

To the living memory of my father,

Rahmi Yaşar (1938- )

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905  
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how the Ottomans perceived the Russian revolution of 1905. In order to achieve this, the Russian revolution of 1905 is described from the eyes of both parties pertaining to the Ottoman empire in 1905, namely the Young Turk revolutionaries, who were very active in 1905 in Europe and their main target, the Ottoman imperial government. This thesis is composed of three chapters. The first chapter provides the reader with a historical background to the Russian revolution of 1905 and to the Ottoman empire in 1905. Following this, the second chapter studies the Russian revolution of 1905 from Young Turks' point of view by relying upon the Young Turk journals published in Europe and in Egypt during the subject revolutionary years. The third chapter, which is based on the archival documents, describes how the Ottoman imperial government regarded the Russian revolution of 1905.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, 1905 Rus İhtilali'nin Osmanlılar tarafından nasıl algılandığını incelemektedir. Bunun için, 1905 yılında ihtilalci faaliyetlerde bulunan Jön Türkler'in ve bu faaliyetlerin hedefi olan Osmanlı hükümeti'nin 1905 Rus İhtilali'ne bakış açıları ele alınmış ve söz konusu ihtilalin bu iki karşıt grup tarafından nasıl görüldüğü ve anlaşıldığı anlatılmıştır. Üç bölümden oluşan bu tezin ilk bölümü, okuyucuya 1905 Rus İhtilali ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun 1905 yılındaki durumu ile ilgili bir tarihsel arka plan sağlamaktadır. İkinci bölüm, 1905 Rus İhtilalini, Jön Türk gazetelerine dayanarak, Jön Türkler'in bakış açısından ele almaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde ise, 1905 İhtilali'nin Osmanlı hükümeti tarafından nasıl algılandığını anlamak için, ihtilal ile ilgili bu dönemdeki resmi yazışmalar incelenmiştir.

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## INTRODUCTION

Being two of the remaining traditional empires in the year of 1905, the Russian and the Ottoman empires had much in common and in contrast. The subject year came with a revolution in the Russian empire and the subject revolution was watched closely and in detail in the neighboring Ottoman empire, which would have its own, having different dynamics but same aims and ends, just three years later. Since the Russian revolution of 1905 took place in an spontaneous and unorganized way which then turned out to be a constitutional revolution; all these movements and demonstrations of the people that most of scholars interested in Russian history regard as a revolution today were at the beginning considered to be disorders (*igtişaşât*) stemming from discontent of the Russian people both in the Ottoman imperial correspondence and in the Ottoman revolutionary press.

The Russian revolution of 1905, following constitutional revolution in Iran in 1906 and news on government's consideration of a constitutional regime in China were the harbingers of forthcoming constitutional struggles in the Ottoman empire, which had already experienced a constitutional regime in spite of its limitedness in scope and whose revolutionary dynamics that had strong roots both in thought and in activity strengthened their organization in Europe and throughout the empire and accelerated their activities. Therefore, the Russian revolution of 1905 was a unique example of a constitutional struggle, which emerged in the strongest autocracy of the world and from which lessons should have been taken both by the revolutionary activists and by the Hamidian government.

The Russian revolution of 1905 has been studied in detail from various perspectives by Soviet and Western scholars. The Soviet historians especially consider the revolution of 1905 as a way to the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and studied the revolution in detail and produced many political and documentary books and articles about the revolution and its effects in the World. The Western historians also produced great works on the said revolution. Apart from chapters in Shipilkova's, Pankrotova's and Ivar Spectors's works, which in fact mention overall pictures of the effects and repercussions of the Russian revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman empire; there has been no study on the impact of the revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman empire, which uses Ottoman sources of the subject era. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Metin Berge's book, which deals with the Bolshevik revolution and the Ottoman intelligentsia, is a cornerstone in such studies.

Thus, the aim of the subject study is to create a framework for understanding how the Ottomans, who would experience a similar revolution in 1908, regarded a constitution revolution, taking place in the great neighbor Russia unexpectedly. In order to achieve this, one should consider both sides in the Ottoman empire, i.e., the Hamidian government and the Young Turk revolutionaries. Since the main means of spreading ideas for the revolutionaries was the press, the Ottoman revolutionary press in Europe and in Egypt, which contained news about the Russian revolution of 1905, was studied. Moreover, in order to understand what the governing circles of Abdülhamid II perceived pertaining the revolution, the official documents of the Ottoman empire including reports of the St. Embassy, special reports of the Grand Vizier, translations made by the Chambers of Translation, documents regarding the foreign affairs and military and agreements signed between the Ottoman and Russian empires were examined. Thus, the thesis aims at providing the perception of a

constitutional revolution by both sides in the Ottoman empire through first-hand sources.

The thesis is divided into three main parts following the introduction, the first chapter provides the reader with an historical background to the Revolution of 1905 and the course of revolution and the position of the Ottoman empire in 1905 with regard to the Hamidian rule and government and the Young Turk revolutionaries. This chapter is mainly based on secondary English, Turkish and Russian sources.

The second chapter explores how the Ottoman revolutionary journals published in Europe and in Egypt, where arms of the Sultan could not reach, regarded the Russian revolution of 1905. The subject chapter is based on the journals of *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, *Feryad*, *Osmanlı* and *İctihad* since these journals had the mainstream ideology of the Young Turk revolutionaries and circulated both in Europe and in the Ottoman empire among the intellectuals. The other revolutionary journals were either local, which did not have news in international scope or were ceased to be published at that time. In order to provide a clearer picture, this chapter is thematically divided into sub-sections.

The third chapter shows how the Ottoman government perceived the revolutionary activities and the course of revolution and its aftermath in the Russian empire. This chapter mainly relies upon the Ottoman archival documents. The official Ottoman documents pertaining to the revolution of 1905 are found in *Yıldız* classification, which contains the documents gathered during the reign of Abdülhamid II, at Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in İstanbul. Since Abdülhamid II transformed the Palace, namely Yıldız Palace in which he lived, the center of the imperial administration and requested immediate information about the internal and external developments through his network of government officials and of agents, a

great amount of documents was kept in this classification. The said classification also covers special subjects that Abdülhamid II requested detailed information; various reports, petitions and notifications submitted to the Palace; documents of important figures including Kamil Paşa, Mithat Paşa, Cevdet Paşa; hand-written notebooks of Abdülhamid II and maps.

As it is indicated in *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*<sup>1</sup>, the classification reflects the important international political developments of the era including relations with Russia, Armenian problem, Crete events and Egypt. Documents constituting *Yıldız* classification are sub-divided into five groups in the archives: *Yıldız Esas Evrakı*, *Sadaret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı*, *Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı*, *Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı*, *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı*. As can be guessed, this classification contains countless documents of Abdülhamid II's 33-year reign.

Since documents regarding the Russian revolution of 1905 and its aftermath are included within the sub-group of *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı* (Y.PRK.), the subject sub-group and the documents included within this groups need to be mentioned. Most of the documents regarding the Russian revolution of 1905 in *Yıldız* classification are founded in *Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ateşemiliterlik* (Y.PRK.EŞA.), which contains the correspondence between the Palace and the Ottoman Embassies, *Şehbenderlik* and Offices of Military Attaché in foreign countries. Apart from this, the subject catalog also includes the documents forwarded to the Palace by committees, companies and other institutions in foreign countries; documents forwarded by the undersecretaries, interpreters and charges d'affaires of the Ottoman embassies to the *Başkitabet*. This catalog has the documents sent by the Ottoman Ambassador to the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Military Attaché in

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<sup>1</sup> Yusuf İhsan Genç (*et. all*), *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* (İstanbul : T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2000), pp. 361-372.

1905 and in 1905. These documents, as can be guessed, provided the Sultan with very detailed information about the revolution going on in the Russian empire.

Apart from this, another important catalog within the subject sub-group is *Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiyye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği* (Y.PRK.TKM), which covers the petitions and denouncements written in a foreign language and forwarded to the Sultan; translations of the documents of organizations established by foreigners; petitions of foreigners and balance sheets, manifestations of foreign companies; other translated documents without signatures, published documents in foreign languages and their translations. *Hariciye Nezareti Maruzatı* (Y.PRK.HR.) is also included within the sub-group of *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı*. This catalog contains the correspondence and documents forwarded between the Palace and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its offices. The catalog includes the official messages with the signature of the Minister of Foreign Affairs; translations of letters and other documents sent by governors or officials of foreign countries; translations of quotations from foreign newspapers with the letterhead of the ministry; documents submitted by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; documents forwarded by Directorate of Foreign Press.

*Askeri Maruzat* (Y.PRK.ASK) is another catalog within the subject sub-group. This catalog covers the documents forwarded to the Palace by Ministry of War, Ministry of Navy and other offices related with the military. The last catalog of *Yıldız Perakende* is *Mabeyn Başkitabeti* (Y.PRK.BŞK), which contains the copies of the telegrams dispatched to the governors, commanders, ambassadors, inspectors and ministers in the capital; copies of decrees written by the Head Clerk; documents submitted by the Head Clerk to the Sultan.

Apart from these catalogs, since it contains the informative letters submitted by the office of the Grand Vizier to the Sultan about domestic and international affairs and policies followed; the *Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı* (Y.A.HUS.), which especially focuses on the foreign affairs, is also used in this chapter. The subject catalog contains documents in form of informative letters about Eastern Rumeli, Armenian issues, Crete problem, Egypt issue, African issues and relations of foreign countries with the Ottoman empire.<sup>2</sup>

In the period covered by the subject study, the Julian calendar was used in the Russian empire. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Julian calendar was thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar that has been used in the West. Thus, the dates in Julian calendar in the first chapter's parts pertaining to the revolution of 1905 in Russia are preserved; yet the dates of Ottoman revolutionary journals and Ottoman official documents in the second and third chapter are given in accordance with the Gregorian calendar.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 361-372.

## CHAPTER I

### 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1.1. The Double-Headed Eagle Trapped

Russia entered the twentieth century with the revolution of 1905, which would immediately be felt in Iran, the Ottoman Empire, China and India. The Russian revolution of 1905 came into existence and developed as a spontaneous, unplanned and unorganized chain of events, which, step by step, led the country to a constitutional structure. It can be argued with confidence that the revolution of 1905 marked a turning point in the imperial Russian history and had long-lasting effects both for Russians and for neighboring nations that formed a constitutional revolutionary circle shortly after the Russian experience. As Teodor Shanin states Russian Empire started a new century with a revolution and “for the rest of the world a new century began with the Russian revolution of 1905”<sup>3</sup>. In fact, revolutionary movements of 1848 in the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformed into the constitutional revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in various parts of the World, specifically in Eurasian multi-ethnic empires. Thus, the constitutional revolution of 1905 in Russia, of 1906 in Iran, of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire and of 1911 in China took place with the same demands to the rulers. Even, one can add these revolutionary movements of India in the period of 1905-1908 and of Indonesia in 1909<sup>4</sup>. The core of the argument here is the fact that although all these countries, in which constitutional revolutionary movements came into existence, had different social structures and

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<sup>3</sup> Teodor Shanin, *Russia, 1905-07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (Houndmills: Macmillan , 1986), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

different governing traditions; they all experienced similar upheavals and disorders<sup>5</sup> with indeed varying results. Whether it was a “world time” for that region, or spontaneous, but self-completing circle of revolutions<sup>6</sup>, there are similar patterns of development in these constitutionalist revolutionary movements.

Before delving into the topic, however, it is going to be useful to remember and to understand the underlying reasons, development and termination of the Russian revolution of 1905 in a broader perspective. As it has been pointed out above, the Russian revolution came into existence and developed throughout the empire as a spontaneous, unplanned and unorganized movement. As known, all such movements must have a long lasting background to take place, especially in a country with strict Orthodox tradition and centuries old autocracy.

### **1.1.1. Background to the Russian revolution of 1905**

In spite of the fact that the events that occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and transformed Russia into a revolutionary upheaval can be considered as a part of the events including massive strikes, peasants disorders, struggles for parliamentary suffrage, armed mutinies that were taking place in Europe<sup>7</sup>; the Russian case turned out to be a constitutional revolution in which nearly all classes of the Russian society united against the autocracy; and ended with establishment of a Duma that challenged with the supreme autocracy of the tsar that had been granted by God.

The term revolution is generally considered as a leap in social structure, which integrates fundamental systems of domination, property relations and class

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<sup>5</sup> Nader Sohrabi, “Historicising Revolutions: Constitutional Revolutions in the Ottoman Empire, Iran and Russia 1905-1908”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (May, 1995), p.1384.

<sup>6</sup> Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp.25-50.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Stone, *Europe Transformed 1878 – 1919* (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), Part II.



divisions.<sup>8</sup> It may also lead to a transformation of the state apparatus with newly consolidated state organizations following the transformation of the socio-economic structure, removal of its rulers<sup>9</sup>, and promotion of further change. Moreover, revolutions proceed through struggles participated by organized political parties, organized or unorganized social elements including intellectuals, workers, peasants and professionals<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, as Sohrabi stresses, constitutional revolutions and methods of constitutional revolutionaries have should be differentiated from each other. Namely, constitutionalists did not struggle for an immediate and complete overthrow of the state apparatus of the old regime, but instead they demanded an elective representative body through which they would participate directly or indirectly in the legislative process<sup>11</sup>. The next step for them was to carry out gradual reforms and take control of the executive by legislative power<sup>12</sup>.

Indeed, a revolutionary situation necessitates certain conditions, which include a major social crisis caused by wars or economic depressions; rapid crystallization of social classes and other conflict groups; rise of organizations and ideologies behind these organizations; a crisis of governing elite and state apparatus; a linked moral crisis; and lastly a proper international arena<sup>13</sup>. As it can be easily seen, all these conditions had already been existed in Russia in 1905. To add more, when we take the forced change in the Russian monarchy's autocratic rule, the "dress rehearsal" can be considered as a revolution, in contrary to what Alan Wood tells about 1905 in a way that "1905 was not a revolution in the proper meaning of the term" since the strike movements, demonstrations, disorders and mutinies "which

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<sup>8</sup> Shanin, *Russia....*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>10</sup> Theda Skocpol, "State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia and China", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 1/2, Special Double Issue on State and Revolution (Jan. - Mar., 1979), p.7.

<sup>11</sup> Sohrabi, "Historicising...", p.1385.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1385.

<sup>13</sup> Shanin, *Russia....*, pp.7-8.

swept across Russia in 1905 left most of her social, political and economic institutions intact”<sup>14</sup>.

Wood obviously perceives the chain of events with a micro based approach as a road to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, however, he misses the theoretical bases of the revolution of 1905, which took place as a constitutional revolution rather than a post-constitutional revolution, which generally aims at a complete overthrow of the old regime and its state apparatus, in the Russian case, it was the February revolution by which the Tsarist Russia was exterminated. When we consider the road to the Bolshevik revolution that can be traced back to the social discontent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and to the industrial boom of 1890s; “the chain reaction of explosions that shook the Tsarist regime to its foundations”<sup>15</sup> in 1905 is easily seen as a breaking point. Furthermore, the revolution should not be regarded as an event that made any one part of the development inevitable, but rather as a critical juncture that opened up several parts<sup>16</sup>. Then, what made the Russian case end in a revolution lies on the background of these events that can be dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century reforms and their results. Another point that Wood misses is the fact that the revolutionaries of 1905 failed to reach all of their demands. As it will be explained later, the old regime’s state apparatus was able to keep most of its structure intact except for a few, but not efficient changes including a Duma. Yet, as Shanin, who classifies the revolution of 1905 as a *revolution from above*, points out, in revolutions which fail, the long term social transformation triggered off by such a defeat of social forces is often very substantial<sup>17</sup> like complete overthrow of the monarchy in 1917.

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<sup>14</sup> Alan Wood, “Russia-1905: Dress Rehearsal for Revolution”, *History Today*, vol. 31, Issue 8 (August, 1981), p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905, Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), p.2.

<sup>17</sup> Shanin, *Russia...*, p.7.

Reforms from above were an inevitable policy of the traditional empires after manifestation of their backwardness was declared in various events and in their relations with politically advanced European countries. Also, to carry out the reforms from above prevented the revolution from below at the beginning of the social conflicts, so they made reforms to end the social discontent led by the conditions, which could create instability and threaten the status quo of the ruling elite. However, the reforms from above require reinforcement from below in order to be successful to reach their aims<sup>18</sup>.

The first time that the tsarist state seriously considered the Russian people was the era following the French revolution and the Decembrists revolt. These troubles demonstrated that perhaps in the future the *narod* politically would be able to play a role and the masses should have been told what to do. The state formulated a national doctrine as the vague formula "Orthodoxy-Autocracy-Nationality" (*Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'*), which would also be adopted by Nicholas II, in response to "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*" of the French Revolution. Indeed, the French Revolution and the Decembrists revolt did not bring about great reforms or important changes in the Russian imperial structure.

At that point, when we look at the reforms of Alexander II, its effects on the forthcoming social structure and social conflicts deserve a special attention. Alexander II was known as the Tsar Liberator, and as many historians and contemporaries are aware of the fact that he in fact was trying to get rid of the social discontent aroused especially among the peasants and thus to secure his throne. During his reign, Count Loris-Mellikov was made dictator of Russia and a

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<sup>18</sup> Terence Emmons, "Revolution from Above in Russia: Reflections on Natan Eidel'man's Last Book and Related Matters", *Reform in Modern Russian History*, ed. by Teodore Taranovski (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 33.

constitution even was drafted and signed to be promulgated. However, as known the constitution was blown up by a bomb that killed Alexander II.

With the assassination of the Tsar Liberator, Alexander II, the great reforms and future plans ceased to be carried out, which brought about incomplete series of reforms from above. In spite of this, a very important leap in reformation had been provided and various important reforms had been granted to the people. Yet, both the missing parts of the Emancipation Act of 1861 that were “land and liberty” for the peasants and the immediate reactionary policies of Alexander III, who was enthroned after his father’s assassination, led to the quiet continuation of social discontent and gradually to an intense pressure from below. The subject intense pressure from below had indeed stemmed from the peasants and their *narodnik* revolutionaries until a new force, whose foundations had been laid by the industrial boom of 1890s, would be added to them in the revolutionary struggle of 1905, i.e. workers.

Therefore, one can say that before the year of 1905, the gulf between ruled (*nizy*) and ruling (*verkhi*) in the Russian empire has began to widen in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the growing social discontent that had its roots in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when a group of men educated in Western style started to see the ruling class and bureaucracy as the main obstacle beyond the developmental progress of the Russian people<sup>19</sup>, which was also the beginning phase of Miliukov’s “two Russias”. However, one obvious fact which should not be ignored or neglected is that the Russian people, especially the main bulk of them, the peasant, during these centuries or even during the revolution of 1905 never broke with the idea of tsarism. They continued to perceive the Tsar as a divine figure and demonstrated their loyalty to him on certain occasions; when, for example, tsar visited Moscow or traveled to a

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<sup>19</sup> Sidney Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905* (London: The Bodley Head, 1964), p. 26.

part of the country, huge crowds of people gathered and showed their devotion to him, as it was the case in canonization of Serafim of Sarov in 1903. Yet, it is also evident that the people had had certain hatred against bureaucracy and governmental officials, which slowly but decisively urged the fire of antipathy towards existing authority among the peasants, at a faster rate among the *intelligentsia* and workers and among some of the national minorities<sup>20</sup>.

Before and during the process of the revolution of 1905 in the Russian empire, the problems that the Tsarist government faced varied and in fact showed the extent of the revolutionary upheavals. There are in fact five basic issues that the tsarist government had to deal with; these were agrarian, labor, nationality, *intelligentsia*, and university questions<sup>21</sup>.

### **1.1.2. Foundations shaken: the Revolution of 1905**

In line with the theory of constitutional revolutions that is formulated by Sohrabi, the constitutional revolutionary movements, which aim at creating legislative assemblies, do not intend to overthrow the whole old-regime suddenly. Their struggle and the old-regime's response follow a similar pattern of development in all constitutional revolutions. When the revolutionary forces prove to the government that they can pose a real threat to the existing system, the government agrees to their demands, i.e. a legislative assembly. As long as, most of the demands

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>21</sup> See, O.G. Bukhovets, "Political Consciousness of the Russian Peasantry in the Revolution of 1905-1907", *Russian Review*, Volume 47, Issue 4 (October, 1988); S. Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry* (London : S. Sonnenschein & co., 1905); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire 1552-1917* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997); G.M. Hamburg, "The Russian Nobility on the Eve of the 1905 Revolution", *Russian Review*, Volume 38, Issue 3 (January, 1979); Oscar Anweiler, *The Soviets: The Russian Workers, Peasants and Soldier Councils, 1905-1921* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Sergei Witte, *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, trans. And edited by Abraham Yarmolinsky, (Garden City, N.Y., Toronto: Double Day, Page, 192) for agricultural and labor problems; and see Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar* (Ankara: TTK, 1948); Hosking, *Russia, People...*; Harcave, *First Blood...* for industrial problem; and see Vladimir C. Nahirny, *The Russian Intelligentsia. From Torment to Silence* (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1983); Petr Struve, "The Intelligentsia and Revolution", *Vekhi*, translated and edited by Marshall S. Shatz and Judith E. Zimmerman, (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1994); Ascher, *The Revolution...*, for intelligentsia and university problems.

of the revolutionaries are accepted by the government of the old regime, a period in which both extralegal and legal in contrast to the former period begins<sup>22</sup>.

In the second stage, both parties, namely the government and the revolutionary groups, try to reinforce its strength and to establish power blocks. Another important fight embedded in this stage is the support of quasi-governmental institutions<sup>23</sup>. However, as it was the case in the Russian experience of 1905, the revolutionary groups tend to demand more as they are given concessions by the government. At that point, the government that is generally still effective and powerful enough takes initiatives and starts a counter-revolution with the support of the social groups negatively affected by the revolutionary movement. Then, another struggle in which constitutionalists carry out illegal methods with illegal resources emerges<sup>24</sup>.

The counter-revolutionary third stage of the constitutional revolutions determines the fate of the revolution and scope of the major demands of the revolutionaries. If revolutionaries are defeated by the government in the third stage, then the revolution fails to reach the fourth stage in which “state building legality” are to be defined by them<sup>25</sup>.

When we look at the Russian Empire before and during the revolution of 1905, we can set the scene for a constitutional revolution with the help of the said theories of revolutionary situation by Teodor Shanin and of constitutional revolution by Nader Sohrabi. As can be remembered, there are certain requirements posed by Teodor Shanin for a revolutionary situation, which were, in summary, an economic or social crises, crystallization of social classes, rise of legal and illegal organizations

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<sup>22</sup> Sohrabi, “Historicising...”, p. 1387.

<sup>23</sup> Walkin, Jacob, *The Rise of Democracy in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p.

<sup>24</sup> Sohrabi, “Historicising...”, pp.1387-1388.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1387.

and ideologies, a crisis of the governing elites, a moral crisis, and a convenient international arena<sup>26</sup>.

As for Russia, it can be said that the economic and social crises, as we have already mentioned above, in the Russian Empire at the turn of the century were so explicit. With a proper international background, the empire was in a financial and economic crisis that was caused both by internal situation following the industrial boom and by the European economic crisis at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, the outbreak of war with Japan in 1904 widened the ongoing economic crisis and put an end to the slight recovery experienced at the end of 1903 and at the beginning of 1904. Also, the agrarian question was still there with hungry peasants and bankrupting nobles, and a booming, yet threatening industry, which added the existing and growing economic crisis a social dimension.

Another obvious development on the eve of the revolution in the Russian empire was marked by a highly fragmented society<sup>28</sup> in which each social class started to obtain a certain consciousness that would further itself towards political consciousness during the revolutionary stages. It is known that the workers began to be organized in last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gradually transformed their organizations into politically-oriented bodies on the road to the revolution of 1905. Moreover, peasant organizations came into being during the revolution. Liberal middle-class and gentry organizations were also there at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Seemingly, certain class consciousness and organizations were the rising trends in the Russian empire.

In terms of the criteria regarding a crisis of the governing elite, first of all it should be said that Tsar Nicholas II was a relatively weak character compared with

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<sup>26</sup> Shanin, *Russia....*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> Kurat, *Başlangıçtan....*, p. 375; Stone, *Europe....*, part II.

<sup>28</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution....*, pp. 11-12.

predecessors and easily affected by his ministers and generals, which caused an unconformity among the governing elites in his reign<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, the bureaucratic machine, which created hatred in some parts of the empire among the people, should be taken into account as a part of the crisis in the governing strata.

The Japanese war and the European economic crises enabled the rapid realization of the revolutionary path in the Russian empire. These two events also fit into the criteria envisaging an appropriate international arena for the revolutionary situation. In addition to this, the defeats that the Russians had at the hands of the Japanese led to a moral crisis both among the members of the government and among the people, who at the beginning of the war had united as a whole including the students, most of the intelligentsia, workers and peasants. Therefore, as it can be understood all the criteria, which are necessary for a revolutionary situation, existed in the Russian empire at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another depressing element was the Japanese war, for which Kuropatkin said, “we need a little victorious war to stem the tide of revolution”<sup>30</sup>. The Japanese, who had been marked as an easy prey and victory over whom had been considered as a matter of time, proved to be victorious day by day, however. Indeed, the Japanese war did not make a revolution, as Ascher says; yet it helped opposition create proper conditions for such a movement in the Russian empire<sup>31</sup>.

While the war in the Far East was continuing to be a source of bad news for the empire, the domestic situation became fatal in the first month of 1905, when the zemtvos, municipal dumas, worker unions, liberalist unions intensified their pressure over the government and their agitation over the people. There were in fact three principal issues that motivated the opponents to the regime these were constitutional

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<sup>29</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, p. 181.

<sup>30</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p.250.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.



struggle, struggle of the labor and struggle of the peasantry. Every social group that involved in the opposition were to a great extent distinct groups, yet each of them had a cause to be in the opposition and each of them stressed one of the above-mentioned issues in their struggles<sup>32</sup>.

Thus, the turn of the century witnessed several violent signs of the coming revolution. The governing elites with a shock experienced the assassination of Sipyagin, Minister of Interior in 1903, of Plehve on July 15, 1904 by a bomb. Moreover, growing intensity and politicization of the worker strikes and organizations and of peasant uprisings provided easy clues for the government officials to take precautions.

Actually appointment of Prince Peter Svyatopolk-Mirsky to the post of the Ministry of Interior can be considered as a change in imperial policy since Svyatopolk-Mirsky was known as a liberal-minded man and his appointment was regarded by many people in the empire as the “beginning of a political spring” (*vesna nadezhd i ozhidanii*)<sup>33</sup>. He, during his first weeks in the office, did not disappoint those who had thought that he would pursue liberal, at least not repressive policies. He firstly removed Plehve’s officials from their posts and took certain steps towards a reform-oriented policy like ending the policy of harassment of the zemstvos. Even, the conservative newspaper, *Novoye Vremya* stressed that the new minister might have been a bridge for a rapprochement between the government and people<sup>34</sup>. However, it was not that easy. Svyatopolk-Mirsky’s proposal for reforms was discussed in a meeting conveyed by the Tsar. The most debated issue in his proposal focused on whether representatives elected by people should be allowed to

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Bokhanov, A.N. (*et. al*), *Istoria Rossii XX vek* (Moscow: AST, 1997), p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 49.

participate in the legislative or not<sup>35</sup>. The result came out to be that representatives were to be accepted in the legislative. However, as expected, the Tsar changed this final version of the proposal in a way that the representatives were not to be elected by people, but by the government<sup>36</sup>. In fact, as Mirsky stressed in his Dairy, Nicholas II, having a passive and indecisive personality, at the beginning agreed with Mirsky that reforms were necessary, but was not sure about the means of affecting them<sup>37</sup>. Then, the Decree of December 12 including the reforms planned and to be considered was issued, yet it did not prove to be effective.

What really became a catalyst of the Russian people and opened the violent phase of the revolution of 1905 was the “Bloody Sunday”. In 1903, when Zubatov’s “police socialism” was backfired and Zubatov was dismissed from the office, Father George Gapon, son of a Ukrainian peasant, began to organize Assemblies of the Workers of St. Petersburg with the approval and support of the police. In attempting such an activity, Father Gapon held the idea that the Orthodox Church should embrace the workers in order to avert the violent upheaval that their condition seemed likely to produce or “the pastor would remain without a flock”<sup>38</sup>. As known there are two basic allegations attributed to Father Gapon. To illustrate, Vice Minister of Interior argued that Gapon was an ally of the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists and his real purpose was to make workers hostile to the Tsar. The other side of the argument claims that Gapon was a police agent receiving a certain amount of salary<sup>39</sup>. Yet, as Michael Florinsky points out, the documentary evidence shows that although he received subsidies and consulted to the police

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<sup>35</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, p. 211.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Turnbull, “The Defeat of Popular Representation, December 1904: Prince Mirskii, Witte and the Imperial Family”, *Slavic Review*, Volume 48, Issue 1 (Spring, 1989), p. 59.

<sup>38</sup> Ivar Spector, *The First Russian Revolution and Its Impact on Asia* (N.J.: Perentice Hall, 1962), p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, p. 10.

officials, he was not an ordinary police agent and his aim was to counteract revolutionary agitations and to organize loyal working elements<sup>40</sup>.

Membership of the Assembly, in which the strongest organization was established in Putilov Arms Factory with 13, 000 workers, grew rapidly. The web of events that would lead the revolutionary movement to the violent phase within the first stage of Sohrabi's theory began when in December, 1904 four workers, members of Gapon's Assembly (*Sobraniye*) were fired from Putilov Factories. Following, upon the announcement of the plant manager S. I. Smirnov that he did not consider the Assembly of St. Petersburg workers authorized to negotiate with him<sup>41</sup>, the sympathetic strikes whose aim was reinstatement of the four workers spread from plant to plant. Thus, the period known as *Gaponovshchina* began. In the following days, as the strikes spread to more plants, list of the demands became longer including even provocatively political issues like constituent assembly.

During the same week from January 2 to January 9, Gapon laid the plans of a peaceful march to the Winter Palace in order to submit a petition to the Tsar who according to Gapon was under the influence of the organized upper-classes and who would embrace his people if he could be reached. Their petition demanded a constituent assembly, free universal education, civil rights, regulation of capital-worker relations and an eight-hour working day with an increase in salaries. At the end, a peaceful march was planned to be realized on January 9, 1905 to the Winter Palace. The Assembly's members agreed in the declaration that if the Tsar did not order his officials to carry out demands of the workers, they were ready to die before the Tsar's eyes<sup>42</sup>. In fact, most of them were aware of the fact that some kind of

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<sup>40</sup> Michael Florinsky, "Twilight of Absolutism", *Russian Review*, Volume 8, No. 4 (October, 1949), p. 322.

<sup>41</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

confrontation might have occurred; yet they did not believe that the troops would dare to fire.

On January 9, 1905, huge number of workers of the Assembly carrying holy icons, Tsar's portraits started their march from different directions to the Winter Palace in an orderly way. In a cold and gray St. Petersburg morning, the unexpected happened. Troops and police forces fired on the unarmed people including women and children. The fire killed 130 people officially and wounded several hundred<sup>43</sup>. However, the unofficial number of the disastrous event can reach three thousand as an English newspaper called *Daily Mail* estimated<sup>44</sup>. Repercussions of the “Bloody Sunday” (*krovavoe voskresen'e*) shocked not only the Russian people, but also the World.

In fact, as many of the scholars of Russian history would agree, the “Bloody Sunday” united the people against the Tsar, which political parties had not been able to achieve for years<sup>45</sup>. The weeks following the “Bloody Sunday” became scenes of mass protests in which every strata of the Russian society including both revolutionaries and constitutionalists acted homogeneously. The protest movements were also accompanied by an “epidemic of strikes”<sup>46</sup> as a means of workers’ protest of the “Bloody Sunday”. Thus, during the first weeks following the disastrous event, the number of the workers on strikes rose to more than half-a-million in the industrial centers of the Russian empire<sup>47</sup>. Now, all the Russian population workers, professionals, local politicians and many other found themselves united in a firm

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<sup>43</sup> Florinsky, “Twilight...”, p. 322.

<sup>44</sup> Wood, “Russia-1905...”, p. 30.

<sup>45</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> Wood, “Russia-1905...”, p. 30.

front against the autocracy<sup>48</sup>. Nicholas II's reaction was illustrating at that point.

What he wrote in his diary on January 9, 1905 is as follows<sup>49</sup>:

“A grim day! As a result of the desire of the workers to go to the Winter Palace, serious disorders took place in Petersburg. In many parts of the city troops were compelled to fire; many were killed or wounded. God, how sad and grim!”

Nicholas II was blamed and have still be blamed by some scholars of the field regarding the causes of the “Bloody Sunday”, which, however, seems unfair since the Tsar, probably, might not be informed about the march. If he had been informed properly by his officials, the end may have been different, because as far as we can infer from the studies on Nicholas II, one can say that he would have appear to the marchers carrying holy icons and his portraits, which was a sign of their loyalty. However, the government failed to carry out a well-planned and stable policy against the upheavals. One of the first actions of Nicholas II was to replace Svyatopolk-Mirsky with Alexander Bulygin, who was a conservative nobleman, on January 15, 1905. Moreover, he appointed General F. Trepov as the Governor-General of St. Petersburg and Assistant Minister of Interior, upon whose advise the Tsar accepted to receive a very carefully chosen group of workers on January 19, 1905 at Tsarkoye Selo. In this meeting, the Tsar read a statement, which covered nothing new for the workers and tried to mitigate the effects of “Bloody Sunday”.

Yet, this subject symbolic act of the Tsar produced nothing, strikes continued and spread, protests became harsher and worst of all, for the Tsar, all these movements were carried out by the whole strata of his people. Now, the revolution was grasped by all classes of the Russian society. The month of February began with a depressing event for the Tsar. His uncle and a member of imperial family, Grand

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<sup>48</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 96.

Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, was assassinated. It was a great grief for the imperial family and for Nicholas II, for whom this event meant so much<sup>50</sup>.

On one of the preceding days to the Decree of February 18, a conversation between the Tsar and Bulygin is very didactic. When Bulygin seemed stressed, Nicholas II said, “One would think that you are afraid a revolution will break out”; and Bulygin answered, “Your Majesty, a revolution has already begun”<sup>51</sup>. On February 18, Bulygin announced that the Tsar intended to summon the elected representatives of people as participants of the legislative process as a consultative assembly<sup>52</sup>. However, the announcement met with little response, and liberals and revolutionaries had already started to demand more, i.e. a constituent assembly with a universal suffrage and right to legislate and to draft a constitution<sup>53</sup>. Moreover, repressive activities were continued by the government officials following the subject Decree, which to some extent showed the untrustworthiness of the government in the eyes of the opposition groups<sup>54</sup>. Yet, an important result of the February Decree was the peasant petition campaign began in response to the Decree, which openly showed the level of politicization of the peasantry, allegedly the Tsar’s most loyal subjects<sup>55</sup>.

Organizations of social classes had already been adopted the same principle of constituent assembly with the mentioned rights. The Union of Liberation and the Union of Unions, composed of fourteen separate professional unions under the chairmanship of P. Miliukov; the Peasants’ Union that was organized in July as a

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<sup>50</sup> Herrison E. Salisbury, *Black Night, White Snow: Russian Revolutions, 1905-1917* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. 136.

<sup>51</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 112.

<sup>52</sup> Kurat, *Başlangıçtan...*, p. 382; Witte, *The Memoirs...*, p. 228.

<sup>53</sup> Wood, “Russia-1905...”, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Miliukov, *Political Memoirs 1905-1907*, ed.by Arthur P. Mendel and trans.by Carl Goldberg, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 42.

<sup>55</sup> Larisa Timofeevna Senchakova, *Prigovory i Nakazy Rossiiskogo Krestianstva 1905-1907 gg.: Po Materialam Tsentralnykh Gubernii* (Moskva : Institut Rossiiskoi istorii, 1994), pp. 29-30; Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 162.

part of peasants' politicization; and the Zemstvo leaders met in July adopted all similar programs aiming at the same goals<sup>56</sup>. Meanwhile, the industrial, political upheavals began to spread to the villages and to the army, which were known to be dangerous for the Russian monarchy that was based on the loyalty of the army and peasantry. However, in May a moderate air was in the rural areas, while workers in the city continued and intensified their struggle.

The fatal situation became worse with the news of defeat of the Russian army by the Japanese at Mukden in February and at Thushima on May 14-15. Following that, agrarian disturbances again intensified throughout the country. Now, the military prowess of the Russian empire, which was crucial to autocracy, was in the question. At that time, the defeat was clearer, which deepened the crisis both among the ruling elite and among the people. However, it should be said that the Japanese war did not make the revolution inevitable, but it did facilitate and ease the revolutionary movement. Moreover, there are several arguments about the Japanese involvement in the revolution by providing the revolutionaries with funds and arms and helping revolutionary organizations<sup>57</sup>.

Most importantly, the disaffection spread to the army, the stronghold of the tsarist power. The battleship of Potyomkin belonging to the Black Sea fleet of the Russian navy mutinied and arrested or killed their officers on June 14, 1905 and brought the ship with a red flag to Odessa where a general strike and bloody street battles were going on. At first, certain sections of the Black Sea fleet refused to obey the orders to have the ship attacked and sunk<sup>58</sup>, yet in a short while the state machinery run and the mutiny was contained. Mutineers surrendered the ship to the Rumanian port of Constanza. The military mutinies came into existence several

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<sup>56</sup> Florinsky, "Twilight...", p. 324.

<sup>57</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 50.

<sup>58</sup> Shanin, *Russia...*, p. 38.

times during the revolution of 1905 at Sebastopol, Kronstadt and along the Trans-Siberian railway, however, the bulk of the army still remained loyal to the Tsar and his government. Moreover, generally the army mutinies emerged not because of political demands; the army was not adequately politicized to be a part of the revolution in 1905. Yet, they were enough to lead to an apprehension in the government and a hope in the opposition.

The last attempt of the leaders of an important sector of the opposition for reforms from above by appealing to the Tsar came on June 6, 1905 when under the presidency of Prince Sergei Trubetskoi a delegation including such names as Dimitri Shipov, Ivan Petrunkevich, Prince George Lvov and Count Peter Heyden was received by Nicholas II at Peterhof. The main theme of the address that Trubetskoi read was that the country now was on the edge of a chasm by irresponsible actions of the bureaucrats, which brought about a disastrous war and a dangerous internal strife; and the only way of its recovery was through realization of the promised assembly and peace<sup>59</sup>. Although, the Tsar was very attentive and said that he would call for a Duma, the following weeks brought nothing like that. Therefore, “the duplicity and inflexibility of the Tsar” became a turning point for the appealing part of the opposition to turn to more radical elements.

Following that, the only civilian form of support for Tsar and the government came from the Black Hundreds, which was a ultra-nationalistic movement involved in anti-Jewish pogroms and beating up leftist intelligentsia and student mostly. The Black Hundreds had two points in their struggle: fighting against opposition to the groups that attacked on the monarchy in time of a war and to minority groups which, as they thought, had an anti-Russian and anti-governmental feelings<sup>60</sup>. The Tsar and

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<sup>59</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 160.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.



his son would be the honorary member of the anti-Semitic Union of the Russian People (*Soyuz Russkogo Naroda*) to be founded in October 1905<sup>61</sup>.

At a time until when the Russian mentality had already undergone a change in a way that now “being against the government was an act of conformity than that of daring”<sup>62</sup>; the Tsar promulgated long-awaited law establishing a state Duma and defining the procedure and details of the elections on August 6, 1905 as promised in February Decree. However, the program, known as Bulygin plan, brought about new questions rather than peace at home or hopes because it envisaged a consultative assembly and a strange franchise system based on loyal peasantry, especially land owning nobles<sup>63</sup>. Witte also points out the same weak points of the Bulygin plan in his memoirs: the Duma would be a permanently functioning institution; all laws must have been discussed in the Duma; the Duma was an exclusively a consultative body; and the electoral law was based on the peasantry with regional restrictions<sup>64</sup>. Thus, as Witte, in his memoirs, says that the Decree was nothing more than a meaningless and empty gesture and it satisfied no one<sup>65</sup>.

Interestingly, the Bulygin program became a point on which both conservatives and liberals and revolutionists agreed that it was unacceptable. As for, the conservatives the plan was a great concession and as for the liberals and revolutionists it was not satisfactory<sup>66</sup>. The iron grips of the revolution, namely the universities, were blessed by a surprise law of August 27 with restoration of their autonomy, which had been abolished in 1890s. The subject law turned the universities into police-free areas of illegal mass meetings, free speech.

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<sup>61</sup> Wood, “Russia-1905...”, p. 32.

<sup>62</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 132.

<sup>63</sup> Bokhanov, *Istoria...*, p. 33.

<sup>64</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>66</sup> Florinsky, “Twilight...”, p. 326.

Revolutionary leaders addressed long lasting speeches to the students, workers and other professionals. Students educated unconscious, but disaffected workers, artisans, tradesmen, peasants, and even housewives in the lecture halls where they should have been educated by professors. Thus, the universities played a very significant role at that stage, as G.S. Khrustalev Nosar said the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies was a product of university autonomy<sup>67</sup> and even carried out its first meeting in the University of St. Petersburg on October 12.

Meanwhile, a peace treaty was signed with Japan at Portsmouth with fairly advantageous provisions for the Russian empire on August 23, which enabled the government to bring the troops from the Far East to the European provinces of the empire where the unrest and disorder flourished. The chaotic situation that the Russian empire was going through gradually turned into a general strike, which by October 5 seemed very serious upheaval and which with the Railway Union's decision of strike on October 7 grew and spread to every little aspect of the empire's machinery including telegram and telephone services, industrial sector, printing sector and even pharmacies with a chain of solidarity throughout the country. In fact, as Ascher states, the general strike of October was "a classic example of a momentous historical event that developed spontaneously"<sup>68</sup>. It was the time when the political tension reached the peak point among the people.

Out of this grave situation, an important organization emerged. It was the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, which would play the decisive role in the history of the Russian empire. Immediately after its foundation, the Union of Unions and other left-wing groups were overshadowed by it and they regarded the Soviet's natural

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>68</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution....*, p. 211; Harcave, *First Blood....*, p. 180.

leadership<sup>69</sup>. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies convened on October 12 and their publication known as *Izvestia* appeared on October 17, when the Tsar reluctantly signed the October Manifesto granting basic freedoms and transforming the autocracy into a constitutional monarchy.

However, it was not that easy for Nicholas II, who deeply believed in the traditional autocratic rule of the Russian empire and Nicholas I formula of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality", to sign such a manifesto that would be a great threat for the future of the monarchy and that would literally put an end to the autocratic powers of the throne. As he writes in his memoirs, Witte, who was in fact a sincere favorer of the autocracy<sup>70</sup>, yet also held the idea that the autocracy should have been the revolutionary from above<sup>71</sup> as the life became more complex and the autocratic regimes could no longer satisfy the national interest<sup>72</sup>, proposed two alternatives in order to save the future of the throne and the empire: suppression of all elements of the opposition and strikers by force that would be carried out by a dictator to be installed; or granting of a constituent assembly and a constitution<sup>73</sup>. Witte also told to the Tsar that he sided with the second choice and could be the Premier of a united ministerial board under a constitutional regime if ordered<sup>74</sup>. Meanwhile, Trepov as the Governor-General of St. Petersburg and Assistant Minister

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<sup>69</sup> Florinsky, "Twilight...", p. 328; Shanin, *Russia...*, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> In Bernard Pares book entitled *My Russian Memoirs* (London : Lonathan Cape, 1969), he tells a story that he and Samuel Harper were received by Witte for an interview during the time of the Third Duma. When the interviewers asked Count's views on the Manifesto of October, Witte replied: "I have a constitution in my head, but as to my heart..." and he spat on the ground in front of the interviewers. See also, T.H. Laue, "Count Witte and the Russian Revolution of 1905", *American Slavic and Eastern European Review*, Volume 17, Issue 1 (February, 1958), p. 184.

<sup>71</sup> Laue, "Count Witte....", pp. 25-27; Howard D. Mehlinger and John M. Thompson, *Count Witte and the Tsarist Government in the 1905 Revolution* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Walkin, *The Rise....*, p. 183.

<sup>73</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs....*, p. 237.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

of Interior, ordered to the troops “not to spare ammunition in the suppression of mutiny” and tried to tighten the control<sup>75</sup>, for which it was too late, in fact.

After Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich begged his indemnity from serving as a dictator to pacify the empire and after Witte declined a compromise proposal prepared by Goremykin, the Tsar was left with no choice except for the signing the Manifesto of October. The Manifesto was signed on October 17 and informed the Russian people that freedom of speech, assembly, opinion, organization and press was granted; and the Duma was upgraded to a legislative body and the proposed system of election in Bulygin program was extended to include whole disfranchised groups. Following the signing of the October Manifesto, the Tsar appointed Witte as the President of the Council of Ministers since he did not have another choice<sup>76</sup>; and General Trepov resigned on October 21.

With the October Manifesto, the second stage of Sohrabi’s theory of constitutional revolution starts. The October Manifesto was met with a great enthusiasm in the empire; people celebrated their newly won freedoms in the streets. On the other side, the conservatives were disappointed and dismayed. Moreover, the intelligentsia was also not sure about the new concessions of the Tsar. To illustrate, P. Miliukov considered the Manifesto as a great victory, but also as a new stage of the struggle<sup>77</sup>. As for the Tsar, on the other hand, the Manifesto was an unwanted child<sup>78</sup> and a grim concession as he said to his mother in one of his letters written on October 19<sup>79</sup>:

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<sup>75</sup> Shanin, *Russia...*, p.42.

<sup>76</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 228.

<sup>77</sup> Florinsky, “Twilight...”, p. 329.

<sup>78</sup> Mehlinger and Thompson, *Count Witte...*, p. 29.

<sup>79</sup> Bernard Pares, *The Fall of the Russian Monarch: A Study of Evidence* (London: Jonathan CAGE, 1939), pp. 90-91; Salisbury, *Black Night...*, pp.158-159.

“You remember, no doubt, those January days when we were together at Tsarkoye—they were miserable, weren’t they? But they are nothing in comparison with what happened now...All sorts of conferences took place in Moscow, which Durnovo permitted, I do not know why...God knows what happened in the universities...It makes me sick to read the news...Trepov made it quite plain to the populace by his own proclamations that any disorder would be ruthlessly put down...Through all those horrible days, I constantly met Witte...There were only two ways open; to find an energetic soldier to crush the rebellion by sheer force...That would mean rivers of blood, and in the end we should be where we had started...The other way out would be to give the people their civil rights, freedom of speech and press, also to have all laws confirmed by a State Duma—that of course, would be a constitution...Almost everybody I had an opportunity of consulting is of the same opinion...We discussed it for two days and in the end, invoking God’s help I signed...I had nobody to rely on except honest Trepov. *There was no other way out than to cross oneself and give what everyone was asking for* [italics are mine]...*We are in the midst of a revolution with an administrative apparatus entirely disorganized, and in this lies the main danger* [italics are mine].”

However, as the Tsar might have noticed in the above given letter, the revolution was in the midst of its existence. Thus, the October Manifesto failed to put an end to the revolutionary situation in the country. In fact, as Harcave stressed, “the October Manifesto preceded, rather than followed, the most serious revolutionary disturbances”<sup>80</sup> since as we have already mentioned, the concessions were regarded by the opposition as a new opportunity and a path towards more radical concessions. Now, the solid ground on which the opposition groups had been united against the autocracy since the Bloody Sunday started to crackle since it was divided between two groups. One of them supported the idea that the October Manifesto and the Tsarist government should have been given a chance; and the other favored to go on the revolutionary struggle until the complete downfall of the autocracy and monarchy for a democratic republic or at least to secure an effective legislative control in the administrative machinery<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> Harcave, *First Blood...*, p. 212; Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 274.

<sup>81</sup> Shanin, *Russia...*, pp. 42-43; Laue, “Count Witte...”, p. 39.

In fact, the subject encampment among the opposition was partly caused by the fact the strategy of the old regime that agrees to ambiguous principles. The October manifesto also promised establishment of a State Duma with legislative powers, but the governing powers of the Duma, its legislative responsibilities and the election system for the representatives were the ambiguous issues<sup>82</sup> that were open to different interpretations. As Healy says, “Everything is given, but nothing is given”<sup>83</sup>. Thus, these vague statements in the Manifesto crackled the solid ground of the opposition since the components of it had varying degrees of antagonism and hatred against the autocracy<sup>84</sup>.

As we have said, a new struggle, which was more violent in nature, began both for the government in order to restore order and for the divided opposition in order to secure what the Tsar promised with the Manifesto or get more. Indeed, the subject ambiguities would be the main base of the struggle for the both groups’ legitimacy. Yet, what can be said generally is that the October Manifesto split the support of the people for radical opposition groups including the Soviet, which was deprived of its main bulk of support shortly after the Manifesto<sup>85</sup>, which can be seen in detail in Witte’s memoirs<sup>86</sup>.

The fierce revolutionary upheavals occurred in the *dni svobody* (days of freedom) that lasted from October 18, 1905 to December 2, 1905 when the civic freedoms enjoyed widely by the people and no censorship on the press was imposed in the empire<sup>87</sup>. In these struggles both groups, namely the government and the opposition tried to use both legal and extralegal methods to get more support. At first

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<sup>82</sup> Sohrabi, “Historicising...”, p. 1396.

<sup>83</sup> Healy, Ann Erickson, *The Russian Aristocracy in Crises, 1905-1907* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Book, 1976), p. 17.

<sup>84</sup> Sohrabi, “Historicising...”, p. 1397.

<sup>85</sup> Hosking, *Russia, People...*, p. 413.

<sup>86</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>87</sup> Walkin, *The Rise...*, p. 110.

the increase in the number of disorders throughout the country including worker, peasant, intelligentsia and student groups indicated the country was going towards a wrong direction as Nicholas II explained in one of his telegrams<sup>88</sup>:

“Everybody is afraid of taking courageous action; I keep trying to force them-even Witte himself- to behave more energetically. With us nobody is accustomed to shouldering the responsibility: all expect to be given orders which, however, they disobeyed as often as not”.

The internal situation passed through the months of October and November like that. In November, to illustrate, it was easy to start a strike than to terminate one<sup>89</sup> and peasant risings, nationalist agitation and other disorders continued with a rising effect. However, gradually the state machinery began to handle the issue effectively through end of the days of freedom with punitive expeditions by which the government suppressed the rebellious peasants and striking workers with the use of police and military and lock-outs. As an important stage of the repression, the St. Soviet's leaders were arrested on December 3 by the orders of Interior Minister Durnovo, whom Witte opposed. Yet, the closing of the curtail of the revolutionary upheavals occurred in Moscow where an armed uprising, following the calls for a general strike, against the government forces emerged and lasted until mid-December with a bloody victory of the government forces.

With the suppression of the Moscow armed uprising by the government the third stage in which counter-revolutionary policies were imposed and most of the winnings of the revolution were undermined by the tsarist government began. The second stage, following the promulgation of the October Manifesto, was outweighed by the government rather than the opposition groups, which failed to keep their unity and whose affiliation with the quasi-governmental bodies like the Soviets weakened

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<sup>88</sup> Pares, *The Fall...*, p. 90.

<sup>89</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 281.

after October 17. After the Soviets were crushed and the zemstvos were turned against the constitution; and securing the loyalty of the army, the tsarist government proved to be successful in running the state machine again. Now, it was an easy task for the government to carry out counter-revolutionary applications in the third stage without disorders and upheavals. Thus, the Tsarist regime was able to survive the first revolution from below. Ivar Spector argues that the Tsarist regime succeeded in suppressing the revolution because of the October Manifesto, which split off the opposition forces that was composed of almost all layers of the Russian society and of the end of the Japanese War, following which troops returned to European Russia from Far East and became very effective in suppressing the uprisings and disorders throughout the empire<sup>90</sup>. Yet, Witte says in his memoirs that Russia was saved by a large foreign loan secured and as Spector stresses by the return of army from Far East.<sup>91</sup> One more reason that can be added to them is the lack of structural divisions in the Russian army as Sohrabi stresses due to the successful military reforms initiated by Peter the Great and continued by the successor tsars<sup>92</sup>. Another interesting view that emphasizes the international support given by the reactionary European states to the Russian tsar can also be added the above-mentioned reasons<sup>93</sup>. Pankrotova argues that while the Russian empire helped extensively to the European empires to suppress the revolutions of 1848-1849, in 1905 it was the turn of the Europeans who saved the Russian empire from the revolution<sup>94</sup>.

The other side of the medallion should also be taken into account, if the reforms had been implemented on time by the Tsar and the government or as Witte

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<sup>90</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>91</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, p. 285

<sup>92</sup> Sohrabi, "Historicising...", p. 1392.

<sup>93</sup> A. Pankratova, *Pervaya Russkaya Revolyutsiya, 1905-1907 gg.* (Moskva: Politizdat, 1940), pp. 185-186.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.185.



proposed if the Tsar had been revolutionary from above and initiated the Europeanization of the empire before the people forced him to do, the revolution and the bloody months of 1905 might have been avoided. Nicholas II, as a strong and stubborn supporter of the autocracy, always became reluctant to give concessions, which were never granted on time, thus never pacified the people<sup>95</sup>. Moreover, the government pursued inconsistent and clumsy policies<sup>96</sup> to cope with the revolutionary outbreaks and the lethargy, incompetence and timidity of the executive and administrative officers became an obstacle for the whole body of the government to take effective precautions<sup>97</sup>. Shortly, “it was not the revolutionary terrorists, but inflexible policy of the autocracy that raised the political temperature of all society<sup>98</sup>”.

Then, the road towards the establishment of a legislative Duma as said in the October Manifesto began and was paved under the auspices of the tsarist autocracy. In spite of the fact that the road ended at a different stop when compared with the prospects of the people; certain institutional changes, namely, political parties and a legislative Duma, were secured from the tsarist government. Firstly, the power of the Duma was restricted by unequal and indirect elections similar to what had been proposed by the Bulygin program and by empowerment of the State Council in the legislative process equal to the Duma. Moreover, in order to guarantee the future of the monarchy, “Fundamental Laws” including Tsar’s absolute veto power, discretionary power in financial affairs, right to issue emergency laws without approval of the Duma and the State Council and right to appoint ministers was issued<sup>99</sup>. At the end, Russia had an ambiguous regime something like “constitutional

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<sup>95</sup> Hourwich, “The Russian Duma”, *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association*, Volume 7, Issue Seventh Annual Meeting (1910), p. 54.

<sup>96</sup> Mehlinger and Thompson, *Count Witte...*, p. 14; Ascher, *The Revolution...*, p. 108.

<sup>97</sup> Witte, *The Memoirs...*, p. 257.

<sup>98</sup> Walkin, *The Rise...*, p. 191.

<sup>99</sup> Kurat, *Başlangıçtan...*, p. 392; Harcave, *First Blood...*, pp. 247-248.

autocracy”; and to illustrate, its entry in *Almanach de Gotha*, which was the yearbook of European royalty, changed after 1906 as a constitutional monarchy ruled by an autocrat<sup>100</sup> or as Seton-Watson says the regime was neither autocracy nor constitutional monarchy, but something in between.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, subsequent to the revolution of 1905, a new path that would take the empire to the Bolshevik revolution, namely the end of the Russian Empire. When the conditions under which both revolutions took place were considered, one can see various similarities. Namely, both revolutions occurred when the Russian Empire was waging a war in the international arena and when certain economic difficulties and crises had affected peasantry and working class severely. In any case, the revolution of 1905 was over or the “dress-rehearsal” was completed and dress was ordered to be worn in the forthcoming years.

## **1.2. The Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Ottoman Empire**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires were of two traditional multi-ethnic and autocratic empires. They had, indeed, different paths of historical developments. Yet, both empires experienced similar attempts of reforms and constitutional developments as having similar imperial structures. In these empires, especially in the period of their late imperial years, the liberal intellectuals blamed their autocrat of the despotic imperial system that the ruler implemented and that separated their way of development from that of Western Europe.

Moreover, in the Russian and the Ottoman Empire, the nineteenth century was period of intensive reform when external forces and developments were of crucial importance for reforms. During this century, the Ottoman Empire had already

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<sup>100</sup> Hancave, *First Blood...*, pp.245-246.

<sup>101</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Decline of the Imperial Russia 1855-1917* (London: Mathuen Co., 1958), p. 261.

accepted the superiority of the West in the reign of Sultan Selim III and adopted measures to revitalize the situation.<sup>102</sup> Also, the military defeats and nationalistic revolts of Greeks and Serbs and the revolt of Mehmet Ali Pasha in Egypt in the nineteenth century showed the Ottoman Empire its fatal weakness and corrupt system of military and administration. However, the reform process can be claimed to be a failure both in terms of modern military and of society, which according to Sohrabi played a crucial role in the forthcoming constitutional revolution in 1908<sup>103</sup>.

Both Russian and Ottoman empires watched the internal situation of each other closely and drew lessons from the reforms and attempts of reforms. To illustrate, when Mithat Pasha, who brought economic reforms and relative prosperity to the Ottoman Empire and prepared the 1876 Constitution, began to draft the *Vilayet* (province) Law of 1864, which was the first attempt to reorganize the Ottoman provincial administrative system; the Russian ambassador was alarmed and told the sultan that the subject law would undermine his rule over the provinces<sup>104</sup>. The Russian ambassador's opinion about the *Vilayet* Law might have been affected by the zemstvo reforms of Alexander II in the Russian Empire.

Furthermore, both the Russian and the Ottoman empires were parts of the same circular chain of constitutional revolutions that came and shook the Eurasia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Russian revolution of 1905 was followed by the Ottomans in 1908, yet in a different way and from a relatively different source<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> See Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) for a good description of reforms and transformation of the reform tradition of the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. Also see, Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, two volumes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>103</sup> Sohrabi, "Historicising...", pp. 390-391.

<sup>104</sup> Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 267.

<sup>105</sup> Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi* (İstanbul İletişim Yayınları, 1995), see the introduction.

### **1.2.1. The Ottoman Empire in 1905: Abdülhamid II and the rule of *İstibdâd***

In the year 1905, the Ottoman empire was under the despotic and iron rule of Abdülhamid II, who was enthroned upon his promise to promulgate a constitution known as *Kânun-u Esâsi* in 1876 by the constitutionalist fraction within the bureaucracy and military. However, at that point, it should be noted that there is a significant difference between the constitutional movement of 1876 and of 1908 in the Ottoman empire. The 1876 movement was a result of the long-lasting efforts of reforms from above for which bureaucrats and military officials had worked hard; and initiated and carried out by a group of enlightened military and civil bureaucrats led by Mithat Pasha without a real support of the people. On the other hand, the revolution of 1908 would be supported by the people, minorities and middle-class throughout the empire, although the decisive role would be played by the army. Thus, as it can be seen, the Russian revolution of 1905 brought about partially a new understanding of revolution from below for the Ottoman revolutionary intellectual. The *Kanun-i Esasi* of 1876 was prepared as a very conservative constitution that had provided the Sultan with excessive powers, including the right to disperse the parliament, appoint ministers and provincial administrators, which were very similar to what Nicholas II would intend to do with the Fundamental Laws of 1906 that would be issued before the opening of the State Duma.

In 1905, the Ottoman Empire had already lost much of its past glory and territory. In terms of economy, politics and of relations with foreign powers, the Ottoman empire had been within a process of peripheralization that had begun with the rise of Europe, especially in 18<sup>th</sup> century. The European powers including Britain, France, Austria-Hungary and Russia posed a permanent threat to the

existence of the empire and also an opportunity for the Sultan to defy each threat by allying itself with a different power block in the balance of power.

Although Abdülhamid II declared himself in support of a constitutional regime, he did not hesitate to undermine the meaning of a constitutional assembly in which representatives of people would take part to an advisory body that was not able to promulgate laws. The subject power that the Sultan held produced the expected result and Abdülhamid II dissolved the Ottoman Assembly under the pretext of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 in accordance with the rights that he held. Abdülhamid II said in his memoirs<sup>106</sup>:

“Our country is not mature enough to be governed with a constitutional regime, which would be a disaster for us. This system requires equality among the subjects, but our country is composed of various ethnic groups, including, Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Albanians and Jews...Our Young Turks are inclined to fantasize, because declaring a constitution in our country means an invitation for disorders among the people, which shakes the Ottoman Empire to its foundations.”

Abdülhamid II wrote these sentences in 1905, when the news of the Russian revolution of 1905 was flourishing in the Yıldız Palace as we are going to see in the chapter III of the subject study. Thus, it is an undeniable possibility that Abdülhamid II regarded the events in the Russian empire as an example of constitutionalist struggle and logically argued in 1905 that if such disorders and uprisings had occurred in the Ottoman realm, the empire would have been buried in the pages of history books. In terms of his above-mentioned argument, one can claim that Abdülhamid II was right in trying to prevent such activities in the Ottoman empire, yet another undeniable fact is that the discontent among the people mostly arose from the oppressive rule of Abdülhamid II and his organization of informants, which

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<sup>106</sup> Sultan Abdülhamid II, *Siyasi Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1987), pp.122-123.

might cause an ordinary man to be exiled because of a word that he unconsciously used. History of Abdülhamid II's reign is full of such absurd examples<sup>107</sup>.

These were the years in which one of the most elaborate spy systems, as mentioned above, which was composed of legal and illegal informants, in the history of monarchy was effective throughout the empire and outside the empire<sup>108</sup>. Through this system, Abdülhamid II kept himself informed of every development taking place within the empire or related with the empire. The informants received a certain amount of money or additional salary if they were government officials. Thus, following the declaration of the constitution (*Kânun-i Esâsî*) in 1876, an age of despotism under Abdülhamid II began.

At that time, the importance of the press in shaping the public opinion had already been understood by the Palace and by the opposition movement. Therefore, censorship was tightened with the application of Martial Law Regulation of 1878 and in 1882 not only political, but every kind of journals and newspapers were included within the framework of censorship<sup>109</sup>. The instructions that were forwarded from the Palace to the Directorate of Press indicated the borders of censorship in the Ottoman Empire<sup>110</sup>:

- “\* Priority is to be given to the news with regard to the precious health of the Sultan, production, trade and industrial developments.
- \* No novels or articles are to be published without approval of the Ministry of National Education.
- \* Long literary or scientific articles are not to be published and no usage of the phrases, like “to be continued”.
- \* No gaps in the articles.
- \* Government officials are not to be criticized.
- \* Petitions complaining about corruptions, which are submitted to the Sultan, are not to be published.

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<sup>107</sup> See Süleyman Kani İrtem, *Abdülhamid Devrinde Hafiyelik ve Sansür: Abdülhamid'e Verilen Journaller* (İstanbul: Temel, 1999).

<sup>108</sup> Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press 1908-1911* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> Hıfzı Topuz, *100 Soruda Türk Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Gerçek, 1973), p. 58.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

- \* Certain geographical or historical names, for example Armenia, are not to be used.
- \* Assassinations attempted against the foreign rulers and demonstrations in foreign countries are not to be written.
- \* These instructions are not to be published.”

Abdülhamid II was also very decisive about establishing his rigid order throughout the country. He banned all the words like freedom (*hürriyet*), republic (*cumhuriyet*), constitution (*kânun-u Esâsî*), equality (*uhuvvet*), fatherland (*vatan*), national right (*millet hakkı*), deputies (*mebusân*) and so on from the press and theaters and the effective network of internal informants who regularly reported to the Palace about suspicious activities of anybody or of anything kept the Sultan informed <sup>111</sup>.

Both centralization (diminishing the power of bureaucracy and other peripheral forces) and nationalization of monarchy started during the reign of Abdülhamid II. His reign is interpreted by many historians as “return to centrality of Mahmud II”, which was viewed as absolutism<sup>112</sup>. Abdülhamid II was well aware of the power struggle between the bureaucracy that had been increased its effect since Tanzimat and the Palace. He worked to be the only authority and transform the power of bureaucracy into the throne again. Abdülhamid II gradually eliminated the new bureaucracy and even *ulemâ* (religious scholars) in order to be the only authority in terms of religion as the caliph<sup>113</sup>. He opened modern departments of theology in *Dâr-ü'l Fünûn* and thus diminished the social power of *ulemâ*. He transformed the decision-making process from government departments to the palace<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> Süleyman K. İrtem, *Abdülhamid...*, p. 220.

<sup>112</sup> Karpaz argues that Abdülhamid II used the office of caliphate to legitimize his absolutism. Karpaz, *Politicization...*, p. 19.

<sup>113</sup> Mehmet Ö. Alkan, “Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi Üzerine Bir Deneme”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Tarihi Cilt 1: Cumhuriyete Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, edited by Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekingil, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 2001), p. 390.

<sup>114</sup> Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 35.

Thus, the year 1905 for the people in the Ottoman Empire was passing under the *istibdâd* rule of Abdülhamid II who suppressed all opponent elements within the empire and imposed a suffocating censorship to the press and tried to de-politicize all layers of the society by various repressive methods and laws. In a few years, the discontent of the people would create the necessary nucleus for a constitutional revolution especially among the intellectuals who had to leave the country due to the pressures.

One of the most outstanding events that stirred up the Ottoman government in Istanbul in 1905 was the mutiny of the battleship of Potyomkin belonging to the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. Sultan Abdülhamid II warned the government officials to take every possible precaution to prevent the battleship to come to the Straits. Indeed, Abdülhamid II was afraid of the spread of such mutinies to the Ottoman army whose loyalty was already questionable and which would be the main dynamic of the revolution of 1908<sup>115</sup>. Actually, due to his such fears, the Ottoman navy that had been modernized by Abdülhamid II's predecessors fell into abeyance in the Marmara Sea. As we are going to see, the Ottoman revolutionary press also covered the issue in detail and severely criticized the government in handling it. Nicholas II and Abdülhamid II were corresponded through the ambassadors and decided to help each other for suppressing the subject mutiny in the Black Sea<sup>116</sup>.

Yet, Abdülhamid II in these years failed to prevent the spread of the revolutionary seeds in the Ottoman army. Apart from the fact that officers were the leaders of the 1908 revolution in the Ottoman army, an interesting letter written by the Ottoman officers upon the execution of Lieutenant Pyotr Petrovich Schmidt, who

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<sup>115</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, p. 62.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.



led the Sevastopol uprising of December 1905, to the victim's family shows the strong revolutionary sentiments that had rooted in the Ottoman army<sup>117</sup>:

“We, too, make a pledge to the great citizen Schmidt. We make a vow over his corpse, which is dear to us and to the Russian people. We swear that we will fight to the last drop of our blood for sacred, civic freedom, for which cause of many our great citizens have perished. We vow that we will exert all our strength and means to acquaint the Turkish people with event in Russia, so that by our common effort we may achieve the right for ourselves to live as human beings.”

The idea that the Turkish constitutional revolutionists appreciated the Russian revolution of 1905 and affiliated it with the revolution of 1908 in Turkish is well illustrated by Paul Miliukov, who participated the ceremonies of enthronement of Mehmed V after Abdülhamid II by the revolutionaries. P. Miliukov stresses that he was received by the Turks as a comrade-in-arms and was questioned about the Russian revolution of 1905.<sup>118</sup>

### **1.2.2. Young Turks**

The first organized Turkish opposition known as *İttihad-ı Osmani* was formed in 1889 by İshak Sukûfî, Mehmed Reşad, Abdullah Cevdet, İbrahim Temo and Hüseyinzade Ali in Military School of Medicine<sup>119</sup>. Subsequent to their contact with Ahmet Rıza in Paris, the name of the organization was changed as the Committee of Union and Progress<sup>120</sup>. This new opposition would be known as Young Turk opposition. Moreover, as most of the scholars argued Young Turk movement should be taken into account as a part of the modernization process that the Ottoman empire had gone through. In fact, the name attributed to them, Young

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>119</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu* (Ankara: TTK, 1970), pp.194-195 and Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temeller* (İstanbul: İstanbul, 1970), p. 36; Sina Akşin, “Jön Türkler”, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 832.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 833.

Turks, is a general title used for every group of opposition against the authoritarianism of Abdülhamid II<sup>121</sup> since the time was a “world time” for the opposition to the regime of Abdülhamid II. Revolutionary youth, mainly influenced by the Young Ottoman thought, formed an organized opposition firstly known as *İttihâd-ı Osmani* and then as Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), yet generally called *Jeunes Turcs* by everyone else<sup>122</sup>. Members of the CUP had two immediate objectives that were deposition of Abdülhamid II and restoration of the constitution<sup>123</sup>. Thus, the Young Ottomans of the previous generation, in the next generation, became Young Turks. As Norman Stone argues, “even the foundation-date was symbolic in a European sense. In 1889, the centennial of the French Revolution, the Second International was founded – delegates profited from cheap railway fares offered in Paris: the Italian socialist party was similarly founded in 1892, courtesy of cheap fares to Genoa for the Columbus celebrations”.<sup>124</sup>

Young Turks did never pose an ideology of their own and tried to bridge this gap by adopting popularized versions of the ideologies and ideas discussed in Europe, and by adopting political and social ideas developed out of the revolutionary circles of Abdülhamid II era.<sup>125</sup> Yet, there are certain common features of the Young Turk thought, which were their orientation to the West<sup>126</sup> and their belief that if the necessary precautions through modernization had not been taken in order to put an

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<sup>121</sup> Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Tarihi Cilt 1: Cumhuriyete Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, edited by Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekingil, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 2001), p. 107.

<sup>122</sup> Suavi Aydın, “İki İttihat-Terakki: İki zihniyet, İki Ayrı Siyaset” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Tarihi Cilt 1: Cumhuriyete Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, edited by Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekingil, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 2001), p. 118.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>124</sup> Stone, *Europe...*, p.191.

<sup>125</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), pp. 22,23.

<sup>126</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türkler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989), p.12.

end to the degeneracy of the Ottoman empire; the empire would have collapsed<sup>127</sup>. Apart from these points, in fact, the Young Turk organizations varied from center to center. To illustrate, while a cadre composed of Armenians and Turks carried out the opposition activities in Mersin; in Egypt, Christians were not allowed to join the ranks of Young Turk opposition. Thus, it is impossible to say that all these Young Turk groups shared the same ideology and world-view<sup>128</sup>. Since the nucleus of the Young Turk organization, the CUP, emerged in *Tıbbiye* (Faculty of Medicine); the Young Turks had generally materialist world views. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, young intellectuals and school-going youth began to regard the subject organizations as sacred<sup>129</sup>:

“In 1307 (G. 1891)...Something mysterious was being whispered among the students. Apparently, an organization has been established. But, where and for what? There was no answer to these questions. These hide more mysterious things...The organization, in my view, was something sacred.”

The Young Turks, who were called *erbâb-ı fesâd* (troublemakers) or *eşhâs-ı muzır* (vermin people) in the Ottoman official documents, mainly carried out their opposition activities in European countries and in Egypt. They published their first pamphlet in 1895 and then with the participation of more and more Ottoman intellectuals, who fled from the Ottoman empire; the activities of the Young Turks intensified and accelerated in the European centers and in Egypt until the year of 1908 when officers of Union and Progress seized power in the Ottoman empire. Thus, even following the revolution they could not follow a defined program due to the fragmentations among them became apparent after Adbülhamid II's regime ended in 1908.

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<sup>127</sup> E.E. Ramsaur, *Jön Türkler ve 1908 İhtilali* (İstanbul: Sander Yayınları, 1972), p. 19.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 646.

<sup>129</sup> A letter from Mekkeli Sabri Bey to Abdullah Cevdet quoted by Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal....*, p. 89 from *Abdullah Cevdet Bey Special Archive*.

### 1.2.3. Young Turk Press

History of the Ottoman press dates back to the year 1831 when *Takvim-i Vekâyi* was established upon the order of Mahmud II. During 1860s, the importance of journals and newspapers increased and some journals and newspapers began to publish articles regarding the concepts like freedom, homeland and equality, which had not been known properly by the Ottomans until that time. In fact, Ottoman people learnt such concepts from the press.<sup>130</sup>

Abdülhamid II was aware of the power that the press possessed over the ideas of intellectuals and ordinary reader. As we have already mentioned, during his reign all oppressive measures were taken to silence the Ottoman press regarding dangerous issues that people should not have heard. However, as for the Young Turks, most of whom fled to Europe to continue their opposition, the only way to reach the Ottoman public was the press. Thus, both sides understood the importance of press in shaping the minds of people. Then, the Young Turks began to publish their journals in European cities including Paris, Geneva, London, Brussels, Sofia, Berlin and in Egypt in Cairo, where the Sultan did not have a punitive power. The only precaution that Abdülhamid II could take against these publications was to urge France, England, Switzerland, and Germany to close down these journals or to offer money to the publishers in exchange for stopping their publications<sup>131</sup>. There were about 160 Young Turk journals published in various European countries and in Egypt. However, most of them were short-lived and could only publish few numbers or closed down because of financial problems. In addition to that, there was a great difference between the Young Turk journals, which were published in big cities of

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<sup>130</sup> Muammer Göçmen, *İsviçre'de Jön Türk Basını ve Türk Siyasal Hayatına Etkileri* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1995), p. 73.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, "Jön Türk Basını", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 845.

Europe and Egypt by the Ottoman elites, and the Young Turk journals, which were published locally in the regions that had newly separated from the Ottoman empire or still under its political domination. The difference was while the Young Turk journals of big European cities and Cairo dealt with issues discussed in Europe at that time and freely criticized the Sultan; the local Young Turk journals mostly wrote about local issues and were not free to directly criticize the Sultan and Ottoman administration<sup>132</sup>, due to the pressures that the Ottoman empire could apply to the newly independent states and other regions in which these journals were published<sup>133</sup>. Therefore, these local Young Turk journals were excluded from the scope of this study. Thus, during the Russian revolution of 1905, only the journals studied in this thesis and a few others whose collections are not complete or in special archives continued to be published in Europe and in Egypt.

When the journals, *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, *Feryad*, *Osmanlı*, and *İctihad* are considered, certain common facts can be found. First of all, these journals had a rigid ideological perspective in line with the Young Turk group that published them. Secondly, main target of all these journals was Abdülhamid II and his regime of despotism. When mentioning the Russian revolution of 1905, most of the articles ended with warnings that these events were likely to take place in the Ottoman empire due to the regime of Abdülhamid II and his character. Moreover, the subject journals always tried to agitate people by stressing how Russians revolted and gained their freedom from their oppressor Tsar. Also, as Göçmen argues, since the distribution of the copies was harder than publishing; the dimensions of the journals were smaller than a normal newspaper.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 845.

<sup>133</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria, 1878-1908* (Ankara: TTK, 1998), p. 290.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.

Lastly, these journals always found a way to enter the Ottoman realm and read in the empire by the intellectuals in spite of the all efforts of the Ottoman government to prevent them. Therefore, although the censorship implemented by the Palace was rigid, it can be said that it was not that successful. As one foreign resident of Istanbul noted in 1903<sup>135</sup>:

“The Turkish press Censor confiscates all European journals containing references to the internal affairs of Turkey, or her relations with the Powers, and prohibits the publication of native press of any news of practical importance to the Turkish public. And it is only, therefore, by intercourse with European acquaintances, who receive their correspondence and newspapers through medium of the foreign post offices-English, French and Austrian-that an intelligent Turk is enabled to obtain a knowledge of current political events”

Thus, press and publication were the only and the most effective means of spreading their ideas for the Young Turk groups. In spite of pressures of the Ottoman government and permanent informant activities of the Sultan, the publishers of these journals were able to carry out their struggles against the rule of Abdülhamid II in Europe. The Ottoman revolutionary publications, which always found a way to be circulated in the Ottoman realm, became the main place of discussions that were written without censorship regarding the international and domestic events going on related with the Ottoman empire.

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<sup>135</sup> Quoted by Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism...*, from Lucy Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1911).

## CHAPTER II

### 2. PRESS AS A MIRROR OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905 IN THE OTTOMAN REALM

As we have already mentioned, the Ottoman press in the capital, Istanbul, was under a heavy censorship of Abdülhamid II, who managed to secure Istanbul free from revolutionary activities. The journal headlines in Istanbul in 1905 devoted their pages to the Russo-Japanese war and the defeat of the Russian empire at the hands of an Asiatic nation. Moreover, other news related with the Russian empire could be allowed under the condition that they should not offend the *dilhâh-i hümâyûn* (tolerance limit of the Sultan). To illustrate, *İkdam* informed about the construction of a new military harbor in the Russian empire just subsequent to the October Manifesto<sup>136</sup>. Yet, nothing about the great events of the year of 1905 was mentioned in the same journals<sup>137</sup>. However, the Young Turk journals published abroad, especially in Paris, Cairo, Sofia and Geneva were instrumental in bringing the news of the Russian revolution to the Ottoman empire through foreign post offices which was not under full control of the Ottoman government.

#### 2.1 Publishers and the Ottoman Revolutionary Journals

In this part, repercussions of the Russian revolution of 1905 in the revolutionary Ottoman press are going to be analyzed. In order to handle this task, Ottoman revolutionary journals of *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, *Feryad*, *Osmanlı* and *İctihad* published from 1904 to 1906 have been studied in detail. *Türk*, which, according to Hanioğlu, was a cornerstone of Turkish nationalism, began to be

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<sup>136</sup> *İkdam*, October 16, 1905.

<sup>137</sup> Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar* (Ankara: Kebikeç, 1994), p. 20.

published in Cairo following the Congress of 1902<sup>138</sup>. The journal *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* (Council of People) again started to be published after the same Congress on April 10, 1902 in Paris with a program declaring that the journal would work for the freedom of the Ottoman empire from the foreign powers and from the despots<sup>139</sup>. *Feryad* (Cry), whose aim was to reach a rapprochement between the Bulgarians and Turks<sup>140</sup>, began to be published in Sofia by Mustafa Ragıp in September 1905<sup>141</sup>. Although it was published in Sofia, the subject journal did criticize the Ottoman government and wrote about the Russian revolution of 1905. *Osmanlı* (Ottoman) was published from December 1, 1897 until the end of 1904 by İshak Sukûfî, Tunalı Hilmi, Abdullah Cevdet, Nuri Ahmet, Reşit, Halil Muvaffak, Halil Bey and Refik Bey<sup>142</sup>. *İctihad* started to be published in Geneva by Abdullah Cevdet on September 1, 1904 as a part of Ottoman cultural renaissance<sup>143</sup>.

Indeed, there was not a monolithic Ottoman revolutionary or Young Turk press in 1905; the journals indicated above showed certain ideological and methodological differences pertaining to their struggle with the Hamidian regime and interpreting the events going on in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe at that time. However, as for the Russian revolution of 1905, their interpretations and commentaries were claimed to be close to each other in comparison with their debates regarding the constitutional struggle in the Ottoman empire and its means.

The main source of the subject journals in terms of getting the news about the events going on in the Russian empire was the European news agencies, European and Russian journals, Turkic journals, which mushroomed following the revolution

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<sup>138</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 65.

<sup>139</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi.....*, p. 251.

<sup>140</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for.....*, p. 75.

<sup>141</sup> Dündar Akunal, "Jön Türk Gazeteleri", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 852.

<sup>142</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi.....*, p. 140.

<sup>143</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for.....*, p. 58.



of 1905 in the Russian empire especially *Tercüman* that was published by İsmail Gaspıralı in accordance with the Ottoman grammar and *Hayat* that was published in a simplified Turkish<sup>144</sup>, and telegrams cabled from the Russian empire by Russian Turkic-Muslims. *Tercüman* was an important source for the Ottomans publishers during the revolution. In fact, *Tercüman* itself was distributed and read in the Ottoman empire. *Hayat*, which was published in Azerbaijan, was also very influential among the Ottoman publisher and readers. Even, the Sultan Abdülhamid II asked the Tsar Nicholas II to prevent entrance of these journals to the Ottoman empire<sup>145</sup>. References to the Russian papers in the Young Turk journals covered revolutionary, liberal and conservative papers. To illustrate, the reader can find a reference to conservative *Novoe Vremya* and to revolutionary *Izvestia* in the same issue of the Ottoman journal. However, since they were struggling for the same end, interpretations in the Ottoman journals were mostly based on liberal or revolutionary Russian journals. Yet, generally speaking, it is very easy to see that these journals interpreted the events in the Russian empire and the revolution of 1905 and its aftermath through the European glasses mostly.

It should also be said that they acquired the news more lately than they could have done and very often wrote the dates of the events inaccurately. Moreover, some Russian names and concepts were also given inconsistently in most of their news, which can create confusion for a reader who does not have a deep knowledge of the revolutionary era of the Russian empire in 1905. Furthermore, dates of the events in these journals sometimes are given erroneously due to the confusion of the Gregorian calendar with Julian one.

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<sup>144</sup> Hakan Kırımlı, *Kırım Tatarlarında Milli Kimlik ve Milli Hareketler (1905-1916)*, (Ankara: TTK, 1996), p. 39, 40, 146.

<sup>145</sup> Spector, *The First Russian...*, p.

Therefore, this chapter is designed to analyze the understanding and interpretations of the Russian revolution of 1905, which was led by the same goals in a very neighbor empire with similar structures. The central idea here is that the Russian example was watched closely and an organic tie was tried to be established between the reasons and results of the Russian revolution; and those of possible Ottoman constitutional revolution. In order to achieve the mentioned aim, the Ottoman revolutionary journals published during the years of Russian revolution outside the Ottoman empire were studied. Most of the current collections of the Ottoman press in Turkey, have gaps. Yet, they are adequate to show how the course of events in the Russian revolution of 1905 was told to the people and what comments were made on this revolution.

## **2.2. An overview of the Ottoman Revolutionary Press**

### **2.2.1. His Majesty or Tsar the Oppressor**

One of the basic features of the censorship over the press in Istanbul is related with the titles and adjective used to describe the Tsar. When the Istanbul press mentioned the Tsar, they always used *Çar Hazretleri* (His Majesty) and other glowing titles. However, in the Ottoman revolutionary press published abroad without being censored, the Tsar generally described with titles and adjectives like bloody, oppressor, absolutist (*müstebid*) and with other humiliating words. In *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, the Tsar was described<sup>146</sup>:

“If humanity and society had disciplined the Tsar properly, today, a revolution would not have spread all over the Russian empire like a clap of thunder that threatens the existence of the Russian government....the Tsar has now proved to be a friend of old Abdülhamid in the hell...”

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<sup>146</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 71, March 21, 1905.

The Tsar was also regarded as a disingenuous autocrat by the Ottoman revolutionary press. Moreover, the Tsar was not only criticized because he was an autocrat, but also he was trying to halt the progressive movements and developments in the Ottoman empire<sup>147</sup>. In fact, if one considers revolutionary movement at that time as a progress and development, what the journals said; then, the argument is true because there were several agreements signed between the Russian and Ottoman empires in order to co-operate in the struggle against revolutions in both empires<sup>148</sup>.

### 2.2.2. “Awakening of the Poor and Oppressed Russians”

On December 29, 1904, about 10 days after the declaration of December 12 *ukaz* in the Russian empire, there appeared news on the first page of *Türk* mentioning how the Tsar was forced to carry out reforms (*islahat*) in the empire because of the pressure of the people from below. The journal also stressed, “We ourselves know very well the evil of oppression of throne from which the Russian people are suffering. Although, we, the Ottomans, should be pleased about the subject oppression in the land of our rival and enemy, Russian empire; we are not so since we do not like oppression”<sup>149</sup>. In the same column, it was also said, “look at what the uprisings that the people carried out brought about: the Great Empire was forced to issue declarations”<sup>150</sup>. On the same *ukaz*, another revolutionary journal *Osmanlı* added that such reform movements had not been considered to be implemented by the Russian government, because oppressive policies implemented by these absolutist had been met nothing except for patience and endurance<sup>151</sup>.

In fact, the revolutionary journals started to tell about the zemstvo movement and their petition, or as *Türk* wrote warning note (*muhtıra*) to the Tsar mentioning

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<sup>147</sup> See *Türk*, no. 87, July 6, 1905 and “Muharebe ve İhtilâl”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 72, April 6, 1905.

<sup>148</sup> See the Chapter III.

<sup>149</sup> “Rusya’da İslahat”, *Türk*, no. 61, December 29, 1904.

<sup>150</sup> *Türk*, no. 61, December 29, 1904.

<sup>151</sup> *Osmanlı*, December 8, 1904.

oppressive policies of the government, misadministration of the officials, equality in law at the end of 1904<sup>152</sup>. Furthermore, the students' meetings and demonstrations, favoring civic freedoms and constitution were given in full detail with numbers of the students included in the demonstrations, the places and the following announcements of the Tsar. According to *Türk* published on December 22, 1904 three thousand students marched in St. Petersburg and gathered in Nevskii Square, yet they were dispersed by the Cossack regiments. Upon this, the Tsar announced that the old regime would continue and he would leave the throne intact and having full autocratic powers to his son<sup>153</sup>.

Interestingly, the journals had full details of the events, and, as it has been said; these details were provided from European sources and telegrams; indeed, there was not any Ottoman or Young Turk news agency and no reporter in the Russian empire. To illustrate, *Türk* described a meaningful event occurred in a theatre. While Tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Aleksei, was sitting in a box and talking with upper-class people around his box, a man shouted at him, "Give our money back. All your richness is the seized money of the peasants"<sup>154</sup>. Issues of both *Türk* and *Osmanlı* journals published in December 1904 gave detailed information of the uprisings and the growing disorders with the ongoing political developments<sup>155</sup>.

### **2.2.3. "Internal Situation of Russia and Growing Disorders; or the Rising of the Sun of Freedom"**

*Türk* dated January 26 mentioned the "Bloody Sunday" with a great enthusiasm. It wrote that about 400,000 workers (*amele*)\* marched towards the

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<sup>152</sup> *Türk*, no. 59, December 15, 1904.

<sup>153</sup> *Türk*, no. 60, December 22, 1904.

<sup>154</sup> *Türk*, no. 61, December 29, 1904.

<sup>155</sup> December issues, *Türk*, *Osmanlı*.

\* In fact, the number of workers, most probably due to the source that the journal used, was exaggerated here. The marchers were no more than 200,000.

Winter Palace under the leadership of 24- year-old\*\* Gapon. A point that should be stressed here is that the journal pointed out that some groups of soldiers did not fire on them by failing to obey the orders, yet Cossack regiments and other regiments attacked on the workers and killed about three or four hundred, in line with the journal<sup>156</sup>. The “Bloody Sunday” scene was put on the stage tragically by *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* published on March 21 as follows<sup>157</sup>:

“Thousands of hungry and destitute people, including children, women and aged oppressed under autocratic rule and misadministration of the officials marched to the residence of their “little father”, Tsar, to tell him their desperate living conditions; and kneeled on the snow and said, ‘We are in a desperate situation...we even prefer to be died instead of living in such conditions. We came here took refuge with your greatness for the reforms that you promised to carry out in order to improve our lives’. The Tsar, who has been quiet for a long while, then began to talk. And answered, ‘Shoot them!’. The soldiers were firing on the people. The people were being fired and their blood was flowing on the northern snow. The was one thing, however, that the bullets and swords of the soldiers, who had been defeated by the Japanese and now was winning over their own brothers, could never kill: ‘thought’”.\*

Although, as it really was, the “Bloody Sunday” was regarded by the Ottoman revolutionary press as a turning point and often referred in the forthcoming issues; another turning point for them had been the assassination of Plehve, which, to illustrate, *Osmanlı* saw as a point that initiated the reforms. Moreover, the assassination also attracted attention, according to the same journal, in the Ottoman court and the Sultan immediately requested the full details of the event from his St. Petersburg Ambassador Hüsni Paşa in order to take precautions to protect himself from similar attempts<sup>158</sup>.

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\*\* Gapon was 35 years old at that time.

<sup>156</sup> *Türk*, no.65, January 26, 1905.

<sup>157</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 71, March 21, 1905.

\* Indeed, it did not happen this way.

<sup>158</sup> *Osmanlı*, September 5, 1904.

Events following the “Bloody Sunday” were watched carefully by the Ottoman revolutionary press. *Türk* told that the Tsar decided to convey an assembly composed of Grand Dukes under the presidency of Grand Duke Vladimir on January 21-22 in order to take measures to deal with the people who were ready to struggle for freedom<sup>159</sup>. In the same issue, it was also said, “while the Grand Duke does not seem around in the Japanese War, now he has showed up against the people”<sup>160</sup>. *Türk* also wrote that the event was a massacre; and students, soldiers and workers immediately reacted against the government; and no one knows where the Tsar was at that time<sup>161</sup>. In the same vein, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* said, “Today, there is no way out for the supporters of freedom. Russia is awakening; workers are awakening, peasants are awakening, millions are awakening”<sup>162</sup>. Tsar Nicholas II’s reception of worker representatives and his declaration of grief about the “Bloody Sunday” was also given in *Türk* with news about the arrest and the letter to the officers of Maksim Gorkii, who was interestingly declared as a hero among freedom fighters and a man of noble-character who grew up among the real people. He was told to be one of the most important names of the whole world, “a citizen of civilization” and a freedom fighter<sup>163</sup>. Moreover, Mirsky’s replacement with Bulygin was depicted; and it was said that measures to satisfy the people were considered and the rumors about a possible people’s assembly was ungrounded<sup>164</sup>. *Türk* published a verse about the position of the Tsar, which meant, “Although the Tsar does not want such situations; he desperately has to implement reforms”<sup>165</sup>:

“Hâsılı istemiyorsa da bu gibi hâleti;  
Çar, nâçar kabul etmeli islahâtî”

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<sup>159</sup> “Rusya’ya Dair”, *Türk*, no. 67, February 9, 1905.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Türk*, no. 65, January 26, 1905.

<sup>162</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, no. 71, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, March 21, 1905.

<sup>163</sup> “Maksim Gorkii’nin Mektubu”, *Türk*, no. 68, February 16, 1905.

<sup>164</sup> *Türk*, no. 68, February 16, 1905.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

*Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* regarded all these events taking place in the Russian empire something that had been long expected and said, “Russia is being shaken by an earthquake that happened as a result of Russia’s past and future”. Moreover, the subject journal pointed out that in order to save its existence, the autocratic government, at that time, had to fight in all fronts; in Manchuria, in St. Petersburg, in Moscow and in other parts of the empire<sup>166</sup>. In an article written by Turgud in *Türk* dated March 9, 1905, the author said that the Russian revolutionary movements were of vital importance for their journal and that although they had predicted the current situation in their previous issues; they had failed to estimate the current scale of the disorders which were participated by many and growing number of Russians. The same author also wrote<sup>167</sup>:

“...Thus, the Russian people began to revolt in order to secure that the people must rule over themselves; and they want this by their blood. As a reporter wrote from St. Petersburg, there is a difference between this revolt [Bloody Sunday—M.Y.] and the French revolt. The Russians were led by a priest like a flock of sheep...According to the reporter, what is dangerous in Russia is that the Russians are ready to die...I wish they [minorities in the Caucasus, including Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Circassians, Daghestanis] do side with the oppressed Russians and gain their independence by fighting with them...The statue of autocracy in Russia is tottering and will be overthrown in very near future...”

Thus, the revolution, according to the Ottoman revolutionary press, began in the Russian empire. “What comes into being everywhere in Russia, in the classroom of the universities, among the ordinary people, craftsmen and workers is ‘revolution’”, stressed *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* on March 21, 1905<sup>168</sup>. Meanwhile, *Türk* claimed that ministers who are trying to prepare a program of reform fell into disfavor; and the Tsar under the impact of the supporters of autocracy published an

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<sup>166</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 71, March 21, 1905.

<sup>167</sup> Turgud, “Rusya Ahvali”, *Türk*, no. 71, March 9, 1905.

<sup>168</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 71, March 21, 1905.

*ukaz*, which confirmed the continuation of autocratic regime in Russia<sup>169</sup>. However, Ottoman revolutionaries estimated that if Witte, who favored reforms, and the Tsar had failed to carry out reforms, the people themselves would have done the subject reforms from below<sup>170</sup>.

The subsequent chain of events was given in full detail in the Ottoman revolutionary press. To illustrate, *Türk* wrote that a bombing attempt on Warsaw Police Director<sup>171</sup>; and that people plundered and burnt the market place and freed the prisoners in Yalta<sup>172</sup>. According to *Türk* again, the journals in Russia began to debate the nature of the assembly to be established. *Türk* here made a comment and said, “we know that there was an ancient assembly in Muskovy known as *zemskii sobor*; however, now Russia is an empire having subjects from every language and race, thus such an assembly is not adequate”. Moreover, in the same issue, it was written that every attempt of reform to be made by Bulygin would probably like that of Plehve<sup>173</sup>. In the spring and summer days, the importance of what was going on in the Russian empire was well understood and from that time on journals devoted more space to the situation in Russia. For example, *Türk* began to publish a column entitled “The Internal Situation of Russia” as of May 11, 1905.

From that time on, the journal *Türk* informed its readers in every issue about the situation and the ongoing disorders and revolts in Russia. With regard to this, however, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* continued to publish more commentary articles with comparisons with the Ottoman empire. The Zemstvo Congress and its declaration was published on June 22, 1905 by *Türk* under the title “Zemstvo Address to the

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<sup>169</sup> *Türk*, no. 72, March 16, 1905.

<sup>170</sup> “Rusya’da Harekât-ı Fikriyye”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 68, February 6, 1905.

<sup>171</sup> *Türk*, no. 74, April 2, 1905.

<sup>172</sup> *Türk*, no. 75, April 13, 1905.

<sup>173</sup> *Türk*, no. 78, May 4, 1905.



Tsar”<sup>174</sup> and the Tsar’s answer, which, in fact, was the event that the Tsar received a zemstvo delegation under the presidency of Prince Trubetskoi, was given in detail with the full text of Trubetskoi’s speech and the Tsar’s reply in *Türk* on July 6, 1905<sup>175</sup>.

As the revolution in the Russian empire continued to grow, the Ottoman opposition journals gave more and more space for them. Now, these journals began to publish long articles delving into the history of the Russian empire and the conditions that paved the way for a revolution. A very sociological article was published in *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* on September 14, to illustrate, in order to provide the reader with background of the disorders in the Russian empire<sup>176</sup>:

“...Revolution is, on the other hand, the sudden and violent change in the society’s structure...Now, Russia is in a revolution. Power belongs to one or a few classes in every society...One of the reasons of the current revolution in Russia is that several classes in Russia is trying to get the power from an autocrat...  
...The method of administration that the Petr the Great wanted to install in Russia was the method of bureaucracy (*usul-u idare-i memurin*). The commander and the supervisor of the army of bureaucracy would be the Tsar, himself [the foundations of the autocracy—M.Y.]...  
...Improvement of industry and trade in the empire paved the way for the formation and strengthening of the opposition parties...  
Generally, the industrial workers are different from the peasants, agrarian workers...the industrial workers are more attentive than the agrarian workers to the new ideas that might lead to reforms of their situation, improve their social conditions...The industrial workers are openly hostile to the Tsar...and the agrarian workers have gradually withdrawn its support from the Tsarist bureaucracy and opposition have strengthened among them...  
...If agrarian disturbances occurring in various provinces are organized and bulk of the peasants are attracted by the opposition, then if the army most of which is composed of the peasants follows the suit; the Tsarist government will come to an end.”

In the same vein, when the revolution and its fruits become visible by the Ottoman revolutionaries, the journal *Türk* also published a series of long articles

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<sup>174</sup> “Zemstvolarmın Çar’a Hitabı”, *Türk*, no. 85, June 22, 1905.

<sup>175</sup> “Çar’ın Cevabı”, *Türk*, no. 87, July 6, 1905.

<sup>176</sup> “Rusya İhtilâline Dair”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 82, September 14, 1905.

under the title of “A Comment on Russia” written by Dündar as of June 29, 1905. This series lasted for nine chapters and covered the history of Russia from the oldest times. In addition to this, the long articles on the revolutionary situation in Russia started to appear on the first pages of its issues. For instance, an article entitled “An Observation on the Internal Situation of Russia” said<sup>177</sup>:

“Russia in on the eve of a revolution. Up to now, the Russian government have tried to disorientate the European public by attributing only an economic base and character to the disorders among the workers... Strikes in Petersburg and Moscow; pogroms in Odessa and Warsaw; situation of the Black Sea fleet show that Russia is pregnant with a revolution which will change the backward face of Russia and which threatens the Tsarist regime. The Tsar is helpless and looking for a remedy. Ministers are resigning one by one. The people are coming close to an end. Soldiers in the Far East have sided with the people now... There are two groups of revolutionists in Russia now. One group wants to change everything in Russia and the other groups favors the Tsar...”

Meanwhile news concerning the disorders, strikes, uprisings and meetings of different groups were constantly given in the revolutionary newspapers. Informative news that appeared on the pages of *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, *Osmanlı* and *İctihad* often ended with a sentence of comment that criticized the Tsar and his government, especially regarding his ignorance of people’s will and use of force against his people. Before delving into the path to the revolution of 1905 from the glasses of Ottoman revolutionary press, certain important points on which the Ottoman revolutionary press wrote extensively should be stressed and examined under separate titles. One of these important points is related with the mutiny of Potyomkin, which created an air of fear and alarm in the Palace in İstanbul. The others are the role of intelligentsia and of the peasants in the revolution of 1905 and the Muslim subjects of the Russian empire. The reason why the intelligentsia and the peasants are going to be examined under separate titles, in spite of the

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<sup>177</sup> “Rusya’nın Ahvâl-i Dahilisine Bir Nazar”, *Türk*, no. 89, July 20, 1905.

importance of workers and their organizations and strikes in the revolution of 1905 is that since there was not a class of industrial workers in the Ottoman empire, the main bulk of the people and the possible dynamic element of a people's revolution, which was desired by the Ottoman revolutionaries, was the peasantry in Rumelia and in Anatolia, if we are to exclude middle-class and minorities. In addition to this, as a guide to them, the peasant uprisings and peasant organizations and their historically shaped situation in 1905 were among the extensively written topics of the time. In the same vein, the leading group of the revolutionary movement in the Ottoman empire was the intellectuals who were middle and upper class educated elements of the reformist generation that had its root in the Young Ottomans of the Tanzimat era. Hence, both the role and situation of the peasantry and of the intelligentsia was important for the Ottoman revolutionary groups in the revolution of 1905. Moreover, the Muslims of the Russian empire and their situation during the revolution and in the post-revolutionary era were written much by the Ottoman revolutionary intellectuals, which then necessitates to be considered under a subtitle.

#### **2.2.4 “On the Battleship of Knyaz Potyomkin”**

Understandably, the mutiny of Potyomkin battleship appeared on the first pages of many journals of the Ottoman revolutionaries and various comments on the subject event were made by their columnists. As Tahsin Paşa stresses in his memoirs, Abdülhamid II was very disturbed by the maneuvers of Potyomkin led by the mutineers in the Black Sea<sup>178</sup>. He especially feared that Potyomkin might have come to the Straits and made an impact on the soldiers of the Ottoman empire, which, according to Tahsin Paşa, one of the worst things for Abdülhamid II.

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<sup>178</sup> Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid, Tahsin Paşa'nın Yıldız Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1990), pp. 237-238.

Reasons and the conditions of the Potyomkin mutiny were examined in detail by the revolutionary newspapers, but a bit differently. To illustrate, while *İctihad* mentioned the events and the pre-conditions of the mutiny as we are thought today including the rotten foods and bad behaviors of officers to the soldiers<sup>179</sup>; the journal *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* wrote, “the officers had in their pockets the booklets of Sevastopol Society of Freedom and the soldiers had the principles that are written in these booklets in their hearts”, which included the officers of Potyomkin into the ranks of mutineers and revolutionists<sup>180</sup>.

The journal *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* also claimed with regard to the Potyomkin battleships that Sultan Abdülhamid II asked his officials to do everything to keep the battleship out of the İstanbul Strait, because the empire did not have the necessary military capabilities even to overpower a single battleship due to the Abdülhamid II’s policy that caused the Ottoman fleet to perish in the Sea of Marmara since the Sultan always feared a navy uprising against himself<sup>181</sup>.

However, on the other hand, another revolutionary journal, *İctihad*, stressed, “Abdülhamid II was so alarmed when he heard that Knyaz Potyomkin began to move towards İstanbul that he withdrawn his order to send two battleship to suppress the uprising in Yemen”, which meant that the empire had certain defense apparatus<sup>182</sup>. Moreover, Tahsin Paşa in his memoirs states that the Sultan ordered the defense artilleries located on the Straits to be strengthened<sup>183</sup>. The Potyomkin mutiny, thus, was “a reflection of the internal situation of the Russian empire and

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<sup>179</sup> “Rusya Ahvâli”, *İctihad*, July 1905.

<sup>180</sup> “Knyaz Potyomkin Zırhlısı”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 80, August 16, 1905.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> “Rusya Ahvâli”, *İctihad*, July 1905.

<sup>183</sup> Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, pp. 237-239.

also an event that shows the murders of the Hamidian government in the Ottoman empire”<sup>184</sup>.

As it is going to be told in the next chapter, the Potyomkin issue did not end for Abdülhamid II when the battleship surrendered to the Rumanian authorities at Costanza. Since in accordance with the agreement that the mutineers made with the Rumanian government, the mutineers were given the right of asylum to Rumania, Abdülhamid II was informed that some of these people would come the Ottoman empire with Rumanian passport, which showed that the Potyomkin issue continued for another year for the Sultan, who was very afraid of spread of revolutionary ideas in the Ottoman empire.

### 2.2.5 “The Intellectual Movement in Russia”

In *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* dated February 6, 1905, events going on in Russia were described with several comments and their possible and desired impacts on the Ottoman people with a special focus on the origins of the movement. Universities, in this article, were regarded as the main jumping point of the revolutionary ideas. By using the word, the universities; the journal meant both students and intellectuals in the Russian empire. Indeed, popular support of such a movement had also a great importance for the journal. The subject issue of *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* wrote<sup>185</sup>:

“The fire of war conquers countries by destroying, burning; yet thoughts and ideas stemming from the universities conquer people. Then, sometimes both are pyrotic. However, the first is a regular fire, the latter is sun...For a while Russia has been experiencing thought of freedom and a struggle made for it and the county seems to be on the eve of a revolution. The said movement of thought that are going on in the autocratic Russia, in which the Tsar arbitrarily rules over 130 million people, are led by the universities...The Russian people led by the love of freedom and idea of a revolution seem ready like a floating mine to be fired. It was one of these Russian who blew up famous and cruel absolutist and Minister of Internal Affairs Plehve. When we compare the court of this Russian in which people’s

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<sup>184</sup> “Knyaz Potyomkin Zırhlısı”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 80, August 16, 1905.

<sup>185</sup> “Rusya’da Harekât-ı Fikriyye”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no.68, February 6, 1905.

demonstration saved him from execution with the court of Mithat Paşa<sup>186</sup>, then, can we say that a movement of freedom has begun in Russia?.”

Individual intellectuals were also written and their ideas and letters were given a space in the Ottoman revolutionary press of 1905. To illustrate, *Türk* published the full text of Maksim Gorkii’s letters, one of them was related with the “Bloody Sunday” and the other with the peasants<sup>187</sup>. In addition to Gorky, Tolstoy was also given attention and his interviews and letters were published in full text or as a long summary<sup>188</sup>. However, only the activities of the intellectuals in a revolution was not adequate for the Ottoman opposition groups, for example; *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* in the same issue stressed the importance of support of the people provided for the struggle of intellectuals against autocracy<sup>189</sup>:

“In fact, about eight or ten years before now, our universities and education institutes had awakened in terms of the civic laws. In our universities, young intellectuals had laid the foundations of a movement of thought. However, this movement was eliminated by internal spies and the police. The newly born ideas were crushed with cruelty. What caused this? Either because of lack of knowledge or of understanding, the people failed to support and participate in the subject movement of thought. In Russia, a fleet admiral said boldly that the Kronstadt fleet was not ready to fight against the Japanese...When he was arrested because he said the truth to the people; the people organized a demonstration around the prison. Then, the government had to free him. Yet, our people have not freed for twenty two years even a single person who had been arrested because of his/her struggle for the people.”

In the same vein, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* dated February 9, 1906 wrote that the revolutions were provoked by cruelty and autocratic character of the old regime and

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<sup>186</sup> After his court, Mithat Paşa was found guilty with fake evidences and following the court, he was first exiled, then executed in 1884. See, Ali Haydar Mithat, *Hatıralarım 1872-1946*, (İstanbul: Mithat Akçit Yayını, 1946).

<sup>187</sup> “Maksim Gorkii’nin Mektubu”, *Türk*, no. 68, February 16, and no. 91, August 3, 1905.

<sup>188</sup> *Türk*, no. 96, September 7, 1905.

<sup>189</sup> “Rusya’da Harekât-ı Fikriyye”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 68, February 6, 1905.

led by philosophers and writers<sup>190</sup>. Thus, as it can be seen the Russian intelligentsia and the mass support that it received from the people were among the core issues of the Ottoman revolutionary journals regarding the Russian revolution of 1905. Yet, since the subject Ottoman journals were circulated in Europe illegally among the Ottoman intellectuals and middle class. The bulk of the people, peasants, were not reached by these journals. In fact, most of them were illiterate; and no intensive activity of forming an organization to make them conscious of the current situation was realized by the Ottoman intelligentsia.

### **2.2.6 The *Muzhik* and the Ottoman Revolutionary Press**

Although the peasantry in the Russian revolution of 1905 was not very effective in comparison with the workers- if we exclude the post-revolutionary peasant uprisings-; rather the workers who were the key elements in 1905 with their organized or spontaneous strikes and who attracted the scholarly attention of the west, the Ottoman press emphasized mostly the role that the Russian peasants played in the revolution of 1905. As it has already been said, the reason for that are the demographic features of the Ottoman empire in which peasants formed the bulk of the population and the lack of a working class. Therefore, the Ottoman intellectuals who published the opposition journals in Europe and in Egypt directed their agitation towards the peasantry.

Many articles appeared in the Ottoman revolutionary press regarding the history of the Russian peasants, their position, and their role in the Russian revolution of 1905. To illustrate, *İctihad* dated May 1905 published an article on the rural history of Russia with an emphasis on the institution of *zemskii sobor*<sup>191</sup>. These were informative articles for the Ottoman public. In addition to these, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*

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<sup>190</sup> S. Sezai, "Rusya'da İhtilâl Hala Niçün Muvaffak Olamadı?", *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 87, February 9, 1906.

<sup>191</sup> *İctihad*, May 1905.

wrote extensively about the situation of the provinces and the peasants in the article entitled “War and Revolution”. The article mentioned the plunders of manors of landlords by the peasants with examples of Kursk where peasants, according to the journal, killed nine landowners and plundered their manors. The article also told that the cities including Moscow and Nizhni- Novgrad were threatened by the peasants and the dwellers of these cities asked for more security. Moreover, the journal continued<sup>192</sup>:

“In Russia, peasants are in a fine fuss because of the autocracy, cruelty and misadministration of local officials. Among the ten or fifteen million peasant families, only one-third can get their necessities to survive. Others, who are hungry and naked, have to go to the cities in order to earn their livings...

...these hungry peasants look like mines and torpedo which are ready to fire with a little contact as it is the case now with real mines and torpedo on the coast of Port Arthur. These peasant masses are to be the ammunition of the revolutionaries to blow up the autocracy”.

As it can be seen, the journal well understood the topic and the point that how easy to spread revolutionary ideas upon the peasant masses who came to the city to work in factories as many scholars would agree. Another point, that the revolutionary press connected with the peasantry is the fact that the peasantry were also the army in both Russian and Ottoman empires. Thus, both are connected, at some point, if you are able to agitate peasantry, you may also agitate the army since, as *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* says, “...Against that the Tsar defends himself with his armed forces, which in fact the most dangerous action to carry out in such a case. He can several times use armed forces against the people. However, the soldiers, who are a part of them cannot fight against his sons, father, brothers for a long time”<sup>193</sup>.

While mentioning the events that were going on in the Russian empire, the journal *Türk* also gave a special importance to the peasants, but not as much as *Şûrâ-*

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<sup>192</sup> “Muharebe ve İhtilâl”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 72, April 6, 1905.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*



yi *Ümmet* and *İctihad. Türk* published the letters of Gorkii and Tolstoy regarding the situation of the peasants in Russia. To illustrate, Gorkii said in his letter appeared in a Russian newspaper and copied by *Türk* that those who considered peasants as only rural dwellers were wrong in their thought. They knew what was going on in Russia as much as a civil servant in Petersburg<sup>194</sup>. Moreover, in another article written by Tolstoy for an English newspaper and again copied by *Türk*, the peasantry was considered to be the most important reason of the revolutionary situation in Russia<sup>195</sup>.

The article entitled “On the Russian Revolution” and published in *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* provided the reader with information about the Russian peasantry from the oldest times and argued that they had lived in small communities with an administrative form that had been close to the system of republic; and continued with the argument that the peasants then were enslaved and the system of bureaucracy strengthened and cemented the process of slavery<sup>196</sup>. Although, the same article accepted that the industrial workers were more open than the peasants for new ideas; a revolution to be successful was, the article argued, supported by the peasants and by the army<sup>197</sup>. And the Russian intelligentsia, to some extent, succeeded in obtaining the support of the peasants, especially in European Russia, as *Türk* said, “the *muzhiks*, who regarded the Tsar as the little son of God, now are shaking his throne”<sup>198</sup>.

### **2.2.7 Muslims of Russia and the Ottoman Revolutionary Press**

One of the major topics of the Ottoman Revolutionary press during the Russian revolution of 1905 was the situation and future of the Russian Muslims.

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<sup>194</sup> “Maksim Gorkii’nin Mektubu”, *Türk*, no. 91, August 3, 1905.

<sup>195</sup> *Türk*, no. 96, September 7, 1905.

<sup>196</sup> L., “Rusya İhtilâline Dair”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 82, September 14, 1905.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Konuralp, “Rusya’nın Ahvâl-i Hazîrâsı ve Bizler”, *Türk*, no. 106, November 16, 1905.

Several long articles were devoted by each journal to the Muslims of the Russian empire, whose population reached, according to the journals, 30-40 million. The main idea of whole series of articles appeared on the pages of *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* and *İctihad* was that the Muslims must have taken an active role in the revolution and support the cause of the revolutionaries if they wanted to gain their civic freedoms and then, possibly political freedom. Developments in the Caucasus and in Azerbaijan particularly were reported regularly with an emphasis of the importance and effectiveness of the Muslim population of the Russian empire or how their effect and role in the subject disorders should have been formulated and improved<sup>199</sup>. On March 1905, *İctihad* published an article entitled “Muslims of Russia are awakening”, which stated that the Muslims, especially from the Volga-Ural region participated in the revolutionary activities actively and began to gain a consciousness, which would lead them to their freedom<sup>200</sup>.

In addition to *İctihad*, an article under the title of “To the Muslims of Russia” appeared on the first page of *Türk* on October 13, 1905. This article proposed to the Muslims of Russia that they should have participated actively in politics political struggles and established a Muslim Party. According to the same article written by Turgud, the Muslims must have been conscious of their position in Russia and used this position to gain everything that they could have<sup>201</sup>. Moreover, the author Uğur in his column “I have seen” wrote that the Muslims would have indeed been happy that the Muslims of Russia had been granted civic freedoms; and that if the Muslims of Russia had insisted to remain static, they would have completely assimilated by the others under these conditions<sup>202</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> *Türk*, no. 58, December 6, 1904 and *Osmanlı* December 8, 1904.

<sup>200</sup> “Rusya Müslümanları Uyanıyor”, *İctihad*, March 1905.

<sup>201</sup> Turgud, “Rusya Müslümanlarına”, *Türk*, no. 101, October 13, 1905.

<sup>202</sup> Uğur, “Gödüm ki”, *Türk*, no. 105, November, 9, 1905.

Thus, as can be seen, the Muslims of Russia were given special importance by the Ottoman revolutionary journals. They were encouraged to take active part in party struggles in the Duma and to establish their own parties to strengthen their newly won civic freedoms and to pave the way for autonomy or even political freedom. Indeed, the Ottoman revolutionary journals were read by the Muslims of Russia, especially their ties and communication with Azerbaijan and Crimea were very strong, which Sultan Abdülhamid II feared. The same Muslims of Russia would play an enormous role in the forthcoming Young Turk revolution in Turkey.

### 2.2.8 “The Great Russian Revolution and its Future”

Interestingly, the *ukaz* of August 6 in which the Tsar granted a consultative assembly and very restricted election principles to the Russian people was considered as a great victory of the revolutionaries in the Ottoman revolutionary press. *Türk* gave the news of freedom of the Russian on its first page on August 17, 1905. The column entitled “Political” written by Özbek said<sup>203</sup>:

“Do great results and awards stem from great struggles and difficulties? Russia has had enough struggles and difficulties both within the empire and outside of the empire. In spite of all difficulties, the Russians are writing a glorious history: August 12<sup>204</sup>. As of August 12, the Russians are a member of the European family. On August 12 (birthday of his son, Alexei), the Tsar granted an assembly to the Russians. Although, the decree does not grant everything that the zemstvos and people wanted, with new arrangements, this can slowly and gradually look like the system of European governments.”

However, as the Ottoman revolutionary press was confused about what was going on in the Russian empire and what did the *ukaz* mean; the Russian people, according to the Ottoman journals, were confused. A joke published by *Türk* showed the Russian ideas of the August election system and Duma<sup>205</sup>:

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<sup>203</sup> Özbek, “Siyasi”, *Türk*, no. 93, August 17, 1905.

<sup>204</sup> The date here is given erroneously. The publication date of the *ukaz* is August 6 in accordance with the Julian calendar and August 19 in accordance with the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>205</sup> “Latife”, *Türk*, no. 102, October 19, 1905.

“This conversation between a man that had the right to be elected and his wife took place:  
-‘What is *konstitutsia*?’ Asked wife.  
-‘Wife of Grand Duke Konstantin’ answered his husband.”

Another revolutionary Ottoman journal, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, on the other hand, did not consider the *ukaz* of August 6 as an ultimate triumph of the revolutionaries and wrote nothing important about this *ukaz*. Yet, for *Türk* and *İctihad*, it was a great lap. *Türk* wrote that an assembly was to be summoned by the Decree of August 6<sup>206</sup> with an election law that was so restricted; however, the assembly itself would continue to affect the Russian people<sup>207</sup>. Fortunately, the real difference between granting civic rights made itself clear with the publication of the October Manifesto. *Türk* published on November 9 gave a long column for the Manifesto and published a full text of it in the same column<sup>208</sup>:

“Now, all subjects of the Russian empire were granted freedom. Namely, they wanted and they have got their freedom...If one cannot sacrifice, then he cannot get something desired...These Russians carried their lives at their hands and shed their blood for freedom...Two days before, a general amnesty was announced. The Russian history had a great revolution.”

As it can be anticipated, the October Manifesto was regarded as a great achievement by the Ottoman revolutionary press. However, as *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* wrote, the revolution was still failed to reach an end in a proper way<sup>209</sup>. Yet, the disorders and uprisings including peasants, workers and soldiers were growing and spreading. Then, what would be the future of the Russian revolution according to the Ottoman revolutionary press? As early as August 3, the journal *Türk* announced that this time rather than the people, the Tsar wanted to carry out reforms, yet now the people

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<sup>206</sup> The date of the *ukaz* is given correctly here.

<sup>207</sup> A letter forwarded from Russia, *Türk*, no. 99, September 28, 1905.

<sup>208</sup> Uğur, “Gördüm ki”, *Türk*, no. 105, November 9, 1905.

<sup>209</sup> S. Sezai, “Rusya’da İhtilâl Hala Niçün Muvaffak Olamadı?”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 87, February 9, 1906.

desired to put an end to the autocracy<sup>210</sup>. For the Ottoman revolutionaries, the Russians would, in a short while, be member of the free nations<sup>211</sup>.

Another article written by Konuralp in *Türk* considered the Russian revolution of 1905 and the Manifesto of October as the beginning of the path that would take Russia close to the civilized and free nations of Europe. The same article also presented notable and literal comments of the future of the Tsar's dynasty<sup>212</sup>:

“...Keeping his nation under an autocratic rule with the help of his army, the Tsar entrusted his throne to Trepov the bloodthirsty and wanted to increase his pressure over the people by these measures when he realized that something had gone wrong in the empire. The Tsar anticipated that these measures would suppress the disorders and the will of freedom among the people...Although the Tsar was able to sign an agreement with Japan, he failed to sign an agreement with his own people...Such a freedom that was obtained as the Russians did cannot be taken back easily. It is known that constitution is not granted but taken... Fearing the spread of the uprisings and disorders, the Tsar had to grant a constitution and an assembly to the people...Journals, which had been under the strict censorship in a few months ago, are now shaking the authorities of censorship. The government following this will satisfy people and the Tsar will see how meaningless of the autocratic law given by God. If Romanovs do not lose their throne at that time, they may understand that their Great Father is still supporting them...”

Furthermore, the journal *Feryad*'s editorial written by Mustafa Ragıp on May 31, 1906 said, “now the internal situation of Russia can be said to be tranquilized to some extent; yet the real revolution in Russia can began after that”<sup>213</sup>. The same journal even asked if the parliament composed of people's representatives would forgive the former oppressors or exercise a jurisdiction over them<sup>214</sup>. *Türk* pushed it too far to claim, “The Russian revolution proved to be greater than the French revolution...Russia from now on will not satisfy with a constitutional monarchy and will be the first to declare a republic among the European states...The Russian

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<sup>210</sup> Dündar, “Rusya Hakkında Bir Mütalaa”, *Türk*, no. 91, August 3, 1905.

<sup>211</sup> Dündar, “Rusya Hakkında Bir Mütalaa”, *Türk*, no. 94, August 24, 1905.

<sup>212</sup> Konuralp, “Rusya'nın Ahvâl-i Hazırası ve Bizler”, *Türk*, no. 106, November 16, 1905.

<sup>213</sup> Mustafa Ragıp, “Rusya'da Meclis-i Meşveret”, *Feryad*, no. 64, May 31, 1906.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

people have fully realized what they want is not constitutional monarchy, but a republic”<sup>215</sup>. In the forthcoming issue, an article entitled “Future of the Russian Revolution” claimed that the Russian revolution did not only mean a Russian, but also showed its impact on a geography ranging from the Adriatic coasts to China and that this was not only an economic revolt stemming from internal reasons. The article also said that when the Russian revolution freed itself from foreign impact, it would turned out to be an Islamic revolution<sup>216</sup>.

As it can be seen the Russian revolution of 1905 was considered to pave the way for greater changes in the structure of the Russian empire. Yet, the Ottoman revolutionaries failed to understand and see or preferred not to understand and see that a counter-revolution, which would pacify the country in a relatively short time compared with the revolution, was already on its way in the Russian empire. Only an article in *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* written by S. Sezai mentioned a possibility of a failure regarding the Russian revolution and stated the weak points of the Russian revolutionaries<sup>217</sup>. In this article appeared in the editorial column on the first page, it was said that revolutions did not come into existence suddenly and a general uprising was prepared in long period. However, the article also argued that in spite of being prepared in a long time period, a revolution should have taken place and seized the power in a very short time<sup>218</sup>:

“If it does not, then it means that the revolution has not adequately prepared yet. To illustrate, the French revolution took place in a few days following the Bastille incident...There are two ways for the revolutions prepared in a long time one is to succeed in a short time and the other is to perish in a long time. The reason why the Russian revolution has not yet succeeded in its ultimate goals is that the revolution has not occurred in a spontaneous and unorganized way. Moreover, the revolutionary party is too fragmented ideologically.”

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<sup>215</sup> “Rusya İhtilâl-i Kebiri”, *Türk*, no. 107, November 23, 1905.

<sup>216</sup> *Türk*, no. 112, December 28, 1905.

<sup>217</sup> “S. Sezai, “Rusya’da İhtilâl Hala Niçün Muvaffak Olamadı?”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 87, February 9, 1906.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

Although, the author of the article was able to catch very interesting and meaningful points with regard to the Russian revolution of 1905, he at the end of the article again tried to ensure the reader that the Russian revolution would be successful in spite of a short postponement since the people sacrificed themselves for it and he continued that there was no power that could alter the course of the revolution to end with no results<sup>219</sup>. Moreover, *İctihad* claimed on June 1906 that at that time the power of the supporters of the autocracy and of freedom were equal and that opening of a parliament meant that the freedom was there<sup>220</sup>.

Since a constitutional revolution in one of the strongholds of the autocratic rule in Europe was a great dynamic for the Ottoman revolutionary movement; the period of counter-revolution from above and its success was ignored by the Ottoman revolutionary press and the Russian revolution of 1905 was depicted as a great achievement of the oppressed Russian people led by intellectuals. These were in fact the desired future developments for the Ottoman opposition groups. Therefore, they imposed a censorship of their own and ignored the success of the counter-revolution in the Russian empire in a directly opposite way from the censorship imposed by the Palace that banned the news on the Russian revolution in İstanbul.

### **2.2.9 The Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Ottoman Empire**

The Russian revolution's evaluation by the Ottoman revolutionary press with regard to the Ottoman empire should be taken into account under two mainstream arguments. One of them is that the journals considered the Russian revolution of 1905 as an example to the Ottomans and a successful revolution against the autocratic rule of a ruler against which they also fought in their country. The second

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<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> *İctihad*, June 1906.

is that the revolution and the subsequent formation of Duma were evaluated by the opposition press in a way that through these steps, the Russia empire entered into the path of free nations and thus development, which would leave the Ottoman empire as the only autocratic power in Europe that according to them would deteriorate the position of the Ottoman empire in international arena, so the Ottoman empire must have kept up with the Russian empire.

In the eyes of the Ottoman revolutionaries, two remaining autocracies in Europe were the Russian and the Ottoman empires. Although the European power insisted on imposition of reforms in the Ottoman empire, the Sultan showed Russia as an example of them and considered it as a guarantee of his own rule in the Ottoman empire, the Ottoman opposition groups thought. In fact, the memoirs of a contemporary intellectual, Ali Haydar Mithat<sup>221</sup> confirms this view. According to him, to illustrate, the progressive movement and air created by Tanzimat reforms alarmed the Russian empire, which thought that the sick man would recover from the illness of backwardness<sup>222</sup>. Moreover, he claims that the Russians sent General Ignatiev in order to be an obstacle to the progressive reforms of the Ottomans. Interestingly, this was the same Ignatiev, who tried to hinder Mithat Paşa's *Vilayet* Law, which envisaged an improvement in local administration, by saying to the Sultan that the subject law would undermine his rule in the provinces as we have mentioned above<sup>223</sup>. Another interesting example that Ali Haydar Mithat gives regarding the Russian and Hamidian alliance is re-appointment of Mahmut Nedim Pasha who was a Russophile and the Tsar's advises to the Abdülhamid II sent through an official of the Sultan. According to this, Tsar Nicholas II advised Sultan Abdülhamid II that a) the constitution should have been eliminated completely; b)

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<sup>221</sup> Son of the famous Mithat Paşa, who prepared the first Ottoman constitution, *Kânun-u Esâsi*.

<sup>222</sup> Ali Haydar Mithat, *Hatıralarım...*, p. 80-81.

<sup>223</sup> Karpal, *Politicization...*, p. 267.



the Sultan should have been autocratic; c) dynasty's revenge should have been taken from those who included in the killing of Sultan Abdülaziz<sup>224</sup>. Thus, in line with the Ottoman intellectuals of opposition an unnamed agreement was there between the Tsar, who aimed at preventing the progressive dynamics of the Ottomans and the Sultan, who aimed at protecting his status as absolutists.

Regarding this point, an opposition newspaper, *İctihad*, wrote that Abdülhamid II said, "If the people try to take action against me, they will find Russian battleships on Beşiktaş coast and Cossack whips on themselves"<sup>225</sup>, which was considered as a high treason of Abdülhamid II to his own country. In the same column, a revolution in the Russian empire, due to these reasons, was said to be welcomed by the Ottoman people as if the revolution had occurred in the Ottoman empire. In addition to this, the journal stated, "the future of Russia is of vital importance for Turkey, because Russia is sponsor and protector of not only Turkey's but also whole world's autocratic rulers"<sup>226</sup>.

Moreover, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* made comparisons of the events in the Russian empire in terms of the Ottoman traditions and past. Mentioning the Tsar's assembly convened before the *ukaz* of February 18 in which the Tsar consulted his ministers and the Holy Synod regarding the reforms and the Minister of Justice argued that the autocrat did not have the right to restrict autocracy in the Russian empire, the journal said that even though we still had the constitution of 1876, our minister could not dare to say such a thing to the Sultan, which showed the limits of autocracy in both

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<sup>224</sup> Ali Haydar Mithat, *Hatıralarım...*, p. 82.

<sup>225</sup> *İctihad*, February 1905.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

countries<sup>227</sup>. Indeed, the main point that the journal ignored here is the European culture of the Russian elite. It continued<sup>228</sup>:

“Ottomans! Learn a lesson from these. You had never been enslaved. You have always been free. But, today you seem much more enslaved than Russian *muzhiks*. Ideologies and thoughts do not make any impact on you. No one among you rebels. You should know that continuation of life requires freedom. Because of your inactivity, other nations of the world consider us as a death nation; and small and great, all nations are waiting to take a share from our country.”

In its March 21 issue, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* again made a comment regarding what should have been in the Ottoman empire in an article written mainly about the “Bloody Sunday”. The journal pointed out, after briefing what Gapon said following the “Bloody Sunday”, that these words must have been said by a Muslim religious man in our lands since our religion required this as a must<sup>229</sup>. *Türk* also often stressed the importance of the Russian revolution as an example for the Ottomans, “Now, we know who waits for us and see where we go! In this sense, it is important for us to know which path the Russians followed”<sup>230</sup>. On May 31, 1906 *Feryad* said, “those absolutists who do not know or do not want to know how sacred is people’s will as God says, should learn a lesson from the Russian revolution”<sup>231</sup>. In the same article, which appeared as editorial, the journal said by taking a lesson from the Russian revolution that nations, which did not install their freedom by their blood, were bound to lose it in a short time as the Ottoman people had done in 1877<sup>232</sup>. *Türk* wrote on November 16, 1905<sup>233</sup>:

“We should awaken by seeing the events in Russia. If history is read it can be seen that such revolutions occurring in one country show their effects on the neighboring countries. It is our country which is

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<sup>227</sup> “Rusya’da Harekât-ı Fikriyye”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 68, February 6, 1905.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> “Rusya’da Fikir ve Asker”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 71, March 21, 1905.

<sup>230</sup> Dündar, “Rusya Hakkında Bir Mütalaa”, *Türk*, no. 86, June 29, 1905.

<sup>231</sup> Mustafa Ragıp, “Rusya’da Meclis-i Meşveret”, *Feryad*, no. 64, May 31, 1906.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Konuralp, “Rusya Ahvâli ve Bizler”, *Türk*, no. 89, November 16, 1905.

close to Russia and in need of freedom. History of Russia in the last year should be an example for us. If we do not know how a nation forces its rulers to grant civic freedoms, we should learn. Otherwise, this situation has already began to take us to the edge of a chasm...Let's show a sign of life...Nation should now take control of this.”

As it has been said above, the other reason why the Russian revolution stressed so much in the Ottoman revolutionary press with regard to the position of the Ottoman empire is that the revolutionaries thought that when the Russians obtained their freedom, the only autocratic state in Europe would be the Ottoman empire, which would place the empire in a difficult position in the international arena. To illustrate, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet* argued that the real threat for the Ottoman empire would not come from Russia, but from our autocratic rule, if the revolution succeeded in Russia and that in order to secure ourselves from such a situation, we should have first to look at our internal affairs and tried to catch a progressive path to follow<sup>234</sup>. As *Türk* stressed<sup>235</sup>:

“A new Russia out of today's disorders and uprisings may emerge. Then, Russia may become a real world power, which should be an example for the Ottomans. Even the Chinese have decided to summon a parliament within 10 years and sent students to be educated in Japan. If Russia is granted a constitution, then there will remain no country governed by old regime except for us between Asia and Europe. We rejected the reform proposals from Europe by showing Russia as an example of autocracy. Now, we will have no excuse. We have written and will continue to write on Russia as an example. We do not want the same bloody events to be experienced in our country, but we want our people to learn lessons from these examples...How can we remain incurious while a revolution is on its way in Russia? If we do not take Russia as an example, it is very likely that we will experience the same disasters?”

Again in *Türk*, a letter sent by Turgud stated that the national interests of the Ottoman empire was against establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Russia, which would strengthen the Russian empire in international arena; yet, declaration

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<sup>234</sup> “Muharebe ve İhtilâl”, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, no. 72, April 6, 1905.

<sup>235</sup> “Rusya'nın Ahvâl-i Dahilisine Bir Nazar”, *Türk*, no. 89, July 20, 1905.

of a constitutional rule should have been supported from a humanly point since it meant freedom of 140 million of people<sup>236</sup>. Thus, regarding this point, a constitutional monarchy was regarded as a threat also to the existence of the Ottoman empire, which had been protected by the great European powers from the Russian pressure. But, what would be if Russia became a constitutional monarchy. Then, as the revolutionary opposition feared, the Ottoman empire might have been left to the Russians unprotected. It is in fact, true to some extent, if we consider the one of the reasons of the 1908 military led-revolt in Rumeli in the Ottoman empire; that was to prevent further foreign intervention including the British and Russian regarding the implementation of reforms in the Ottoman empire under the patronage of these states.

Hence, the Ottoman revolutionary press wrote; analyzed; and interpreted the Russian revolution of 1905 in every single aspect since it provided their readers and themselves with a very dynamic example of a constitutional revolution in the strongest autocracy of the World. News on the Russian revolution of 1905 often appeared on the first pages of these journals, mainly as editorials, which showed the importance of news on Russia at that time. As it has been said, peasants, intellectuals, and the Muslims of the Russian empire were the main focuses of the Ottoman revolutionary press with regard to the revolution. To a great extent, these journals were the most important sources that the Ottoman intellectuals within the Ottoman empire learnt about and followed the course of the revolution of 1905. Although there are certain ideological differences among the publishers of the journals used in this study, it is obvious that on the Russian revolution of 1905, all of these journal more or less said the same things, made similar comments and

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<sup>236</sup> Turgud, "Rusya Müslümanlarına", *Türk*, no. 101, October 13, 1905.

comparisons with their own revolutionary experiences regarding the Ottoman empire, which shows the possible lines of merger among these revolutionary groups, in fact. The subject merger took place just before the revolution of 1908, partly on the bases of their lessons that they derived from the Russian and then Iranian constitutional revolutions in which deep divisions among the revolutionaries harmed the course of revolutions. Therefore, as one can easily see, the revolution of 1905 was regarded as a valuable experiment of people and example for the Ottoman intellectuals in the Ottoman revolutionary press.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **3. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905 IN OTTOMAN IMPERIAL**

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

After examining the repercussions of the Russian Revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman revolutionary press, perception of the other side of the struggle regarding the same event should be taken into account. The other side, namely the Ottoman imperial government, was informed about the revolution of 1905 by its embassy in Russia, informants and through Russian and European press. Although no news with regard to the concept of revolution in general and the Russian revolution of 1905 in particular were allowed to appear in the Ottoman press, even a relatively very small detail on the revolution of 1905 was immediately reported to the Palace. Moreover, news and columns that appeared in the foreign newspapers were translated by the Chambers of Translation and were forwarded to the palace.

Indeed, one can easily perceive that every piece of news about the revolution in the Russian empire was of great importance for Abdülhamid II, who would experience a revolution for the same ends that would result in his dethronement from the power and put an end to the practical use of power by the Ottoman dynasty and undermine it to the theoretical means. In fact, Abdülhamid II proved to be effective in taking precautions to suppress the revolutionary tendencies among his subjects by drawing lessons from the same tendencies taking place in Russia and Iran at that time. News and courses of the events that brought about constitutional monarchies were regularly reported to the Palace. Thus, the same dynamics in the Ottoman empire were tried to be silenced and pacified. In the same vein, an important part of the imperial strata, i.e. the army, that had not been so active in the Russian and Iranian revolutions might have been ignored by the Ottoman Palace by

looking at the dynamics of the constitutional revolutions in the Russian empire and in Iran. In the Ottoman empire, however, the army would launch the armed uprising and the harshest struggle against the rule of Abdülhamid II. Actually, Abdülhamid II was known to have feared that the revolutionary ideas might spread to the Ottoman army<sup>237</sup>, yet, the role of army in Russia in 1905 and in Iran in 1906, which was still largely loyal, might have misled him. In fact, it was the role of the army that brought about the most successful constitutional revolution in 1908 among the three multi-ethnic traditional empires.

However, as we are going to see below, the palace was well-informed about the all revolutionary activities in the Russian empire in 1905 and its aftermath through various sources including Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg, informants and European newspapers and journals. Information obtained from these sources was prohibited to be announced to the public since Abdülhamid II feared that his subject would be inflicted by the revolutionary virus that affected the neighboring countries and shook the foundations of their absolutist regimes. Since there was no antidote effective for such a virus at that time, Abdülhamid II tried to prevent his empire by isolating it from the rest of the world in quarantine.

The imperial structure in which reports regarding the Russian revolution of 1905 were processed and perceived was a sophisticated one that had both ossified and crystallized during the reign of Abdülhamid II. During the *Tanzimat* years, the state had already been institutionalized with ministries and a bureaucratic structure<sup>238</sup>. As it has been mentioned above, following the first years of his ascension to the throne, Abdülhamid II succeeded in de-politicizing the Sublime Porte bureaucracy and transferred Yıldız Palace into the center of administration.

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<sup>237</sup> Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, p. 237-138.

<sup>238</sup> Akşin Somel, "Ottoman Empire: Administrative Mechanisms, Bureaucracy and Local Elites", *Empires: Comparative History, Conference 2003*.

Thus, as Somel says, a separate bureaucratic body in Yıldız Palace emerged with the sole principle of loyalty to the Sultan<sup>239</sup>. Moreover, Abdülhamid II established a patrimonial palace structure consisting of people from different origins having certain connections with various segments of the society in his 33-year reign<sup>240</sup>. Thus, with the help of this structure, loyalty to the Sultan in the Palace and among the various segments that the subject patrimonial bureaucracy had ties; and a permanent flow of information to the Palace were provided.

Abdülhamid II was also successful in establishing informal ties with various agents and informants from the high-ranking officials, even among the heirs to the throne in the Ottoman dynasty, to the ordinary people in the Ottoman society. Therefore, as it can be seen, the Court system was created in detail and produced efficient results for 33 years. The patrimonial structure was the main source of loyalty to the Sultan in the Palace; and the loyalty of various segments of the Ottoman society to the individuals that had been included in this patrimonial system brought the loyalty of these subjects to the Sultan. Furthermore, the informants kept the Palace aware of the events ongoing within the Sublime Porte and among the people in advance, which resulted in both an effective control mechanism for the Sultan and a tension among the internal dynamics and institutions of the empire.

Since we have already analyzed the period proceeding the revolution and the course of events of the revolution of 1905 both in line with secondary hand English, Russian and Turkish sources and within the Ottoman revolutionary press; in evaluating the contents of these documents, specifically the last months of the revolution of 1905 and the first month of the year 1906, namely the beginning and

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*



the development of the counter-revolutionary era, are going to be discussed and analyzed below.

### **3.1.How Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg viewed the Revolution of 1905**

Obviously, the basic, the most accurate and the first-hand source in accordance with the Palace with regard to the Russian revolution of 1905 was to be obtained from the Ottoman embassy officials in St. Petersburg. The information from this center was forwarded to the Palace in form of reports to the Sultan; and these reports were written by the Ambassador himself or by other high-ranking personnel of the embassy. Moreover, if Sultan needed, further information and details were requested from these embassy officials. To illustrate, Abdülhamid II asked for further details of Plehve's assassination from St. Petersburg Ambassador Hüsnü Paşa in order to take necessary precautions to protect himself from such an attempt<sup>241</sup>.

The sources that the Ambassador and the other embassy officials used in their reports to the Palace regarding the daily or weekly developments in Russia in 1905 and its aftermath might be the official announcements of the Russian government, Russian newspapers and journals that were circulated in the capital of Russia, revolutionary pamphlets and means of propaganda. Moreover, individual agents in big cities of the Russian empire might be another source for these reports.

Whatever, the sources were, the reports were full of details. Even the smallest-scale event, which occurred in a relatively unimportant city, was reported to the Sultan in these reports in a way that showed the course of events and how it emerged and developed. When mentioning an event, the city names, district names, casualties and deaths from each side were inevitable parts of the subject reports prepared by the Embassy. Furthermore, these reports, apparently, paid a great

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<sup>241</sup> *Osmanlı*, September 5, 1904.

attention to the personal names and importance and role of these names in each event reported.

Language used in these reports is also another point that should be emphasized. The revolutionaries were explicitly regarded as the other side and assassins of the high-ranking Russian governmental officials and were described with adjectives like “*câni and kâtil*” (murderer). Moreover, revolutionary groups were labeled with rather insulting words for the Ottomans like “*anarşist*” (anarchist). On the other hand, the Russian government officials were always respected in these reports. The name of the Tsar, to illustrate, was always used with the adjective “*hazretleri*” (sacred). Therefore, it can be said that these documents demonstrate narrative of a constitutional revolution and its aftermath from an absolutist perspective day by day including important events, names, dates, places and figures.

As it has been explained above, the reports forwarded by the Ottoman Ambassador in St. Petersburg and by Military Attaché and other officials of the Embassy are stored in the *Yıldız Perakende Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ateşemiliterlik* catalog. Ottoman Ambassador in St. Petersburg had very important and parlous duties since the Russian empire was one of the key elements in Ottoman foreign policy and in international balance of power. Thus, relations and ways of communications with the Russian officials were of great importance for the Ottoman Ambassador in St. Petersburg. During the Russian revolution of 1905 and its aftermath, Hüsni Paşa was the Ottoman Ambassador. During his term of office, he proved to be sincerely loyal to the Sultan and he reported the events taking place in the Russian empire during and after the revolution of 1905 in detail and as regularly as possible.

The first news of *iğtişâsat* (disorders) as harbinger of the further disorders began to appear in the reports of the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg to the Palace on July 24, 1904<sup>242</sup>. The report also stressed that an assassination by the anarchists was planned to kill the Tsar<sup>243</sup>. The news of the “Bloody Sunday” and the following uprisings and disorders were forwarded to the Palace by the Ambassador Hüsni Paşa on January 28, 1905<sup>244</sup>. The subject report said that the Russian government fired upon the rebellious workers, who first had gone on strike and demanded various concessions from the government<sup>245</sup>. The report also included the anti-tsarist and anti-governmental demonstrations, strikes and uprisings following the subject event in the Russian empire<sup>246</sup>. Moreover, the report provided information regarding the international reactions and condemnations, especially those of France<sup>247</sup> with regard to the mentioned event occurred in St. Petersburg and later to be known as “Bloody Sunday”. On April 20, 1905, the report dispatched by the Embassy mentioned the envisaged reforms and precautions to be implemented by the government in order to pacify the increasing tension among the people<sup>248</sup>. According to the subject report, the reasons of the discontent and disorders would be examined and necessary reforms to satisfy people would be applied<sup>249</sup>.

On July 7, 1905, Hüsni Paşa, in his report to the Palace, told a series of events regarding the mutiny of the battleship of Knyaz Potyomkin<sup>250</sup>. The report gave a historical background regarding the mutiny and its development, then, the precautions taken by the Russian government to capture the mutiny and its aftermath

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<sup>242</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA. 46/15.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA. 47/13.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA.47/47.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 47/91.

were given in detail with names of the mutineers and officers. At that time the mutineers had already been surrendered to the Rumanian authorities at Costanza, yet, as it can be understood from the document, Hüsni Paşa tried to attract attention to the precautions taken by the Russian government and then how the government acted in order to stop the mutiny before it grew to the unwanted extents<sup>251</sup>.

On December 12, 1905, the report forwarded by the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg indicated that the Russian government began to take necessary precautions to prevent revolutionary disorders throughout the empire and announced the penalties to be implemented in case of a disorder or uprising.<sup>252</sup> Yet, as it can be seen in the report, although these precautions showed certain impact over the people, some groups including workers of the postal services and a military regiment in Moscow continued their uprising and a rebellion was planned in the Baltic provinces to separate the subject provinces from the Russian empire<sup>253</sup>. Moreover, the report informed that nine newspaper proprietors were arrested and their newspapers were closed down by the government officials<sup>254</sup>, which was a very common act of the Ottoman government at that time as we have already said. Meanwhile, the report sent on July 28, 1906 mentioned dispersion of the Duma; appointment of Stolypin to the post of Prime Minister after the resignation of the previous one; and the precautions taken so as to secure the order in the capital city, St. Petersburg<sup>255</sup>.

Another report sent by Hüsni Paşa on September 24, 1906 stressed that military courts were established to exercise jurisdiction upon the revolutionists who tried to

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<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA, 48/47.

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

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA, 49/54.

assassin or killed a military or government official<sup>256</sup>. According to this document, the military courts undertook this responsibility in order to pacify further revolutionary activities. Moreover, in the report it was told the Embassy was doing and would continue to do its best to protect the citizens of the Ottoman Empire in Russia.<sup>257</sup>

After that time, when we proceed to the year 1907, it can be seen that the format of the reports including the hand-writing changed. Moreover, length and details given in the report increased. In addition to that, the reports started to indicate the sources from which information presented was received. To illustrate, in a report dated January 1, 1907 and forwarded to the Palace in the name of the Ottoman Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Hüsni Paşa, it was said, “in accordance with the newspaper *Rus*, a demonstration with participation of hundreds of people in the above-mentioned region and upon the warning of soldiers the demonstrators were dispersed...”<sup>258</sup>. Furthermore, in the same report, it was told that a new agreement or a modification in some articles of the Treaty of Portsmouth were being negotiated between the Japanese and the Russian governments; and this information was said to have been written by European newspapers for a while<sup>259</sup>. In addition to these, now, domestic and international policies of the Russian empire began to be dealt with in the reports apart from the revolutionary activities and governmental precautions against them. For example, Stolypin was claimed to resign from the post of Minister of Interior and only retain his premiership<sup>260</sup>, which was not true, in fact.

Following that date, frequency of the reports forwarded from the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg increased. To illustrate, four reports were sent to the

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<sup>256</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA. 49/63.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA.49/89.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

Palace between March 18 and April 8, 1907; and six reports between May 16 and June 11, 1907. Now, the focus of the reports became the Russian Duma, its activities, political parties involved in the elections and their political orientations. The reports forwarded on March 18, 21 and on April 2, 8 provided information regarding the discussion taking place in the Russian Duma on the abolition of the martial law in the empire and budgetary and agricultural issues<sup>261</sup>. In addition to these, the documents mentioned the disorders and uprising going on, specifically in Moscow and political assassinations, which generally targeted the members of the Duma<sup>262</sup>. According to the reports, various groups of workers often went on strike and government tried to take precautions against them<sup>263</sup>.

Reports dispatched from the St. Petersburg Embassy of the Ottoman empire on May 16, 21, 22 and June 1, 5, 11, 1907 provided information with regard to the revolutionary disorders that were still going on in the Russian empire and the government's proposed and applied precautions in order to suppress such disorders and movements<sup>264</sup>. The reports also mentioned the parliamentary politics and political parties and zemstvo activities<sup>265</sup>, which had already been transformed into a tsarist character at that time. As mentioned, since Abdülhamid II was very interested in the assassinations and assassination attempts in foreign countries, in spite of the fact that such news were forbidden to be published in the Ottoman press in İstanbul; in order to take necessary precautions to protect himself from such attempts; the assassination of Grand Duke Constantine was given in these reports<sup>266</sup>. In the two

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<sup>261</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK. EŞA. 50/20.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 50/50.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

reports dated September 3 and 23, 1907<sup>267</sup>; the St. Petersburg Embassy of the Ottoman empire the disorders and uprisings seemingly suppressed and more space was given to the political developments occurring in the Russian empire. To illustrate, the documents mentioned the zemstvo meeting in Moscow and its outcomes and the issues that had been discussed in the Duma during the subject months<sup>268</sup>.

The reports that were dispatched from the Embassy on October 8, 29 and November 2, 5, 1907 stated that the revolutionary committee which had led the uprisings of soldiers in Kronstadt and in St. Petersburg were judged by the Military court of St. Petersburg and were sentenced with various penalties<sup>269</sup>. Moreover, the same reports indicated that political assassinations in the Russian empire continued, while the government seemingly tightened the measures in order to handle the revolutionary tendencies. In addition to these, the underground revolutionary organizations and governmental struggle against them was mentioned with an example in central Russia<sup>270</sup>. This shows that the once free organizations that had openly carried out their activities in the “days of freedom” following the October Manifesto, now, became again illegal and underground organizations. The election results and the composition of the Duma, in the document, were given attention with the ideas of each group represented (*ibid.*). Actually, in another report forwarded on December 31, 1907; January 5, 18, 1908; by the Military Attaché Mustafa Enver of the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg, the subject revolutionary organizations would be examined in detail in terms of their leadership, organizations, aims and

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<sup>267</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA. 51/9.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 51/33.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

activities<sup>271</sup>; while an extensive information would be provided regarding the domestic situation of the Russian empire.

The report forwarded on October 17, 24 and 31, 1907, which mentioned the revolutionary activities throughout the empire and results of the elections<sup>272</sup>; the above given report regarding the revolutionary organizations<sup>273</sup> and the following report sent on February 3, 1908 to the Palace were written by the above-mentioned Military Attaché instead of the Ambassador. The Military Attaché provided information regarding the revolution in the Russian empire and the situation of the Russian army and the Duma politics<sup>274</sup>.

Then, the last report from the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg in the catalog, which covers the reign of Abdülhamid II, as mentioned above, was dispatched by the Ambassador Hüsnü Paşa on April 13, 1908<sup>275</sup>. It mentioned the activities of the Duma and travel of Montenegrin Prince to St. Petersburg<sup>276</sup>. Interestingly, the subject report that was sent on April 13, 1907 still talked about a revolution in the Russian empire. As it can be seen, although the Russian government had already taken decisive measures to suppress the all revolutionary elements, at least to silence them, and to a great extent became successful; the reports forwarded from the Ottoman Embassy give the impression that there was still a revolution in mid-1906 and in 1907. Indeed, there were revolutionary groups and they continued to carry out certain activities; it was not the case of a revolution in mid-1906 and in 1907. The counter-revolutionary attack of the Tsar and government proved to be successful at that time when the Fundamental Laws that

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<sup>271</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA. 51/71.

<sup>272</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 51/28.

<sup>273</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 51/71.

<sup>274</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.EŞA 51/94.

<sup>275</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK. EŞA. 52/28.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*



restricted and undermined the meaning of the constitutional system had already been issued before the opening of the First Duma.

### **3.2. Chambers of Translation and the Russian Revolution of 1905**

The main duty of the Chambers of Translation in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Abdülhamid II was to translate news and other documents related with the Ottoman empire or that the imperial government was interested in. These news and documents might be written in any language other than Turkish and were translated into Turkish. The subject documents, in the Ottoman Archives, are stored under the catalog name of *Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiyye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği* attached to *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı*. In fact, the subject catalog also includes the documents that are in a foreign language and not translated. Since the Russian empire and its situation had a great importance for the Ottoman Sultan and statesmen, important news appeared in the European or Russian press regarding domestic and international situation of the Russian empire were immediately translated by the interpreters served in the Offices of Translation. The documents related with the Russian revolution of 1905 that can be reached in the archives are mostly the translations of European and Russian newspapers and journals.

A document dated July 7, 1905 contained translation of various parts of the newspaper *Die Zeit* regarding the battleship of Potyomkin, which, according to the translation, surrendered<sup>277</sup>. The subject translation was made by Veli, whose name often appears under the documents related with Russia. News translated in this document was long and included a detailed history of Potyomkin issue with the possible penalties to be implemented for mutineers. According to the document, the Tsar was not expected to forgive even a few mutineers symbolically and the

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<sup>277</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.TKM. 48/66.

mutineers would probably be executed<sup>278</sup>. The document did not only mention the Potyomkin issue, but also the scarcity of food throughout the empire and its possible effect over the growing revolutionary tendencies<sup>279</sup>. Moreover, the disorders in the St. Petersburg regiment and reasons of this were examined in the subject document.

However, the Potyomkin mutiny was not over for the Ottoman empire, as we can understand from another document dated July 21, 1905, according to which Potyomkin mutiny deeply alarmed the Ottoman empire<sup>280</sup>. The document translated by Veli from *Lokale Anzeiger* newspaper dated July 18, 1905 said, “First the Greek war and then the movement of the Russian Black Sea fleet had not had little impact on the Ottoman Minister of Navy; yet this time the Potyomkin issue wakened the Minister from his deep sleep and the threat that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea posed has been perceived well...”<sup>281</sup>. The document also stated the break-down of the Ottoman navy and its current strength<sup>282</sup>. Another document dated February 9, 1906 contained translations of summaries from European press regarding the ongoing events in the Russian empire<sup>283</sup>. Indeed, the offices did not solely translate newspapers, but also official documents of foreign countries. To illustrate, the archival document dated February 23, 1906 was a translation of the Tsar’s decree to notables regarding the attempts to secure the order throughout the empire<sup>284</sup>. In the same vein, the Tsar’s proclamation regarding the Duma was directly translated in the document dated June 18, 1907<sup>285</sup>. The subject documents also included the reasons of the dispersion of the Duma and results of the elections held<sup>286</sup>.

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<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.TKM.48/67.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.TKM.49/17.

<sup>284</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.TKM. 49/25.

<sup>285</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.TKM. 50/15.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

Another document dated June 8, 1906 is a translation of various news from a Brussels newspaper *Independence Belsh*<sup>287</sup>. It mentioned extensively on the agrarian uprisings in the Russian empire and new developments in St. Petersburg regarding the inspection of revolutionaries and their organizations. To illustrate, police had discovered dynamites and revolutionary materials in Zabalkanskii Square in St. Petersburg<sup>288</sup>. The documents also provided information regarding how agrarian protests and uprising took place and how the government and soldiers reacted<sup>289</sup>. In this example, the soldiers fired on the peasants and five of the rebellious peasants died and many wounded<sup>290</sup>.

The documents included in this catalog are direct translations and do not have any personal comments. They are generally short and the expressions used for the Ottoman empire in the European press might be softened. However, they are indeed another good source of information for the Ottoman government regarding the Russian revolution of 1905. If these documents are read with the others, they can provide an overall picture of the world in that year with a special focus on the Ottoman empire, its neighbors and its relations with the great powers of that age. When compared with the *Yıldız Perakende Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ateşemiliterlik* catalog, the *Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiyye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği* put an end to the revolutionary activities in the Russian empire at the end of the year 1906. It means that the European and Russian press and officials documents did put an end to the Russian revolution of 1905 at the end of that year since they constituted the basic sources of the subject catalog.

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<sup>287</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.TKM. 50/14.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.3. The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Ottoman Military Documents

The documents included in the catalog entitled *Askeri Maruzat of Yıldız Perakende* are, in terms of the Russian revolution of 1905, related with the Potyomkin issue and border issues. The first document mentioning a disorder in the Russian empire dates March 15, 1905<sup>291</sup>. In fact, the focus of the subject document was the border violation done by the Armenians, who took advantage of the disorders in the Russian empire<sup>292</sup>. On July 7, 1905, it was said that the Potyomkin battleship began to follow a route towards İstanbul<sup>293</sup> and certain precautions were said to have been taken. As can be understood, Potyomkin issue was watched closely by the Ottoman military since there was not enough defense force on the Bosphorus at that time and the existing ones should have been strengthened, as Abdülhamid II would do<sup>294</sup>. Another document from *Mabeyn Başkitabeti* catalog<sup>295</sup> also displayed the importance of the Potyomkin issue. It alarmed the government that the Potyomkin battleship was moving towards İstanbul and precautions including placing torpedo in the Sea were to be taken in accordance with this<sup>296</sup>. One can learn specific details from these documents. To illustrate, in a document dated July 1, 1905<sup>297</sup>; the Russian Ambassador in İstanbul, Zinovyev, was said to depart for the Black Sea in order to inspect an event that Russian revolutionaries captured a Belgian ship in the Black Sea.

Meanwhile, an interesting document reached to the Palace on August 20, 1905. The document warned the government that some people from the rebellious crew of the battleship of Knyaz Potyomkin came to İstanbul with Rumanian

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<sup>291</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 227/95.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 231/13.

<sup>294</sup> Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, p. 237-238.

<sup>295</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 79/91.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 74/76.

passports<sup>298</sup>. The document suggested that since these people had the possibility of being anarchists; the government should have taken the necessary and compulsory precautions<sup>299</sup>. The district that these people settled in İstanbul and other details were also provided in the document<sup>300</sup>. Thus, as it can be seen, the military documents covered the issues related with the security of the Ottoman empire and protection of its citizens.

### **3.4. The Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Office of the Grand Vizier**

Most of the documents in *Yıldız* Archives regarding the Russian revolution 1905 are classified within the sub-group of *Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı*, which contains documents forwarded to the Sultan by the Grand Vizier regarding especially foreign affairs and developments in foreign countries that might have an impact on the Ottoman empire. The system generally worked in a way that ministries and embassies dispatched informative letters and translation of foreign documents to the office of the Grand Vizier, who forwarded the important ones to the Sultan with a notification. The subject catalog, thus, includes a great amount of documents sent by various sources to the Grand Vizier. These documents are in forms of translations, direct information, newspaper summaries and inquiries regarding any specific issue related with the foreign affairs, especially.

The documents related with the Russian revolution of 1905 began to be forwarded to the Sultan from various sources at the end of 1905. To illustrate, a document dated October 29, 1905 stated that disorders and uprisings spread to all parts of the Russian empire<sup>301</sup>. Indeed, it was the hardest time of the revolution following the October Manifesto for the Russian government. Then, seemingly

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<sup>298</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.ASK. 232/20.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 494/495.

Ottoman officials began to worry about the citizens of the Ottoman empire in Russian and searched for the ways through which the citizens of the Ottoman empire would be brought back<sup>302</sup>. In fact, there emerges a contradiction here with what scholars claimed with regard to Abdülhamid II and the attitude of the Ottoman government towards the Ottoman citizens in Russia. Although, many scholars claim that Abdülhamid II was so afraid of a spread of revolutionary ideas that he even did not let the pilgrims going to Mecca from the Russian empire during the time of revolution; the document shows that he did care about the Ottoman citizens, who might be affected by the revolutionary virus, in the Russian empire and tried to save them from the chaotic situation in Russia.

The subject catalog also includes many documents, which contain translation and summaries of the foreign press on the revolution in the Russian empire. To illustrate, a set of summaries with regard to the same topic was submitted to the Sultan on March 25 and March 26, 1905<sup>303</sup>. The latter document gave the summaries of the newspapers of *Novoe Vremya* and *Novosti* of Russia. Again, a document dated January 28, 1906 provided summaries of news regarding the revolutionary uprisings and activities in the Russian empire in European press<sup>304</sup>. Such documents, which had the same format and included news from the European and Russian and even local Russian newspapers<sup>305</sup>, were forwarded to the Sultan on April 1, 1905<sup>306</sup>; March 29, 1906<sup>307</sup>; April 8, 1906<sup>308</sup>; April 29, 1906<sup>309</sup>; May 9, 1906<sup>310</sup>; May 19, 1906<sup>311</sup>; May 30, 1906<sup>312</sup>; June 4, 1906<sup>313</sup>; July 15, 1906<sup>314</sup>; July

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<sup>302</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 497/98.

<sup>303</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 500/103; *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 500/113.

<sup>304</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 499/16.

<sup>305</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 507/3.

<sup>306</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 500/142.

<sup>307</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 501/39.

<sup>308</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 501/120.

<sup>309</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 502/24 and *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 502/29.

<sup>310</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 502/79.

22, 1906<sup>315</sup>; August 26, 1906<sup>316</sup>; August 31, 1906<sup>317</sup>; September 30, 1906<sup>318</sup>; October 11, 1906<sup>319</sup>; October 19, 1906<sup>320</sup>; and on December 17, 1906<sup>321</sup>.

Apart from these newspaper summaries, other documents including embassy reports and official announcements of the Russian empire helped the Palace to shape the events going on in the Russian empire during the revolutionary era. The news of the October Manifesto and the envisaged establishment of the Duma with legislative rights in the Russian empire were submitted to the Sultan, who regarded Russian autocracy as a basic support for his own, on November 10, 1905 from the summaries of Russian newspapers of *Novoye Vremya* and *Novosti*<sup>322</sup>. Documents regarding the disorders following the October revolution were regularly sent to the Sultan by the Grand Vizier. Opening of the first state Duma by the Tsar was told in a document dated May 13, 1906<sup>323</sup>. The same document also provided details regarding the State Council that was designed to counterweigh the Duma in the legislative of the Russian empire and its rights<sup>324</sup>. Another document dispatched from the office of the Grand Vizier to the Sultan on January 4, 1906 indicated the grave situation in the Russian empire with detailed narratives of the uprisings occurring in various parts of the empire and the impacts of these uprisings on the Russian government<sup>325</sup>. Following documents from the same office to the Sultan with regard to the revolution mostly mentioned disorders (*iğtişâşat*); internal

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<sup>311</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 502/137.

<sup>312</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 503/23.

<sup>313</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 503/24.

<sup>314</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 504/97.

<sup>315</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 504/129.

<sup>316</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 506/7: summaries of St. Petersburg newspapers.

<sup>317</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 506/25: summaries of St. Petersburg newspapers.

<sup>318</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 506/117: translation of an article from *Novoye Vremya*.

<sup>319</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 506/141.

<sup>320</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 507/3.

<sup>321</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 507/177.

<sup>322</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 495/66.

<sup>323</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 502/107.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>325</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 498/64.

situation of the Russian empire<sup>326</sup> and sometimes specific uprising in a part of the empire, specifically the uprising in Moscow<sup>327</sup> or reasons of the current disorders in the empire<sup>328</sup>.

However, as it was the case in the Ottoman documents forwarded to the Palace from the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg, the revolution, disorders and uprisings did not end in the Russian empire in line with the documents dispatched from the office of the Grand Vizier. Documents that gave information with regard to the internal situation of Russia, disorders, and uprisings continued to be sent to the Sultan. To illustrate, a document dated July 18, 1906 still mentioned the seriousness of the internal situation in the Russian empire and that the grave events, which shook the foundations of the empire, did continue for years<sup>329</sup>. Moreover, another document forwarded on August 8, 1906 said that the Ottoman Embassy in St. Petersburg would be protected by the Russian officials against the threat of an attack by the revolutionists and anarchists<sup>330</sup>. Moreover, a document dated October 1, 1906 included the full text of an *ukaz* published by the Tsar on August 19, 1906 regarding the envisaged reforms on the freedom of thought, individual; improvement of the workers' situation and application of insurance by the government; reforms regarding the Duma, zemstvos; improvement of the rights of the peasants was sent to the Sultan<sup>331</sup>.

Thus, as it can be seen, the Palace watched the chain of events that brought about a state assembly with legislative rights and a constitution to the Russian Empire closely from various sources, which provided the Palace with different

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<sup>326</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 498/44; *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 498/64.

<sup>327</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 498/99, January 19, 1906.

<sup>328</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 498/11, January 3, 1906.

<sup>329</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS.504/108.

<sup>330</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 505/69.

<sup>331</sup> *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 506/121.



perspectives. The news prohibited to be published in the Ottoman realm were circulated in the hidden mechanism of the Yıldız Government under Sultan Abdülhamid II and the subject mechanism was aware of the smallest details regarding the revolutionary upheavals in the Russian empire on which the non-intelligent Ottoman reader did only know rumors and stories that were sometimes exaggerated or undermined.

### **3.5. An Exemplary Agreement signed between the Ottoman and Russian Empires regarding Revolutionists and Anarchists**

In the last year of Abdülhamid II's reign, an agreement was signed between the Ottoman Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Interior and the Russian Embassy in İstanbul on April 6, 1908 for co-operation in inspection, arrest and sending back the revolutionists and anarchists between the Ottoman and the Russian empires<sup>332</sup>. The text of the agreement and a summary of the provisions included in the subject agreement were submitted to the Sultan for approval by the Ottoman Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Interior.

One of the interesting points of the agreement is that it was signed with two Ottoman Ministers and the Russian Embassy in İstanbul, which seems a bit strange in terms of diplomatic procedures. Moreover, the time of the agreement shows that the agreement would produce nothing since the revolution of 1905 in the Russian empire had already been ended and counter-measures applied by the Tsar had proved to be successful. Furthermore, the Ottoman constitutionalists, who would seize the power with a military uprising in the same year of the agreement, did not carry out activities in the Russian empire, which they criticized much due to its autocratic character.

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<sup>332</sup> *BOA*, Y.PRK.HR. 36/12.

The agreement envisaged that a special commission composed of officials from the Ministries of Interior of the Russian and Ottoman empires was to be established with a preliminary duty of exchanging information regarding the activities of revolutionists and anarchists with each other. Secondly, news and activities against Sultan Abdülhamid II and Tsar Nicholas II were to be prevented and special commissions of both empires were to take action and inform each other in such cases. Thirdly, revolutionists and anarchists, who might attempt assassination of the Sultan and the Tsar or plan activities with dynamites and other terrorist means of struggle, were to be arrested and sent back to his/her country. Moreover, the military units on the mutual borders of both empires were to prevent border violations by revolutionist groups from both sides and to arrest them before informing each other. The military units were also to take necessary precautions for this. The special commissions to be established were to exchange information without concealing<sup>333</sup>.

As known, the agreement is short-lived as Abdülhamid II would leave the power in the Ottoman empire to the Young Turks and to the Parliament that would be opened with a constitution in 1908. Thus, Abdülhamid II failed to see a revolution with full force was at the door when the subject agreement with his approval was signed between his Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior and the Russian Embassy in İstanbul.

As can be seen, the Ottoman archives regarding the Russian revolution of 1905 contain a lot of documents, which may help a reader understand the chain of events occurred in the Russian empire from 1905 to 1907 and even to 1908 from the perspective of the Ottoman government. As said before, the documents, as a whole,

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

is a narrative of a constitutional revolution from an absolutist point of view. Abdülhamid II, who was claimed to consider the Russian empire as a protector of his own despotism in the Ottoman empire, must have alarmed when he read these documents coming from various sources in 1905, 1906 and 1907. Yet, he unexpectedly, may be, fell into the trap of constitutionalists while the Russian imperial government had already recovered from the subject virus.

## CONCLUSION

The Russian Revolution of 1905 occurred in a spontaneous and unorganized way that resulted in a constitutional regime with certain deficiencies. The revolution was a turning point in terms of showing that the people of autocratic regimes began to ask their rights from their rulers and to awaken, which, in fact, was the real virus disguised in the concept of revolution for the rulers at that time. The Russian empire, however, succeeded in suppressing the upheavals and movements that had shaken the foundations of the empire once; and recovered from the virus for a while.

Indeed, it was impossible in 1905 to remain unaffected from the constitutional movements in multi-ethnic traditional empires of Eurasia, especially if it happened in one of the strongest hold of the autocracy. Thus, the Ottoman empire, both as a neighbor and as a traditional empire, watched the Russian revolution of 1905 closely. There were two opposing body, each of which considered and interpreted the events of 1905 in a different way. Namely, they were the Ottoman revolutionaries, who extensively used press as a means of struggle and of spreading their constitutional ideas against the Hamidian rule at home; and the Ottoman government under Abdülhamid II, who transformed the Yıldız Palace in the heart of administration by devitalizing the bureaucracy and *ulema* in the administrative structure.

The revolution of 1905, therefore, was a blow to the rule of Abdülhamid II of the Ottoman empire since such an experience would be a leading example for his own subjects. On the other hand, what Abdülhamid II feared was realized by the Ottoman revolutionary groups of the Young Turks, who as Abdülhamid II thought, used the Russian revolution of 1905 as an example and considered it as a cornerstone of their own struggle against rule of *istibdâd* of Abdülhamid II. Although

Abdülhamid II had already taken precautions and imposed a heavy censorship on press regarding news on anti-imperial and revolutionary activities in the Ottoman empire and in other countries. Thus, the Ottoman press in İstanbul and in other cities of the empire were not allowed to publish news or articles regarding the Russian revolution of 1905. In fact, Abdülhamid II's rule and precautions proved to be effective that 33 years of reign can be considered its proof.

Then, the Young Turks, who had their ideological roots in the Young Ottomans of the previous generation and who established a opposition movement against the rule of Abdülhamid II, especially in Europe, where the Sultan's power was ineffective to prevent their activities. The Young Turks in Europe were either exiled or fled to Europe due to the oppressive regime of the Sultan. Gradually, they began to establish organizations and at the end the Committee of Union and Progress came into existence. Undoubtedly, during the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sole way to reach the Ottoman intellectuals and spread their ideas on constitutionalism was press. Thus, the Ottoman revolutionary groups were efficient in publishing journals in various cities of Europe and in Egypt. These journals always found a way to enter the Ottoman realm in spite of the regulations banning them and were read by the Ottoman intellectuals and middle class in the empire.

As for the Young Turk journals, the revolution of 1905 in the Russian empire was a great event for the Ottoman revolutionaries since the revolutionary process showed and enlightened their way, in line with their arguments. The journals including *Türk*, *Şûrâ-yı Ümmet*, *Feryad*, *Osmanlı* and *İctihad* provided the reader with a detailed narrative of the Russian revolution of 1905 and with numerous articles devoted to the subject revolution. Most of the commentaries in the subject journals ended with sentences indicating that the Russian revolution must have been

an example both for the Young Turks and for the Ottoman Sultan if the Ottoman government did not want the same bloody events to happen in the Ottoman empire. As can be expected, the revolution of 1905 in Russia was depicted as if it had been a great revolution of world-scale and led the Russian people to be a part of the civilized European nations. Indeed, carrying out their activities and being educated in Europe; the Young Turks had a Euro-centric mind and way of thought and considered the European civilization as a great example to be followed.

Interestingly, the role of peasantry and of the intellectuals were given great importance in the Ottoman revolutionary and the working class was, to some extent, ignored since there was no working class in the Ottoman empire; the main dynamic of a possible constitutional revolution in the Ottoman empire, in accordance with the Young Turks, would be the intellectuals, military and peasants. Moreover, if the journals published in mid-1906 and after are studied, it is seen that the journals still depicted the Russian revolution of 1905 as a great revolution and achievement of the people, although the counter-revolution carried out by the imperial government became successful in Russia. Understandably, the revolutionary and constitutionalists movements in the Russian empire were the desired future development for the Young Turks, thus, as said before, they imposed their own censorship and ignored the news pertaining to the successful counter-revolutionary measures of the Tsar.

In addition to these, there are certain common characteristics that the subject Ottoman revolutionary journals had. First, although, these journals had a strict ideological perspective in line with their publishers in terms of being Ottomanists or Westernists, and the Russian revolution of 1905 was unique and a great example for them; they had sometimes different comments on the events of 1905 in Russia and its

possible effect in the Ottoman empire, as stressed in Chapter II. Secondly, since the main target of these journals was Abdülhamid II and his rule of *istibdâd*, commentaries and articles regarding the revolution of 1905 mostly ended with criticism of Abdülhamid II and warnings that such events would occur in the Ottoman empire if the Sultan continued to suppress people. Furthermore, these journals tried to agitate Ottoman reader by stressing how Russians revolted and gained their freedom from the Tsar and the same could be done in the Ottoman empire.

The Ottoman government, on the other hand, received the news pertaining to the events going on in the Russian empire during the years of 1905-1906 from a variety of sources. Yet, these sources were mainly governmental reports of the Russian empire regarding the events; European and Russian newspapers and journals, most of which were conservative; and information obtained from the informants and others. Therefore, there was a difference between the Russian revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman revolutionary press and the Russian revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman imperial documents in terms of its scope and ideological background and the support that it received from the people. In fact, the Russian revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman imperial documents was a narrative of a constitutional revolution from a conservative and administrative point of view.

Ottoman imperial documents present a picture of the Russian revolution of 1905 in, which is full of disorders, blood, assassinations, murders and upheavals, to the reader. Such a picture, indeed, was not only avoided by the Sultan, but also by ordinary people. On the other hand, the Russian revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman revolutionary press was a triumph of the oppressed people against their autocratic rulers. Disorders and upheavals were shown as people's answer to the oppressive

regime of the Tsar; blood, assassinations and murders were the necessary price to be paid by the people in exchange for constitution and freedom for the journals.

Although, a constitutional revolution in any country, especially in a neighbor country, was not a desired development for the Sultan and Ottoman government, the revolution of 1905 did not end in mid-1906 and in 1907 in the Ottoman imperial documents. Documents forwarded to the palace even at the end of 1906 and beginning of 1907 still mentioned a revolution (*ihtilâl*) in the Russian empire. Yet, the documents, in contrast to the Ottoman revolutionary press, paid attention to the counter-revolutionary measures imposed by the Tsar; and how these measures were carried out by the imperial government.

Generally, the Palace was well-informed about the events and revolutionary activities in the Russian empire in 1905, 1906. The documents pertaining to the revolution of 1905, like the Young Turk journals, were full of details. The volume of the subject documents, openly, indicates the importance given by the palace on the revolution 1905 in Russia and its consequences.

Thus, the Russian revolution of 1905 observed by the Ottomans closely, but evaluated in two different ways by two rival bodies. While the Ottoman Sultan and the government were alarmed with the chain of events, which later has been known as the revolution of 1905; the Ottoman revolutionary groups greeted the revolution in their journals and took it as a precious example of people's power and their guide to a constitutional regime in the Ottoman empire.



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