1973), 138-148.

What did this slight freedom really mean for these journals? First, *La Boz de Oriente* was subject to the same laws. With the Press Law of 1931, the government ensured its right to close any newspaper or magazine whenever necessary.⁴ *La Boz de Oriente* was aware of the vulnerable status of the press. Moreover, it can be suggested that there was extra pressure on the journal because of its status as a minority paper. However, this same status also gave them a space apart from the mainstream media and the prying eyes of critics. We argue that both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* had a range of liberty that could be used only in a certain form, and they used this liberty to build the structure and content of the journal.

§ 4.1 The Fixed Structure of *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* and the Possible Reasons Behind the Choice of the Composition of the Journals

The content of *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* was highly stable. Following the journals over the years would have been a steady experience for their readers. The pages of the publications were characterized by a few fixed, persistent subjects. These unchanging topics remained such for two reasons. First, these fixed topics were highly important for the journals and there was a certain, persistent need to express them. Second, this settled mode of writing gave the sensation of safety. As it was noted before Turkey was experiencing a tumultuous atmosphere at the time, it can be assumed that bringing something new to the public would have created stress for the writers. Fixed content meant that the topics had already passed through the trial and error phase and had not caused fatal problems for the journals, proving that the content was publishable.

Thus, the space in *La Boz de Oriente* was reserved for a few recurring topics. Among these were charity campaigns, information about various Jewish communities living in different parts of the world, the Palestine issue, and myths about the ancient history of the Jewish people. If these topics were only seldom found in the paper, it would be unnecessary to discuss them. However,

4 Ibid.150.

these subjects appeared in almost every issue for nearly twenty years. These articles were the journal's way of entering the heated debates that mentioned above. Doing so in an obvious way was near impossible because of the tense political atmosphere in Turkey, but it was possible in a subtle way and, of course, in Ladino. In the following pages, the study focuses on these particular topics to which *La Boz de Oriente* chose to stick and tries to explain what they added to the existing discussions.

§ 4.2 The Safeguard of the Journals

As mentioned above, the journals designed a system to secure their position in an atmosphere in which the press was strictly and continuously inspected. Another part of this protective system was the carefully distributed pro-government content in the journal. Both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* devotedly followed official holidays and this is an example of censored content.⁵ The anniversary of Atatürk's death and the birthday of İsmet İnönü, for instance, were unfailingly covered in the journals.⁶ Whether regarding the introduction of *Halkevleri* and their cause or the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the republic the journals' position was supportive.⁷ Such articles were neither tepid in language nor written out of custom; they were useful instruments indicating the community's faith in Turkey and its present government.

5 The celebration of 19 May, "Youth and Sports Day" holiday, occupied the first page in 1937. Albert Cohen, "El Glorioso Aniversario del 19 Mayo: Fiesta de Sport y de la Joventud," *La Boz de Oriente*, (Jun 1937), Head-page.

6 "Gitti," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (November 15, 1947), Cover.

7 People's Houses were established in 1932, for the enlightenment of the people. Their various branches of interest offered intellectual and physical development. They also had a branch related to language and literature, in which *La Boz de Oriente* was interested. Kemal H. Karpat, "The People's Houses in Turkey: Establishment and Growth," *Middle East Journal* 17, (Winter-Spring 1963), 59-60. "Para Una Mejor Cohesion Nacional: La Ovrá de los Halkevleri," *La Boz de Türkiye*, May 1937, 32. "Cumhuriyetin 25nci Yıldönümünü Kutlarken," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (November 1, 1948), Head-page.

While narrating the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, for instance, *La Boz de Türkiye* added that on the second day of the celebration, the community prayed for the prosperity of Turkey and for the protection of the precious life of İsmet İnönü. The same issue of the journal set aside its front page for congratulations on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.⁸ Furthermore, the journal time to time chose to write more clearly on its political side. In 1944, the journal clearly defined its political stance and goal: “We will work to develop the prosperity and light that the reformist group has brought to our country; we will be a factor of progress.”⁹ Such articles and statements occupied an important space and made a statement that was apparent even at first glance. The journals were offering explicit proof of the community’s support of the government. Doubtless, it can be said that these pro-government articles were written for their own sake and produced as a direct reflection of the political views that both journals shared. Furthermore, there is no clear proof that the journals harbored overtly opposing views. Indeed, both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* were clearly aware of and criticized the worsening situation of the community. Their pages were full of the problems that Jews suffered both in their own country and in foreign countries. They were also aware that some of these issues were rooted in the administration. So it seems logical that the journal developed a self-defense mechanism and chose to tell relate the problems of the community only after persistently declaring its loyalty to the government first.

§ 4.3 Time As a Determining Factor in *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye*

Before looking at the recurring topics in *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye*, we must point out a specific feature of them to understand the overall

8 “O!” and “Las Fiestas de Roch Hachana y de Yom Kippur en Nuestra Comunidad,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (October 1, 1944), 71-74.

9 Yaakov Beja, “Bir Yıl Daha,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (August 15, 1944), 3.

organization of the journals. Every topic that appeared in these journals generally fell into one of the following categories: the past, present, or future. The Palestinian issue, for instance, fell into the last category, while calls for charity and articles on Jewish communities of the world belonged to the second. Myths and religious narratives, on the other hand, were in the first category. Doubtless, the division among these categories was not absolute. While ancient myths were obviously the subject of the past, they were also closely related to the current issues and thoughts. Similarly, in the journals Palestine mostly symbolized the potential future of the Jews, yet it was also a developing issue and had to be discussed as such. Interestingly, all these categories - past, present, and future have a deliberate function that contributed to the journal's narrative.

The topics following into these different categories were telling a separate story that only become apparent when looked at as a whole. Accordingly, the study investigates these topics in chronological order and places them in a broader frame to understand what they suggest.

§ 4.4 The Past: The Myths/Ancient History of the Jewish People

La Boz de Oriente and *La Boz de Türkiye* devoted a fair amount of space to narrating the ancient history of the Jewish people. These pages usually were about the important holidays for the Jewish people such as Passover or Hanukkah.¹⁰ In narrating the background of these holidays, the journal was constructing a Jewish national history. Doubtless, these types of national constructions were common among other nationalist movements.¹¹ As they began to imagine their own national homeland, Jews, like many others, started

10 Hanukkah is the Jewish holiday that celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. In the second century BCE, a small unit of Jews led by Judah the Maccabee, a Jewish priest and leader of the revolt against the Greco-Syrian Empire, defeated the Greek army and reclaimed the Holy Temple. It is also known as the "festival of lights." Passover, or the festival of liberation, celebrates the emancipation of the Jews from slavery in ancient Egypt.

11 Benedict Anderson, "Ulusal Bilincin Kökenleri" in *Hayali Cemaatler: Milliyetçiliğin Kökenleri ve Yayılması*, (Istanbul: Metis, 2004), 52-62. Eric Hobsbawm's words regarding commonness

to build their own narrations as a foundation for the development of Jewish nationalism.¹² In the process, ancient religious texts like *Sefer Josippon* were commonly used. *Sefer Josippon* was written in the tenth century and narrated the history of ancient Israel up to the destruction of the Second Temple. The text was part of collective Jewish memory and was later used in the nineteenth century to awaken national pride among Jews all around the world.¹³

La Boz de Oriente and *La Boz de Türkiye* carried ideas that had already begun to expand with the help of texts such as *Sefer Josippon*. The journals, for instance, reminded readers that Hanukkah was not just a religious celebration but nationalist in character.¹⁴ With this, the journal transmitted the message that Jewish nationalism and the military heroism of the Jews were now on the agenda in Turkey. *La Boz de Türkiye* both informed its followers of what was going on in the intellectual wing of the community and encouraged its followers by showing them that these were valid topics of discussion. In 1947, the journal wrote that “speeches and lectures were delivered with great enthusiasm by some young intellectuals who made evident the national character of Hanukkah. According to them, Hanukkah illustrated Jewish patriotism and the heroism of the Maccabees regarding the salvation of the faith and Israel.”¹⁵

of this practice can be enlightening: “We should not be misled by a curious, but understandable, paradox: modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so ‘natural’ as to require no definition other than self-assertion. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 14.

12 These narrations helped to construct Jewish nationalism that appeared in the journals showed a great deal of repetition. Which is, in fact, a common trait among those of the nationalist narration. Umut Özkırımlı notes that this repetitiveness kept nationalism alive can also be provided by many different things including songs and dances. Umut Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, (Ankara: Doğu Batı 2008), 243.

13 Steven Bowman, “Yosippon and Jewish Nationalism,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 61, 1995, 23-51.

14 Ben Guerchon, “La Fiesta de Hanouca en Nuestra Comunidad,” *La boz de Türkiye*, January 15 1947, 145.

15 Ibid.

La Boz de Oriente clearly sensed this process of construction regarding the Jewish history. In 1938, for instance, the journal stated the importance of Passover as follows: “This celebration symbolizes our hopes and fidelity towards teaching our history.”¹⁶ The journal specifically stressed the quality of continuity as in an article entitled “Pessah” - “this book, Haggadah, is the legacy of our fathers and the fathers of our fathers, and we bring it to recite the Exodus of Egypt.”¹⁷ Just as in the article “Hanouca” - “these pages of history have been repeated from generations to generations and the eight lights of Hanouca continue for two thousand years.”¹⁸

As it can be seen from these passages, time was something all Jews shared with their ancestors. This particular perception regarding the continuity of time was clearly beneficial for creating a national history. As nationalism began to gain importance, the religious festivals and ancient stories started to be referred with their nationalist aspect.

This feast [Hanukkah] is, in addition to its national character, also a religious feast. It is endowed with all the Jewish and liberal ceremonies. It is an evocation that manifests itself in the observance of certain rites and traditions for some and for others with commemorative ceremonies in which the glorious events of the history of Israel become the object of conferences and talks.¹⁹

The narration of continuity was also important for other purposes. The mythical past presented a basis on which comparisons could be made. The perception of consistent time provided a useful tool to turn the current problematic atmosphere into part of a long story.

16 “Pessah,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (April 1938).

17 Haggadah is a Jewish text that retells the story of the exodus from Egypt. The text also provides a guide for the arrangement of the Passover Seder, a Jewish ritual feast that commences Passover. “Pessah,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (April 1938).

18 Avi Mah, “Hanouca,” *La Boz de Oriente*, December 1936, 153-154.

19 “La Fiesta de Hanouca,” *La Boz de Oriente*, December (13, 1934).

In our day, the fate of the Jews of Central Europe and some of Eastern Europe is more tragic than ever. In countries that are supposedly civilized, our coreligionists are deprived of the most elementary rights of man. The treatment imposed on Jews in those countries is even less supportable -more inhuman in character- than the servitude of Egypt.²⁰

A similar approach, drawing parallels between the ancient past and the modern day, can be seen in the article "Pourim" which was published in *La Boz de Oriente* in 1936.²¹ The journal wrote about the origins of the celebration of Purim -about how Jews in ancient Persia managed to escape total annihilation. While narrating the story, *La Boz de Oriente* drew parallels between the Jew-hater Haman, who tried to kill the Jews in the ancient Persian Empire, and modern anti-Semites repeating the same lies and accusations.²² The same article also questioned whether there were similarities between the Jewish hero Mordecai who saved the Jews from the ill-willed plans of Haman and modern Jews. "Is the modern Jew as equally a Jew as Mordecai? He had a strong desire for the solidarity of Israel."²³

There were reasons behind these comparisons other than just creating an intellectual base for the continuity of the Jewish nation. Given this link between past and present, the dolorous, bleak present can be perceived as just an act in the middle of a longer play. If this continuity was really the case, then these horrible developments were clearly not the end considering that the expected end -the realization of the Promised Land- had yet to occur. This type of narration that the journal chose to adopt is thus more understandable. This approach had the potential to give more hope to readers than the crude, isolated, and seemingly endless news of horrible incidents regarding world Jewry.

20 "Pessah," *La Boz de Oriente*, (April 1938), no. 2 (50)

21 Purim is a festival that commemorates the salvation of the Jews from total annihilation in ancient Persia. The story of how the Jews escaped from the hands of Haman, the grand vizier of the king, is told in the biblical book; the book of Esther.

22 "Pourim," *La Boz de Oriente*, (March 1936), 1.

23 Ibid. 1.

To understand these articles that recurrently stressed this continuity, we need to stress that the ancestral land of Israel was linked to modern Jews through these continuous historical ties. Accordingly, both journals had great interest in Palestine and devoted significant space to the Palestine Issue in their pages. As mentioned above, the process of the foundation of the Jewish state had already begun, and the journals were building the historical background while bringing Palestine forward. Without the links to the past that the journals were narrating, the future in Palestine would not have the same meaning.

§ 4.5 The Present: Current Problems of the Community

The problems of the community gradually grew in the period that the journals were operating. As mentioned in the first chapter, the government forced a change in the organization of the Chief Rabbinate. The new system strictly limited the power of the Rabbinate with respect to issues related to religion. This process generated a secular wing in addition to the traditional post, to deal with the community's civil issues.²⁴ However, this new system faced serious, practical problems. In 1936, *La Boz de Oriente* expressed complaints regarding the changing structure of the Chief Rabbinate and the community schools. There were severe alterations to the community's institutions and no solution was in sight:

For a few years, a malaise subsists in the heart of our community... There must be a nefarious plan for our community, one that paralyzes all its movements. No new work has come to characterize our communal administration for many years. The position of the Chief Rabbinate remains null; no measure has been taken regarding the deterioration of education; the work of arts and crafts that could be salvation for our young men remains lacking. The same stormy and destructive wind

24 Rifat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni 1923-1945*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), 89-94.

blows on all the communities: Galata, Pera, Şişli. In each place, disorganization, disintegration, decadence, and ruin are manifest.²⁵

La Boz de Oriente did not lay the burden on the government, not because the journal's perspective was impaired but because it was criticizing the only party it could. *La Boz de Oriente* felt betrayed by the community's leadership and it stated this disappointment clearly:

If an administration cannot gather its strength for the interest of the people who created its own being or cannot manage to not leave those people in ignorance, then it cannot govern and lead that population successfully.²⁶

The journal urged the administration to take action to prevent the demise of the community. In 1936, it wrote about the revival of the Jewish community in Alexandria. According to the journal, the Jews of Alexandria had faced similar problems to those of the community in Turkey. Hospital, orphanage and alms-house of the community in Egypt had not been up to standard, for instance. However, they later managed to overcome these critical issues. The journal through the conclusion if the community in Alexandria had managed to restore itself, then the Chief Rabbinate in Turkey also had the potential to reorganize.²⁷ This desire for a reform reappeared in the pages of the journal for almost a decade and a half until it was permanently closed. The issue was not limited to the administration, economy, and institutions of the community. There was an unease regarding the disintegration of Jewish culture in Turkey -a growing fear that the new generation was wandering away from Judaism.

That feeling of pride in being Jew turns to sadness when we turn our eyes to the Jewish collectivity of our city. The situation suggests that Judaism has been killed here and that nothing ties Jews anymore to

25 Avi Mah, "Onde Vamos," *La Boz de Oriente*, (February 1, 1936), 14.

26 Ibid, 14.

27 "La Question del Gran Rabino de Turquia: Tomemos Ejemplo de los Otros Centros Judios," *La Boz de Oriente*, (January 1936), 169-170.

their people and past. Our rabbis, our administrators, our social organizations lost the notion of the duty to mark our Jewish holidays. Above all, our youth now know very little about their history and past.

28

The cultural and financial problems of the community grew steadily. Before these issues could be solved, the shock of the Wealth Tax of 1942 was added to the list of problems. In 1944, the community proposed a joint budget to manage the cultural and philanthropic works of the community, but this plan did not work as originally planned.²⁹ Five years later, *La Boz de Türkiye* was still criticizing the paralyzation of the decision-making mechanisms of the community.

New problems emerged in addition to the old ones. On one hand, the poor awaited aid and the education of the youth was still a problem. Community schools were closing, if not because of government policy, then because the Jews could not financially support them.³⁰ On the other hand, the new matter of the emerging Jewish state and the question of emigration pressed. The community demanded for the discussion of these issues and waited for decisions. The journal announced discontent with the passive position of the Council of the Chief Rabbinate. According to the journal, council knowingly neglected the community's problems.³¹ As a consequence of leadership's inability to solve problems, *La Boz de Türkiye* signaled that the erosion of the community in Turkey had begun. The journal estimated that between three and four thousand people had emigrated to Israel just from Izmir. The people who chose to

28 "La Fiesta de Hanouca," *La Boz de Oriente*, (December 13, 1934).

29 "La Centralicacion de las Ovras Comunes de Istanbul," *La Boz de Türkiye*, Oct 1, 1944, 75.

30 The community school in Milas, for instance, was closed in 1934 due to the community's financial problems. Kaya, Önder, Milas Yahudi Cemaati ve Mezarlığı, Şalom, Dec 2, 2015. Similarly, in 1937, the community school in Bursa closed because the community could not support it. "En la Comunidad de Bursa: La Question Escolar," *La Boz de Oriente*, (May 1937), 22.

31 Avi Mah, "Onde Vamos," *La Boz de Oriente*, (February 1), 1936, 14.

emigrate in this early period mostly came from among the poor and the youth - the exact groups whose problems remained unsolved.³²

The process expanded to the other cities. In April 1949, the journal reported a mass movement. In Bursa, 950 people left the city to travel to Israel; in Trakya 650. Although not in equally large numbers, in Adana, Ankara, Tekirdağ and Iskenderun there was also activity. Despite the ostensibly small numbers, proportionally they signaled a massive change. In Tekirdağ, for instance, forty-seven Jews departed the city, but given that the number that remained in the city was just 350, the scope of the movement is apparent.³³ Another article in the same issue indicated the total number of people arriving in Israel from Turkey: in 1949, some 250,000 people arrived in Israel, and 10,000 of them came from Turkey.³⁴ Considering that the Jewish population of Turkey was just shy of eighty-two thousand in the first quarter of the twentieth century, this was an important proportion. A large part of the community reacted to the problems and became mobilized.³⁵

§ 4.6 The Present: Current Problems of the Community: Charity Calls and Or-Ahaim

As mentioned, the community had growing problems that were waiting to be solved. In light of this, it seems natural that the topic of charity had a lasting influence in the pages of *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye*. After World War I, the community became poorer. The rich and middle class remained a

32 “Situacion actual de la Comunidad,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (January 15, 1949), 174-175.

33 “La Emigracion Judia de Turquia: Nuestra Enquesta Cerca las Comunidades Respectives,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, April 1949, 252.

34 “En el Mundo Judio: 250.000 Inmigrantes Arrivaran Este Ano en Israel,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (April 1949), 245.

35 *Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, 28 Teşrinievvel 1927* (Population Census of 28 October 1927). Ankara: Türk Ocakları Merkez Matbaası, 1929.

small group while the destitute grew in number.³⁶ As divisions in the community became more unbalanced, the capacity of the small upper and middle classes to solve the spreading ills of the community was reduced.

Despite this apparent incapacity, the community still largely relied on a self-sustaining system. Both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* took part as mediums for the working of this self-supporting organization, spreading the word regarding areas that needed immediate support. With this system, the community was invited to help institutions such as the orphanages, almshouses and hospitals.³⁷

This system specifically revealed itself in the form of calls for charity community's hospital, Or-Ahaim. The overall space devoted to the hospital in these journals seems particularly large. Together, topics concerning the schools, orphanage, and almshouse did not occupy as much space as the hospital by itself. In almost every issue, the journals called for help from coreligionists regarding the worsening situation of the hospital. The journal's constant attention to the hospital stemmed from Albert Cohen's close ties with Or-Ahaim. Cohen himself was a member of the hospital's commission.³⁸ Cohen's position on the commission probably gave the journal insight into the perpetual needs of Or-Ahaim; however, there were more reasons behind these constant articles about the hospital, than Cohen's affiliation with it.

The significance of Or-Ahaim and what it represented for the community can only be understood by taking the overall situation of the community at the time into consideration. As mentioned in the first chapter of this research, the community had to face serious changes regarding their institutions. While school curriculums were transformed in line with government designs or schools were closed altogether and while the Chief Rabbinate became paralyzed by the new committee, Or-Ahaim gained new importance. The hospital was still operating and its work was visible and important. While education

36 Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Türkiye ve Balkan Yahudileri Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), 384.

37 "El Nido de los Huerfanos de Izmir," *La Boz de Oriente*, May 1936, 40. "Nuestras Ovras Sociales y de Benefecencia," *La Boz de Oriente*, (March 1936), 3. "En Nuestra Comunidad: Fakir Mektep Çocuklarına Yardım Cemiyeti," *La Boz de Türkiye*, December 15, 1944, 157.

38 "La Pajina del Hospital: El Aniversario del Or Ahaim," *La Boz de Oriente*, January 1, 1937, 177.

and religion were central focuses of the new regime, hospitals escaped the bitter end probably because of their more universal character. Both schools and the Chief Rabbinate were mired in a restoration process that created an ambiguous atmosphere. The children of the community chose not to go to the community schools because of the impractical burden of obligatory Hebrew lessons and the lack of French courses that had prepared them for the business in the past.³⁹ While the schools became impractical for the new generation, the community began to reconsider their worth and resources reserved for them. The Chief Rabbinate's future seemed equally undecided. Considering that the community had limited resources, to spend them cautiously was an understandable concern. But the hospital was not hindered by such changes. Although it experienced financial difficulties, it still had practical value.

Furthermore, with some exceptions, community schools mainly educated the Jewish children.⁴⁰ The Chief Rabbinate was a religious post that mainly served Jews. The hospital, on the other hand, was open to everyone, as stated in *La Boz de Oriente*: "The people treated in our hospital are not only poor and destitute Jews. From the day it opened its doors, the hospital has fulfilled its duty to our country."⁴¹ The hospital was probably the rational choice for the community to place their collective support.

Despite the open door policy of the Hospital and the efforts of the community to keep it afloat, Or-Ahaim still did not receive enough support to escape financial instability. This chronic insecurity was where the journal came in with its repeated calls for charity. On the fifty-third anniversary of Or-Ahaim, for instance, *La Boz de Oriente* insistently reminded readers that the hospital had a perpetual need from the community to survive and continue

39 "Nuestras Escuelas," *La Boz de Türkiye*, Jan 15, 1949, 171.

40 Dr. Rıza Tevfik Bey (1869-1949), who served as a member of the Ottoman Parliament, was among these exceptions. Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey 1860-1925*, (The United States of America: Indiana University Press, 1990), 142.

41 "Quelques mots sur l'histoire des H Ôpitaux," *La Boz de Oriente*, (Sep 6, 1934), 31.

its work.⁴² Although the Hospital had managed to see more than half a century, fears regarding its existence continued. According to *La Boz de Türkiye*, Or-Ahaim's annual budget was around 120,000 lire. This was an important amount of money to collect which could not possibly be met by young girls that earn 10 lire a year, as the journal stated. As a solution, *La Boz de Türkiye* specifically addressed prominent figures in the community, reminding them that sacrifice for the Hospital was their duty.⁴³

It is worth noting that as the journal expressed the help that Or-Ahaim needed, it openly shared particular information regarding the Hospital. How was the hospital administered, by whom, and in which way? These questions were discussed in the journal.⁴⁴ There were lists published that revealed the annual expenditures of the Hospital,⁴⁵ the medications prescribed, the patients admitted, and the operations that took place.⁴⁶ Self-dependence created transparency within the community; the revelation of information on the financial matters of the hospital for assessment by the public eye is a sign of the extent of the need of community institutions for help and of the lack of organized resources from which they could benefit. Consequently, the hospital was a living part of the community, that the journals put on display to remind it of this fact.

Accordingly, these endless calls for charity on behalf the hospital are key for interpreting what was going on at the heart of the Jewish community. The community was obviously proud of Or-Ahaim, as *La Boz de Oriente* expressed: "Look at the great job [with respect to the hospital] the Jews have done! Our happiness on behalf of our country becomes immeasurable when we hear these words."⁴⁷ Yet the community was still visibly struggling to sustain the hospital, not because of inattentiveness but because the community

42 "La Pajina del Hospital: El Aniversario del Or Ahaim," *La Boz de Oriente*, (January 1, 1937), 177.

43 "El Hospital Or-Ahaim: A la Ocasión de su 62 aniversario," *La Boz de Türkiye*, Dec 15, 1946, 130.

44 "El Controllo Contavle y Administracion en el Or-Ahaim," *La Boz de Oriente*, Jan 20, 1935, 16.

45 "A Proposito del Hospital-Laura Kadoorie Or-Ahaim," *La Boz de Oriente*, Sep 1934, 26-27.

46 "En Nuestra Comunidad: El Hospital Or-Ahaim," *La Boz de Türkiye*, Nov 15, 1948, 121.

47 "Quelques mots sur l'histoire des H Ôpitaux," *La Boz de Oriente*, Sep 6, 1934, 31

was in no shape to steadily support Or-Ahaim. Recurring calls for aid also showed the scarcity of resources to which the Jewish community could turn when the need arose. In the absence of other sources that they could draw steady support such as state assistance, they had to rely on reciprocal ties within the community, and to achieve that end, the journals had to repeat their demands for aid again and again. As the journal reminded readers in 1934: “Do remember our Hospital at every instance!”⁴⁸

Curiously, while the journal took these charity calls regarding the Hospital seriously and repeated them at every opportunity, the paper itself was not spared from the same vulnerability. In 1937, Moïse Dalmedico (1848-1937),⁴⁹ one of the founders of *La Boz de Oriente*, published a letter in the journal to the youth of the community just before his death. Dalmedico expressed in this letter this sentiment.

When we see our coreligionists making generous donations in favor of works of beneficence and communal interest, we believe that we also can expect from them a similar act to maintain the single Jewish organ of Judaism of the country.⁵⁰

This call for help was not unique. Both journals announced their own need for aid from time to time. Whether these calls for help worked or not, it was certain that the journals were remained affected by the crisis in which the community found itself in. *La Boz de Türkiye* did not publish any issues for the six months, from June 1942 to March 1943 because of financial hardships.⁵¹

The 1940s were a particularly problematic period considering the wars shaking various parts of the world. Nevertheless, as Dalmedico stated, the Jewish community had only one publication that managed to remain active. Its involuntary period of silence is a clue to the reasons why the topic of charity and the overall recession of the community remained main subjects of the

48 Avram Naon, “Lora Kaduri Or-Ahaim Musevi Hastahanesine Dair,” *La Boz de Oriente*, Sep 6, 1934, 32.

49 Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (NY: New York University Press, 1991), 181.

50 Moïse Dalmedico, “Carta Avierta a Nuestra Joventud,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (May 1937.) 21.

51 Naim A. Güleriyüz, *Türk Yahudi Basını Tarihi: Süreli Yayınlar*, (Istanbul: Gözlem, 2015), 94.

journal. This recession was clearly not unique to Turkey. Indeed, the conditions of world Jewry were getting poorer with every passing second and its problems found themselves a place alongside local issues in the journals.

§ 4.7 The Present: Current Problems of the World Jewry

While the Jews of Turkey of struggled with the disintegration of the community, Jews around the world faced with critical issues. The period that these journals were being published coincided with many serious incidents including a world war, the Holocaust, and the foundation of Israel. Both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* were interested in these massive developments. This interest was reflected in two different forms. The first was the continued construction of the concept of Jewish nationalism. Related articles mostly fell under the heading of world Jewry on the pretext of introducing different Jewish communities. The second type of article also kept its finger on the pulse of the world Jewry but were more focused on recent developments: the ruin created by the Third Reich and the suffering of the Jews.

The tone of the first type of article stayed generally positive. They usually discussed figures of the Jewish population, and their cultures, customs, education, and institutions in various countries from all parts of the world. This type of article frequently fell under the general heading of world Jewry. The countries covered by the journal were varied: Spain, Egypt, India, Ethiopia, and America appeared in no particular order.⁵² The journal was covered these communities using a similar approach that created a sense of familiarity between them. The article regarding the Jewish community in Spain, for instance, provided the following information: “According to the information received from Department of Organization of the Jewish community in Barcelona, Spain has 2500 Jews... These are tightly organized in three communities;

52 “Las Comunidades Judias en Espagna,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (November 1, 1948,) 101. La Vida Judia en Egipto, *La Boz de Türkiye*, February 15, 1948, 217 “Israel Entre Las Naciones: La Comunidad de Calcuta,” *La Boz de Oriente*, January 1936, 8. “Los Judios de Ethiopia,” *La Boz de Oriente*, January 1936 13. “Israel Entre Las Naciones: Los Sefaradim en America,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (January 1936), 8.

Barcelona, Madrid, and Valencia.”⁵³ Another article covering Bulgaria stated that: “according to the census of 1934, the Jewish population of the country was 40,000”⁵⁴ The article continued with details regarding the education, religion, and culture of the community, just as in similar articles that appeared in the journals. The community in Athens was introduced as follows: “Currently the Jewish population in the capital of Greece numbers 300 families, nearly all of which enjoy a satisfying condition.”⁵⁵ While giving information regarding the community in Egypt, the journal focused on the institutions of the community.

In 1917, the hospital [in Cairo] was founded by some Jewish people... The number of patients of the Hospital in 1935 was 2850... Regarding the success of the Jewish organization, Maccabi, which includes sports, literature, and arts clubs with almost 800 members reported. Thanks to the impetus of the communal council as well as the new Chief Rabbi, community services in the ten-year from from 1925 to 1935 were beautifully deployed. In addition to new schools that were built, the Jewish press, known for weekly publications like *L’Aurore* and *Israel*, was enriched with new publications such as *El Shamsi* in Arabic and *El Kadima* in French.⁵⁶

As mentioned above, there was another type of article for which world Jewry also happened to be the main area of interest. However, this second had a drastically different tone. Nazi policies, death tolls, and anti-Semitic movements around the world appeared in these articles. These pieces of information did not have a devoted column in the journal, and appeared under different headings, possibly because of their dynamic content. On a typical page of a typical issue, one might find news about a boycott of Jewish merchants in Athens, the tragic situation of Jews in Hungary, an attack on a Rabbi in Varsovia, and the elimination of Jews from cultural and economic life in

53 “Las Comunidades Judias en Espagna,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, November 1, 1948, 101.

54 “Los Judios de Bulgaria,” *La Boz de Oriente*, May, 1937, 24-25.

55 “Informaciones Sovre la Comunidad Israelita de Athenes,” *La Boz de Oriente*, Apr 1936, 27.

56 “La Comunidad Judia Del Cairo,” *La Boz de Oriente*, Jul 1936, 71-72.

Germany.⁵⁷ Have the situation worsened, the content of such news developed a darker tone. In 1944, the journal stated in a brief article that approximately five million Jews were killed when the Nazis were in control of Europe.⁵⁸

Such horrible news frequently published under the meaningful headline: "Israel Among Nations". In 1936, for instance, various reports were located under this headline. One of them was titled: "No Dwellings for the Jews". The article was about new developments in Frankfurt regarding rental houses. The journal reported that homeowners in the city were informing their Jewish tenants that their rental contracts would not be renewed. The report ended with the terrible statement: "These poor brothers of ours are left without homes in these days of winter."⁵⁹ Another report in the same issue was from Prague, according to which the Jews there were trying to help their coreligionists in Germany. It was not permitted, and the aid packages were returned to Prague with the note "Death for all the Jews".⁶⁰ In the column "Israel Among Nations" that same year, news regarding Poland was similar: a new anti-Semitist campaign was trying to hinder Jewish business using the motto: "Don't buy it from the Jews, your money will go abroad!"⁶¹ Even countries geographically located far away from the area but under the direct influence of the Third Reich became familiar with anti-Semitist ideas. In 1938, the journal wrote about an anti-Semitist campaign started in the Cuban press, and in 1937 there was a report regarding an association in Mexico demanding the establishment of a ghetto for the Jews in the country.⁶² Although this content was generally found in the "Israel Among Nations" section, the abundance of bad news became so

57 "Grecia: Manifestacion anti-Judia en Atina," *La Boz de Oriente*, Dec 13, 1934, 12. Por Salvar los Judios de Bulgaria, *La Boz de Türkiye*, Aug 1, 1944, p.30. "En el Mundo Judio: Nuestra Recolta de la Prensa Judia," *La boz de Oriente*, May 1937, 31

58 "El Judaismo Hungares," *La Boz de Türkiye*, Aug 1, 1944, 29.

59 "Israel Entre Las Naciones: No Ay Moradas Para Los Judios," *La Boz de Oriente*, Mar 1936, 8.

60 "Israel Entre Las Naciones: No Permeten Que Ayuden a los Judios," *La Boz de Oriente*, (March 1936), 8.

61 Israel Entre Las Naciones: Pologna, *La Boz de Oriente*, (June 1936), 61.

62 "En el Mundo Judio: Una Asociacion Anti-Semitica Demanda el Establecimiento de un Ghetto en Mexico," *La Boz de Oriente*, (May 1937), 32. "Israel Entre Las Naciones, Cuba, Campagna de Prensa Antisemita," *La Boz de Oriente*, (June 1938), 59.

striking the usual place for these news quickly turned insufficient, consequently, these articles began to appear separately. In 1938, for instance, a report titled; “The Situation of the Jews in Austria”, indicated that as the situation in Austria worsen, the suicide rate among Jews had reached high figures. Prominent figures of the society became vulnerable as in the case of Jewish attorneys and doctors who were forced to close their businesses.⁶³ News regarding the situation of Jews in Poland in 1936, is representative of the common content of these reports;

As if the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews is not enough, the Jews have suffered persecutions reaching critical levels these last months... The anti-Semitic league that bears the name *Endek* does not cease provoking the population to organize pogroms. In Poznam, the anti-Semites organized a demonstration in front of the Café Argentina forcing the employers to throw out two Jewish musicians from their orchestra. In Wloclavek and Sledice, Jewish journals were boycotted. In Horn, non-Jewish merchants met and demanded a boycott of all merchants who employ Jews. In Sabra, one hundred members of *Erdek* attacked Jews exiting the synagogue. Unknown people threw a bomb into the local office of the revisionist party; the office burned down.⁶⁴

After seeing news under this title the reader naturally could come to the decision that the place of Israelis in other nations was neither desirable nor preferable. The logical conclusion was that an Israeli nation would give Jews more than they currently received in other nations. Accordingly, these horrific reports were sometimes tied to hopeful expectations regarding Palestine. In 1944, for instance, the journal covered bloody massacres that the Nazis committed in Holland, the high number of disappearances of the young Jews in Greece, and the forced movement of Jews in Budapest on the same page as

63 “Israel Entre Las Naciones: La Situacion de los Judios en Austria,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (April 1938), 24.

64 “Israel Entre Las Naciones: La Situacion de los Judios en Pologna,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (March 1936), 8.

immigration of Jews to Palestine, tying these occurrences together.⁶⁵ In the same year, an article in *La Boz de Türkiye* stated common problems and hopes as follows:

The Jewish masses scattered in the four corners of the world are being slaughtered by Nazi persecutions. They look with hope to the Jewish Yishuv [the settlement of the Jews] in Palestine that has renewed with sweat and sacrifice. They look at that ties existing between the Jewish people and their Old Country, on account of the great ideal that inspired them. The Jews will be encouraged for the future; they will defend themselves with energy and faith. The Jewish people will discover a revival among the people by managing their own lands, by production from their own soil, by believing in a moral power, and by speaking their own language. With this they will develop a culture to defend its existence.⁶⁶

Charity calls for a struggling hospital, horrible developments faced by world Jewry, and the growing financial, intellectual, and administrative problems of the Jews in Turkey... the time was full of problems and offered little hope to the Jews in Turkey. The future, on the other hand, was slowly coming and was full of incredible developments, as seen in the news coming out of Palestine. *La Boz de Oriente* debated this possible future, while *La Boz de Türkiye*, witnessed its realization and covered it in its pages.

§ 4.8 The Future: Palestine

From the first years of *La Boz de Oriente* to last years of *La Boz de Türkiye*, the Palestinian issue was a main subject of discussion. Even though the subject remained constant through across the years, the content under this heading evolved and was enriched as the world witnessed major changes, including the founding of the State of Israel.

65 “La U.R.S.S y la inmigracion en Palestina,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (December 15, 1944,) 163.

66 Abraham Elmaleh, “Israel en el Galduth: La Contribucion del Judaismo Palestiniiano al Esfuerzo de Guerra de las Naciones Unidas,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (September 1, 1944), 44-45.

In 1934, *La Boz de Oriente* reported on Jewish colonies in Palestine; two years later, news on Jewish colonization was already shadowed by unrest in the area.⁶⁷ In 1936, the relevant page of the journal was full of bitter news and chaos. Bombs had been detonated in Jerusalem and Haifa, and there was unrest in other cities such as Tel Aviv and Jaffa. Tension between the native Arab population and the steadily growing Jewish population was dangerously rising.⁶⁸ In other words, the Arab revolt in Palestine had begun.

La Boz de Oriente did not discuss the reasons behind this upheaval, but rather took an obvious interest in both the negative and positive developments affecting the Jewish people and colonies in Palestine. While grievous news kept coming in, the journal began to cover the issue in two forms: violence and directing new problems, on one hand, and developments that were happening regardless, on the other. An example of this tendency appeared on a page that was published in April 1936. On the same page, there were four articles covering the news regarding Palestine in a balanced way. The first was titled “Plantation of Trees in Palestine.” It was a brief article reporting on the effort to plant a new forest in Palestine. The following article had a completely different content. It was titled by “Banditry in Palestine”, and as can be understood from the title, it reported on a Jewish refugee and her son assassinated by Arab bandits as they tried to reach Bat Galim south of the city Haifa. The third topic was about the suicide of a Jewish girl when her entry to Palestine was refused. The last news item reported on agricultural development and rising potato production.⁶⁹

These two different kinds of article were related to a strong belief regarding the future in Palestine. On one hand, there was sacrifices, violence, and death, yet these were not enough to cause despair since there was ongoing progress. Once the violence sufficiently ceased, Palestine will be there to live in peace. Suffering and hope were intermingled, as seen by the fact that both of these types of article appeared usually on the same page.

67 “Palestina: Una Colonia Judia en Palestina Creada Por Perpetuar la Memoria del Baron Edmond de Rotschild,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (December 13, 1934), 11.

68 “Israel Entre Las Naciones: Los Acontecimientos en Palestina,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (June 1936), 61.

69 “Israel Entre las Naciones,” *La Boz de Oriente*, (April 1936), 30.

Ideas about Palestine and key topics such as the Nazi period and the extent of its influence the newspaper debated on were coming from various resources. *La Boz de Türkiye* offered varying opinions in its pages and interacted with developing ideas in the Jewish world. For instance, a small section suggested books to its readers among which were books reporting the crimes of the Nazi administration such as Georges Wellers' book *De Drancy à Auschwitz*. The book introduced to the reader as follows: "While going through the dark history, the book explains the life in the [concentration] camp, with its passions, its vices, its cruelty."⁷⁰ Similarly, author Max Weinreich describes his own *Hitler's Professors* as "a report on the part of German scholarship in Germany's crimes against the Jewish people."⁷¹ There were books that covered the area of the history of the Jews, such as Cecil Roth's *History of the Jews of Italy*⁷² or Léon Berman's *The Chief Rabbi of Lille*, a book on the origins of French Jews.⁷³ There were also books about ancient Jewish writers, such as Jose Maria Millas Valligrosa's work on the famous Jewish poet Ibn Gabirol that were supporting the idea of long, Jewish history.⁷⁴

It is worth mentioning that some of these books were published in the same year or the year preceding the appearance of the review in the journal, Berman's *Historie des Juifs de France des Origines a Nous Jours*, for instance, began being sold in 1937. The review of the book was published in 1938. The first edition of Wellers' book *De Drancy à Auschwitz* was dated 1946; the review of the book was written the following year. Roth's *History of the Jews of Italy* was published in 1946, only a year before its review appeared in the journal. Considering the relative scarcity and slowness of resources reaching Turkey at the time, the quickness of this process signals the speed of the circulation of prominent ideas regarding the Jewish world in Turkey and indicates a

70 Oev Sefer, "Los Livros: De Drancy a Auschwitz," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (December 3,) 1947, 203.

71 Oev Sefer, "Los Livros: Hitler's Professors," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (April 15, 1947), 234. Max Weinreich, "Hitler's Professors," (U.S: Yale University Press, 1999), 5.

72 Oev Sefer, "Los Livros: History of the Jews of Italy," (February 1, 1947), 171.

73 "Los Livros y Las Ideas: Historia de los Judios de Francia de las Origines a Nuestros Dias," *La Boz de Oriente*, (February 1938), 171.

74 Oev Sefer, "Los Livros: Gebirol Como Poeta Y Filosofo," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (December 3), 1947, 203.

strong will to establish an information channel to reach the intellectual resources of world Jewry.

As the book review section was equally interested in current questions and topics of discussion in world Jewry, it inevitably took an intense interest in books discussing the issue of Palestine. In October 1944, for instance, the journal advertised *Harvest in the Desert* by Maurice Samuel, which was published the same year. The book argued that the regeneration of Palestine was only possible with the intervention of the Jewish people. It suggested that Jews could bring western civilization to the East. *Harvest in the Desert* had an interesting approach: it presented the Jews as the saviors of dead lands. The Jews were not the ones in need of the land; on the contrary, the dying, barren land needed the Jews to return it to life both culturally and physically. The chapter “Life Struggle of Palestine” began thusly:

There are many ways of considering the future of Palestine, and the Jewish role therein. We may speak of the possible function of a certain area in the general structure of civilization, and it is not too fanciful especially in connection with Palestine to speak of that area as engaged in a life-and-death struggle to fulfill its function. The land is capable of doing a special job in the world of tomorrow. The question is: Will it be permitted to do that job, or will it be held back among the functionless areas of the world?⁷⁵

The name of the chapter reflects the specific view of the book: what was struggling was not the Jews but the land. Therefore, it would be cruel and irrational to separate the Jews from the land. This view was not far from the Zionist view of the inseparability of the land and the Jews. What Samuel did was to present the picture in reverse.

The influence of foreign writers in the journal was not limited to book reviews. *La Boz de Oriente* devoted space to articles of various writers that had first been published in foreign media. An article written by Herbert Lehman (1878-1963), the forty-fifth Governor of New York, for instance, was an example. The essay was first published in *The American Hebrew* and developed two

75 Maurice Samuel, “Harvest in the Desert,” (NY: Knopf, 1944), 305.

significant ideas already familiar to readers of *La Boz de Oriente*: the universal character of the Jewish ideal and the continuity of ancestral ties.

This light [spiritual ideal and moral values of Jewish law and tradition] expanded from Palestine and reached everywhere ... Men speak of the miracle of the survival of the Jewish people across the time. They survived because the Jews were firmly tied to tradition in which, thousands of years earlier, on the mountains of Sinai, their fathers entered into an alliance with the Eternal... Jewish history teaches that spiritual ideal; teaches to many how to be as one...⁷⁶

Lehman's narration took Palestine as a starting point. *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* not only imported these ideas but generated similar notions. The process of creating and presenting these ideas was challenging since there was a ban on Zionist movements in Turkey.⁷⁷ Accordingly, the journal's journey towards finding its voice was a work in progress. The reader can realize that over time the writing style of the journal regarding particular subjects changed. This development was a result of continued silence from the wider society and the administration with respect to the journal's activities. Nonetheless, community was still in danger of finding itself in the eye of the storm, as happened in the case of mass movement towards Israel.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the journal figured out over the years that it was neither in imminent danger nor encountered strong opposition to particular ideas expressed in the journal. Ladino provided a shelter as the language was not known among Turkish society and consequently articles in the journal were

76 Herbert H. Lehman, "El Rolo del Judaismo en el progreso de la humanidad," *La Boz de Oriente*, (June 1937), 38-39.

77 "The Jews of Turkey: An Assimilated Minority," *TJC*, (June 27, 1941), 12.

78 In 1948, Turkey banned the emigration of Jews in Turkey to Israel. The government announced that "those who leave for Israel will not be permitted to return to Turkey". After this announcement, the press in Turkey began to harshly criticize the Jewish community. The religious leader of the community, D. Raphael Saban (1890-1960), was accused of receiving secret instructions from Zionists regarding the emigration movement. "Turkey Bans Emigration," *TJC*, (November 12, 1948) and "Emigration From Turkey Continues: Hostile Press Campaign," *TJC*, (December 24, 1948).

at least protected from the scrutinizing eyes of the public. The journal also published articles in Turkish. It wrote, for instance, a statement regarding the reasons for Jewish emigration to Israel in Turkish, openly stating that the main reason behind the movement was the Jewish ideal of having a national homeland.⁷⁹ However, this probably posed no serious danger considering that the usual language was Ladino and, consequently, it was not expected that regular readers were found among Turkish society. For this reason, the journals possibly a limited area of freedom and more deliberately expressed their opinion on vital issues. Considering the political atmosphere in Turkey and the intense process of nationalism, the journal's articles on Zionism support the argument that the journals benefited from a relative freedom.⁸⁰

The following article was published in 1938, and adopted a remarkably clear style of expression on Zionism.

This movement [Zionism] is considered something naturally in conflict with the interests of the country, as if there is a dangerous duality harming the sacredness of the homeland... Can we say that the Jews of France, England, or America become less patriotic, less attached to their countries because they are occupied with the grim fate of their coreligionists living in Poland, Romania, or Germany?⁸¹

Doubtless, this one article is not enough to claim that both journals had an openly Zionist worldview. However, the whole picture provided by the journals present a clear affinity for Zionism. On the subject of settlement in Palestine, the journals were neither unclear nor indecisive. As the founding of the State of Israel approached and the Jewish state began to take a shape, the position of *La Boz de Türkiye*, became sharper and even more apparent.

On May 14, 1948, the link between past and present finally overlapped. The State of Israel was founded. *La Boz de Türkiye* reported the news as follows:

79 "Türk Yahudilerinin Mahaceretine Asil Sebepler Nelerdir?" *La Boz de Türkiye*, (November 1, 1948), 100.

80 Although in Turkey there was a ban on Zionist movements, the world was aware of the support of the Jews in Turkey for Zionism. "Turkey Welcomes Truce: Jews Leaving for Israel," *TJC*, August 27, 1948, 9.

81 H. Franco "La Situacion de los Judios en Italia" *La Boz de Türkiye*, (January 1938), 149-150.

The last fortnight marks for the Jewish people a turning point in its history. After a martyrdom of nineteen centuries, the people of Israel have retaken their national existence. The greatest event of our history, which for centuries inspired generations in their daily prayers, was fulfilled, on the unforgettable, historical day of Friday May 15, 1948, with the proclamation by the successors of the old kings of Israel of the Fourth Jewish State, called the State of Israel, Eretz Israel... After two thousand years of exile, after this long night of terror and suffering, the horizon became clear; the dawn appeared loaded with hope.⁸²

The suspicions and endless anguish over a homeland came to a precarious but victorious end. The journal welcomed this development with great interest and responded to it with articles that had a new alacrity. There were no reservations left regarding the expression of this heartfelt sentiment. *La Boz de Türkiye* explained it as follows: “To Turkish Jews have Turkey as their true country, Israel will remain an inner homeland.”⁸³ The enthusiasm of the journal reached a new level and its main focus quickly became Israel.

In 1949, for instance, *La Boz de Türkiye* devoted space to a lengthy article that originally came from Paris expressing the common admiration of and interest in the national homeland of the Jewish people:

Israel today is on top of the world; it is experiencing an incomparable and rare moment, a bright hour, which marks a summit in a person’s life. A successful blow on an uncultivated dune; it is a stroke of time, of destiny. A handful of sand picked up today in a corner of the Negev is a handful of history.⁸⁴

There were still unsolved issues and the obvious vulnerability of the new state that gave the articles published in the journal an urgent, defensive tone. In 1948, *La Boz de Türkiye* “was quoting” the statement of Moshe Shertok (1894-

82 “Israel Fue, El Es Y El Sera!” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (June 1, 1948), 344.

83 Sami Kohen, “Türkiye ve İsrail,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (April 1949), 244.

84 Paul Giniewski, “De Tel Aviv à la terrasse de Chaillot: Reflexiones Sur un Miracle,” *La Boz de Türkiye*, (January 15, 1949), 169.

1965), later to become the second president of Israel, while reporting on news from Palestine. "Israel cannot confine itself to the United Nations for the protection of 100,000 Jews living in Jerusalem. Only a Jewish force is able to secure their protection."⁸⁵ Behind this notion there was a rich body of mixed implications: distrust in external forces, [which had bitter and fresh roots coming from recent developments that had ended in six million deaths], self-reliance as the answer, and consequently the idea of forming a structure to provide protection. The journal was familiar with these views and continuously made these notions part of its content. Even after the foundation of Israel this focus did not wane in intensity. There were still questions about the legitimacy of the Jewish state; consequently, the reasoning establishing the imperativeness of the state was still needed.

La Boz de Türkiye published an article of Nahum Goldman (1895-1982), a leading figure of the Zionist movement, regarding the issue of the diaspora in 1948. In this essay Goldman suggested that the existence of Israel would mean more support for Jews living in different parts of the world. Moreover, he asserted that the diaspora had innate problems that would remain as long as its existence continued. The article declared an opinion that was long supported by the journal: Israel was a panacea for all the ills that the Jewish people experienced. In his article, Nahum stated that

the main significance of the creation of the state of Israel is not that it will solve the Jewish problem overnight: as long as Jewish minorities remain in many countries of the world, the problems of anti-Semitism, discrimination, and the status of the Jews will remain intact. There is no contradiction between the Jewish state and the protection of the rights of the Jewish situation and the strengthening of Jewish life in the diaspora. The theory of many anti-Zionists, according to which Zionism aims at the total suppression of the diaspora, has always been an absurdity pure and simple, a thesis whose falsehood can only be explained by stupidity or malice.⁸⁶

85 Charles Malmuth, "El Movimiento de Emigracion Para Israel: El Regimen Futuro de Jerusalem," *La Boz de Türkiye*, (December 15, 1948), 118.

86 Nahum Goldman, "Israel et la Diaspora," *La Boz de Türkiye*, August 1, 1948, 8.

With this article the journal once again posited Israel as an answer. The debate over promoting multiculturalism or choosing a land on which to establish a Jewish state was found in favor of the latter. Israel turned out to be a blanket of solutions to answer the mounting problems of the Jews; furthermore, it was now a prerequisite for the existence of the Jewish people.

In 1948, *La Boz de Türkiye* published an article regarding the history of Zionism. The work introduced Leon Pinsker (1821-1891), a Polish-born Zionist pioneer, and his famous work *Auto-Emancipation*. Pinsker had been in this work that the Jewish problem would become solvable only after mutual respect was achieved. The Jews were lacking the foundation on which this respect might be established since they have no country that they could claim as their own. Without this solid ground, they could not be accepted as equals and would continue to suffer.⁸⁷ The article in the journal outlined these views and added that “[the Jews] need to reconquer national awareness and human dignity and create a proper land that will be the homeland.”⁸⁸ The thoughts of Pinsker being introduced in *La Boz de Türkiye* are summarized in the following passage:

With the loss of their fatherland, the Jewish people lost their independence and fell into decay. The state was crushed before the eyes of the nations. But after the Jewish people had yielded up their existence as an actual state, as a political entity, they could nevertheless not submit to total destruction -they did not cease to exist spiritually as a nation. The world saw in this people the uncanny form of one of the dead-walking among living. The ghostlike apparition of a people without unity or organization, without land or other bond of union, no longer alive, and yet moving among the living... We need nothing but a large

87 Leo Pinsker, “Auto-Emancipation,” Masada-Youth Zionist Organization of America, 1935, 7-22.

88 Dante Lattes, “La Historia del Sionismo: La Auto-Emancipacion,” adapted by Hizkia M. Franco, *La Boz de Türkiye*, August 1948, 14.

piece of land for our poor brothers; a piece of land which shall remain our property, from which no foreign master can expel us...⁸⁹

Now the foundation providing an equal ground to the Jewish people was finally established. *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* produced almost two decades of work, woven with a bitter but hopeful narrative that reached the Jews in Turkey. It ended when the history of the modern Jewish state began, and shortly thereafter, *La Boz de Oriente* discontinued its publishing activity. As Pinsker once wrote: “Since the Jew is nowhere at home, nowhere regarded as a native, he remains an alien everywhere.”⁹⁰ Now, he was at home, regardless of being recognized as an alien by those with whom he shares that home.



89 Leo Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, (Masada-Youth Zionist Organization of America, 1935), 7-22.

90 *Ibid.* 6.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is a careful reading of a unique journalistic work. This research considered every article and subject that appeared in the journals as the reflection of a conscious body of thought behind their publication. Accordingly, whether articles were taken from foreign sources or written by locals for the journal itself, they were recognized as equally frank and effective mirrors of the general view of the journal. This decision is justified by the use of language and general approach of the journals. The articles in the journals played a role in strengthening an opinion rather than functioning as dynamic and self-criticizing aspects of an active debate. The articles were usually not countered by rebuttals; new volumes only added further detail to previous ones rather than criticizing or bringing up new opinions.

The study suggests that the body of articles that appeared in the pages of the journals displayed a continuous narration. The stability of the content supports this view. The unchanging body of the publication was a way of assuring control over the ideas that appeared in it, decreasing the possibility of irrelevant subjects. This thesis considered the whole content of the journals as a deliberate, repetitive expression of certain ideas.

The assumption that the content of the journals manifested a clear and intentional design created the core idea of this research. Accordingly, the research looks at the whole work from a distance and gather the parts that form

a meaningful narrative that resembles the work of the original body but provides a shortened, clearer picture.

In the first chapter of this research, we summarized the historical background that created most of the problems of the Jewish community. The closing of community schools, the null position of the Chief Rabbinate, the wealth tax, and the Thrace Incidents were key components of the problems that developed in Turkey. Doubtless, the situation of world Jewry also had an impact on Turkish Jews. This influence was two fold: the disastrous fate of world Jewry fueled fears regarding the precariousness of their safety, and the same horrifying situation also inspired the ideal of Zionism that offered establishing that safe place.

The second chapter provided a background for understanding and interpreting discussions that the journals were interested. In the process of the foundation of Israel there were heated debates on the advantages of obtaining a land, the meaning of having a Jewish state, and the inevitability of going back to Palestine where the ancient history of the Jewish people was shaped. The thesis bring these and other prominent debates forward, which gain a new meaning in the third chapter given that both *La Boz de Oriente* and *La Boz de Türkiye* chose sides in these discussions and voiced opinions accordingly.

In the final chapter, the research examines selected articles in the journal and includes from these particular articles that the journals indeed had a consistent narrative that told a specific story. First, it inquires a mythical past that linked the modern Jews to their ancient ancestors. This link validated the claim of Palestine as a fatherland. Second, the work looks at news covering the terrible suffering of world Jewry. It takes these not as mere reports but as a part of a grand narration creating yet another link between the suffering of modern Jews and their ancestors. Also the research considers these articles reporting on current developments were a tool to show the extent of the pain and torment that world Jewry was experiencing, which ultimately stressed the vital importance of obtaining a Jewish state. Third, the thesis explores the solution offered by the journals. Palestine was key to this solution: the final part of the story and the future of the Jewish people. Lastly, the research sees the disentangling of problems and the creation of new, equally severe problems that accompany the materialization of the much-wanted Jewish state and notes

that this development met with the support of *La Boz de Türkiye*, which, with the help of *La Boz de Oriente*, have been preparing its readers for this end for nearly twenty years.



Appendix A *La Boz de Türkiye: Bimonthly Magazine of Information, Science and Literature*, November 1944, Cover Page.



Appendix B *La Boz de Oriente: Bimonthly Magazine of Information, Science and Literature*, August 1937, Cover Page.

Anio 6 Août — Ağustos 1937 No. 18 (42)


La Boz de Oriente

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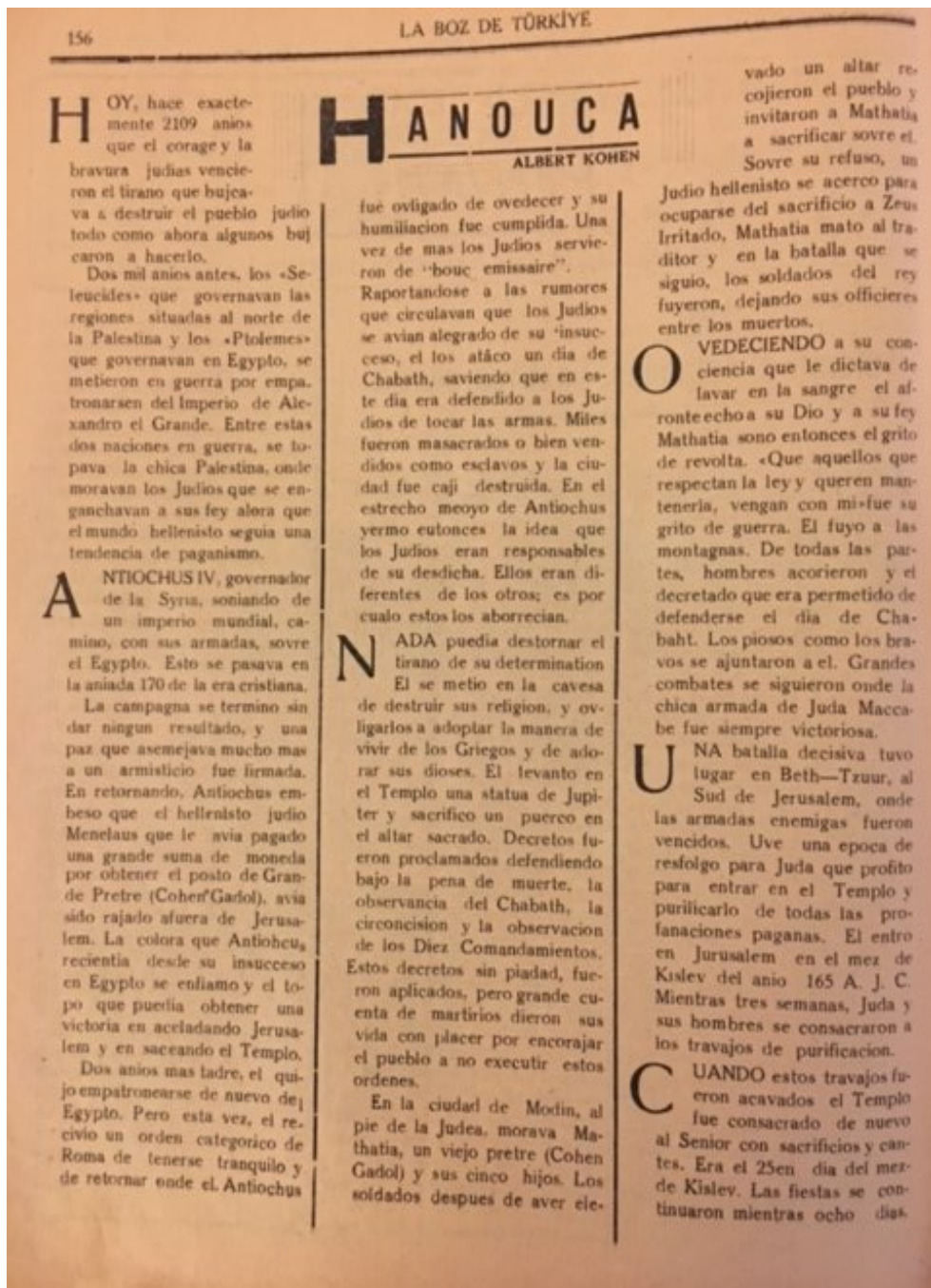
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96 LA BOZ DE TÜRKİYE

en el mundo Judío

La situación del Judaismo mientras la añiada 5705

La añiada que viene de acabarse fue marcada por los tormentos los mas decisivos de la guerra por la liberación de la Europa y el establecimiento de un nuevo orden mundial basado sobre la Charte de la Atlantique donde la realización practica es esperada con despasencia por el mundo entero.

Si de una parte el judaismo continua a suportar en los países ocupados, toda la opresion hite-risna y a sufrir por seguida de la exterminacion nazie, asistimos de otra parte, en los países liberos y democraticos, a un despertar de la conciencia judía y mismo a un despertamiento de la conciencia humana, delante toda la espanidura tragica del problema judío al cual una solución devra ser topada.

Estados Unidos

En los Estados Unidos que se produjo verso el empeño del año pasado, uno de los eventos los mas importantes de la vida judía universal. Se trata, en la ocurrencia, de la Conferencia del Judaismo Americano representando cerca cinco millones de judios y donde las resoluciones en ocho puntos, pravarán cuanto el judaismo americano se rendia cuenta de la estrecha relacion de su avenir con aquel del judaismo universal. La resolución adoptada por la Conferencia, casi a la unanimidad, al sujeto de la creacion en Palestina

de un Commonwealth Judío, es una indicacion del interes traído por los judios americanos al estado futuro de la Palestina afuera de la cual ninguna solución del problema judío es humanamente posible.

En el dominio de la guerra el judaismo americano continuo a desplegar todos sus esfuerzos al servicio de la Patria y no negligió nada por contribuir, tanto que posible, al evento de la Victoria de la cual nos acercamos de hora en hora. Cerca medio millon de Judios hacen hoy parte de las fuerzas americanas. Es una prueba tangible del esfuerzo gigantesco emprendido por el judaismo americano al servicio del país.

Es un Judío, Herbert Lehman, administrador de la U. N. R. R. A. que es cargado de refragar despues de la liberacion de la Europa las ruinas causadas por la guerra. Sus cualidades personales, su espíritu organizador, su entendimiento lo designaron a esta carga ingrata, pero cuanto hermosa, porque ella consiste a hacer nacer la vida en medio de la desolacion.

Inglaterra

Es sobre todo en Grande Bretaña que se juega la destina-da futura del problema judío.

A la Conferencia Imperial onde participaron todos los primeros ministros del Imperio Británico, el problema judío tuvo ser discutido. Las conclusiones a las cuales alcanzaron no fueron descubiertas. Pero, la presencia en esta conferencia, del Marechal Smuts, de Sr. Mackenzie King, de Sr. Churchill, el mismo y de otros ministros donde le simpatia en verso el judaismo es conocida, permite de esperar, ver un día realizarse una política diferente de aquella que vieron hasta hoy.

El Partido travallista ingles como todos los otros partidos del resto, continuo como en lo pasado, a testimoniar al judaismo su simpatia y su solidaridad. Sus resoluciones al sujeto de la Palestina son la expresión de sus sentimientos y de su deseo de traer su contribucion a la solución menesterosa del problema judío.

La opinion publica en Grande Bretaña se enterezo particularmente a la cuestion palestiniana

ÖKSÜRÜK ve BRONŞİTE
KARŞI

TURAL

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