



Turkey's policy towards religious minorities

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Abstract

The independence of individuals and societies in a state, with their various labels, plays a fundamental and important role in its progress and economic prosperity, a matter which reflect the strength or weakness of the state. As a state, Turkey is no exception from this rule. This topic, (Turkey's policy towards its religious minorities) discusses 2 principle points, the first of which is Turkey's government policy since the foundation of modern state of Turkey in 1923 until the Justice and Development party (JDP) gained authority in 2002. This principle explains Turkish state general policy towards religious minorities, whether or not there is any differentiation among minorities? And, regarding this issue, what are the pillars on which the political Turkish regime relied on? The second principle was meant to explain the religious minorities or the non-Muslim minorities, since Islam is the official religion of the Turkish state. This principle explained these minorities labels, numbers, their whereabouts and religions, in addition to the most important issues they faced, their living conditions and how the Turkish authorities dealt with them.

الملخص:

شكل استقرار الافراد والمجتمعات في الدولة بمختلف مسمياتهم الدينية عاملا أساسيا ومهما في تقدمها وازدهار اقتصادها، الامر الذي ينعكس على قوة الدولة او ضعفها، وتركيا كدولة لا تختلف عن هذه القاعدة. يبحث هذا الموضوع (سياسة تركيا تجاه اقليتها الدينية) في محورين تناول الاول سياسة الحكومات التركية منذ تكوين الدولة التركية الحديثة عام ١٩٢٣ وحتى وصول حزب العدالة والتنمية الى السلطة عام ٢٠٠٢، اذ بين هذا المحور السياسة العامة للدولة التركية اتجاه الاقليات الدينية، وهل هناك تمايز في هذه السياسة بين الاقليات؟ وما هي الاسس التي اعتمد عليها النظام السياسي التركي تجاه هذه المسألة؟

وجاء المحور الثاني ليبين الاقليات الدينية او الاقليات التي لا تدين بالإسلام على اعتبار ان دين الدولة التركية الرسمي هو الاسلام، اذ اجاب المحور الثاني على اسماء هذه الاقليات واعدادهم ومناطق تواجدهم ودياناتهم، فضلا عن اهم المشاكل التي واجهوها وظروف معيشتهم وتعامل السلطات التركية معهم.

Preface

The demographic variable of the state is considered one of the elements behind its power, and it's connected to the diversity inside the society, so whenever it was composed of one majority it becomes more and stable and cohesive. Due to this, the minorities in its various labels across the world were

considered one the sensitive and important issues that determine the stability or weakness of the states. That is why this topic gained increasing international interest, especially since the end of World War 2 until the period that witnessed the collapse of the former Soviet Union and what followed, as well as the rising voices that were calling for democracy and human rights. These things resulted in these minorities looking forward to trying to achieve their various demands and what they are suffering under the reign of these governments or the laws they are issuing.

These demands were connected to the strength or weakness of the state to which these minorities belong through several reasons which are: the strength and stability of the central government, the laws and legislations it is issuing, the commitment of these minorities to these laws, in addition to the surrounding international circumstances, the increasing and decreasing external influence and support related to the interests of the states concerned and the Fluctuating international circumstances.

This, Depending on what has been presented above, applies to Turkey and its minorities. To understand the nature of these minorities we have to explain the population nature, their percentage, numbers and some other details, through which we can learn about the conditions of minorities there. The population of Turkey is estimated to be 73.2 million, according to 2005 statistics, 99% of which are Muslims, with an average population growth of 1.4, the population density per square kilometer is also estimated to be 93.4% since 1990 to 2000, 33% of them were villagers in 2005 after they were 41% until the year 1990, while 77% of them were urban population according to the statistics performed in the same year. 42% of the population work in agricultural activity, while the rest worked in the industrial and services activity. The unemployment rate was also estimated to be 09% in the same year¹.

Turkey's policy towards its minorities

To understand Turkey's policy towards religious minorities we have to divide this policy into two parts: the first part contains two periods of time during which a difference in this policy was noticed, even if it was a slight difference, regarding how the consecutive Turkish governments dealt with minorities, the first period of time lasted since the foundation of the modern state of Turkey in 1923 until 1948, a year in which the multi-party system was approved after it was limited to the people's republican party. The second period lasted since the approval of the multi-party system until 2002.

As for the second part that determined Turkey's policy towards minorities, it is about the Turkish constitutions and how they treated these minorities. This part is divided according to 1924, 1961 and 1982 constitutions. We have chosen this specific division not because the Turkish policy had differed that much between these parts, as we can notice a big interference and similarity between

them, nor the periods of time these two parts contained or according to the mentioned constitutions, but to further clarify this policy.

The multi-religious and ethnic Turkish demographic reality came to make the Muslim Turkish nationality at the top of the ethnic and religious groups. Mustafa Kemal tried to limit it with the religious ones overlooking other minorities, a matter which became crystal clear when he signed the Treaty of Lausanne in the 24th of July 1923 which acknowledged only 3 religious minorities, the Jewish, the Armenian and the greek orthodox. The Treaty of Lausanne was considered a cornerstone in how the Turkish state dealt with minorities for long decades. It is worth mentioning that the three minorities labels weren't stated in the Treaty of Lausanne, but the Ottoman State hereditary considered these categories the origin of the non-Muslim minorities in the state². The other party that had signed the Treaty of Lausanne, which are the victorious European states in World War 1, with Britain and France in lead, didn't deal with Turkey according to the principle of minorities but replaced the term religious minorities with non-Muslim sects and religions. Then came the modern Turkish state policy complementing the Ottoman hereditary while applying the European understanding view towards these societies³. Thus the definition of minority, according to the conference of Lausanne, didn't include the ethnic minorities. Articles number 37 to 45 of the treaty clarified the sects' or the religious minorities who were determined by both parties that stressed on the freedom of practicing religious rituals, equality before the law, using their languages and permitting schools and institutions that are concerned with their affairs and living conditions⁴.

According to what we previously mentioned, Turkey has dealt with its minorities from two standpoints, the first was established by Ataturk and then clarified that the Turkish state is a secular nation-state, the basic element of which is only the Turks, it even labeled the Kurds, that is the second nationality after Turks, as (the Turks of the mountain) until the ex-president of Turkey (Turgut Özal 1927-1993) acknowledged their nationality in 1991 and allowed the usage of Kurdish language. Ataturk's policy, in its second segment after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, had clarified that Islam is the religion of the state, despite the laws he exhibited and executed, a matter which marginalized the role of religion in the life of Turks and their state, Özal didn't acknowledge any religion other than what was stated in the Treaty Lausanne and the denominations they approved. The treaty, on the other hand established the second pillar which the Turkish politicians had relied on in the way they dealt with minorities⁵. This policy, which Ataturk brought, lasted many decades and many of its pillars were adopted until this day.

The philosophy which Ataturk believed in was considered the starting point to the Turkish state and its consecutive governments in specifically dealing with the religious minorities, and the ethnic minorities in general. Turkey's

government had embodied this overview towards minorities through what was mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne, as stated previously, a thing which made that treaty, as well as Ataturk's vision, the only two sources to define and deal with minorities. The Turkish state had attempted to narrow the concept of minorities more than the treaty itself permitted, which resulted in focusing only on the periphery of the Armenian Jewish and Greek minorities more than the other religious minorities in Turkey, while in the same time ignoring the ethnic minorities.

The Turkish constitution of 1924, in the one-party era which ruled Turkey since its foundation until 1948, had stressed in article number 69, 75, and 88 that all Turkish people, regardless of their religion and nationalities, are equal before the law and they have the same rights and duties⁶. This constitution remained valid until 1961, and according to the above-mentioned constitution content, in October 1925, the Jews started working on organizing their affairs such as obtaining official approvals to what develops their society and ensures their rights. Three weeks later, the Armenians followed their lead in striving to obtain their goal which was censured by the Treaty of Lausanne. As for the Greeks, the discussions were prolonged and lasted until the 7th of January 1926 as a result of the sensitivity towards them by the Turks due to the Turkish-Greek war, which lasted from 1919 until 1922 to liberate Turkey, in addition to old historical disputes between the two states⁷.

The approvals which the three minorities strived to obtain weren't that easy to obtain, as they have faced many hardships and obstacles in addition to the bureaucracy that took a lot of time to finish. There was also a lot of requests which were rejected due to not fulfilling the conditions that the concerned authorities demanded.

After the relationship between Turkey and Greece got worse in the past, and after negotiations that lasted years, both parties reached an agreement in 1930 to exchange residents who are willing or present in and out of Istanbul, of the Greek Orthodox and Muslim Turks citizens in Greece. 8000 of the Greeks left Turkey and headed towards Greece and Europe due to this agreement⁸.

In 1934, some acts of violence were witnessed against the Jewish Turks, which were later named as the event of Tarakya. It developed due to the incitement against Jews by some of the nationalist Turks, especially the head of the Turkish national movement Cevat Rifat Atilhan, and after an article that was published in Melee magazine: the coupe (of the national revolution), in addition to Hussein Nihal Atsz's articles in Orhanmaganize. These events involved destroying and burning both personal and public properties that belonged to the Jews in some of the Turkish cities. Despite the fact that Ataturk's government faced these events firmly, it spread in Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli and Çanakkale, thus resulted in 15000 Jews leaving Turkey towards Palestine and Europe⁹.

Even though that Turkey didn't participate in the World War 2, they set up an army by training and arming just in case anything happened, as it started recruiting men who are capable of wielding arms, preparing for war. As a result of the events of Tarakya in 1934, in addition to how the Turks viewed the non-Muslims such as Jews, Armenians and Greeks, and due to the latest incidents, those were viewed as untrustworthy and that they shouldn't be recruited in such army, as the member of the Republican people's party, who was in power in that period of time, Kâzım Karabekirsaid in the party's conference that was held in 1940 : that through the previous experiences which this country has gone through, these (the above-mentioned non-Muslims) are deemed untrustworthy, thus they were moved to Anatolia and were made military reservists, there didn't get any arms nor even the military suits. This decision included the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks whom ages were between 25-45 years old, excluding handicapped, and regardless of whether they have served previously or not in the Turkish armed forces¹⁰. They were later dismissed on the 27th of June 1942 for being non-Muslims. This action violated 1924's constitution which stated that Turks were equal before the law regardless of their religion and ethnicity¹¹.

After endorsing the multi-party law in Turkey in 1948, minorities kept suffering; in the 6th and the 7th of September 1955 Istanbul witnessed acts of violence against the Greeks and their properties, especially in Fener ally which was mostly inhabited by Greeks in addition to Eminönü, Fatih, Eyüp and Bakırköy allies, as a response to the bombing of the Turkish embassy in Thessaloniki in Greece and bombing Kemal Atatürk's house there. These events resulted in casualties and wounded people in addition to the grave damages to the properties, a thing that drove the Turkish authorities to enforce a curfew to control the situation. This encouraged many Greeks to migrate outside of Turkey, which resulted in a drastic decrease in their numbers. Statistics published in 2008 by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed that in Istanbul alone the Greek population went from 65.108 people to 49.081 in the period from 1955-1960¹². Not only the Greeks' properties were damaged, but also the Armenians' and the Jews' in Istanbul, soon then the Turkish government rushed to release a series of compensations to the damaged people worth more than 30 million dollars¹³.

United Nations and European states represented by the European Council issued a series of agreements regarding minorities and human rights, only few of which were signed by Turkey, leaving the rest unsigned.

In 1948 Turkey signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations (UN), as well as the European agreement of human rights and Basic Freedoms in 1950, but it didn't sign the UN Agreement regarding the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination which was held in the 21st of December 1965. Later Turkey signed the international covenant for civil, political and international rights on economic, social and cultural rights in the

16th of December 1966, but didn't sign the framework convention for the protection of national minorities which was adopted and signed by the minister, s committee of the European council in 1994. In return, Turkey joined the organization for security and co-operation in Europe in August 2000¹⁴, a thing that puts Turkey responsible for protecting minorities.

In spite of Turkey's endorsement of some of these agreements, the conditions of minorities didn't improve in comparison with the past, as the Greek minorities kept suffering after the military coup in Turkey in 1960, Cyprus's events, after signing the insurance and independence in the same year, affected the status of the Greek minority in Turkey, because the latter accused Britain, which was in control of Cyprus tribute, that it sided with the Greek Cypriots in their quest to consolidate with Greek in what was known as the (Enosis) case, a thing which effected the reality of the Greek minority in Turkey as well as accusing it of supporting the Greek policy on the Island.

It wasn't the Enosis policy only, as it went further to establishing the Cypriot organization of EOKA, which adopted the armed action to achieve the Greek Cypriots' dream of consolidating with the mother nation, Greece. It also carried a lot of violence against the Turk Cypriots who refused Cyprus consolidating with Greece as well as the British presence in the island¹⁵.

Cyprus' events and its developments affected the status of the Greek minority, for they were viewed as suspicious by the consecutive Turkish governments due to their support to Greece and the Greek Cypriot' demands, a thing that resulted in restricting their affairs and daily lives which prompted many of them to migrate outside of Turkey to Greece and Europe.

The constitution in Turkey has been changed after 1960 coupe, and a new one was enacted in 1961 except that it was not different from the previous one regarding the improvement of the minorities' condition. The constitution was again changed in 1982 except for it didn't bring anything new regarding the religious and ethnic minorities. Next, we will discuss some articles of the last constitution regarding minorities and how the state treats them.

In article number 90 in the Turkish constitution of the year 1982 that the international law articles are prioritized over the national law articles in case of contradiction, and since Turkey has signed some agreements which, we have listed above, it must abide by them. But Turkey narrows its concept of the minority to what was mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne, which violates the content of these agreements¹⁶. Furthermore, some articles in the Turkish constitution even violated what was mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne, as article number 40 in the Treaty of Lausanne stressed on the fact that non-Muslim minorities have the right to use their languages in their religious rituals and establishing their schools and training centers in addition to other institutions concerned with their affairs, but this article contradicted with the third article of the Turkish constitution, which states that the main language in

Turkey is Turkish. Furthermore, article number 42 of the Turkish constitution states the following: "there's no language that should be taught except for Turkish, since it's the mother language of the Turkish citizens, in any of the education or training institutions... as for teaching foreign language, it is determined by law". The two mentioned articles were exploited to prevent teaching any minorities' language, privately or publicly, except for the minorities that were chosen in the Treaty of Lausanne¹⁷.

In spite of what the Treaty of Lausanne pointed out in article number 40, it wasn't practically executed in many cases, for example; the Turkish government closed the department of theology in 1971 in the priestly school of the Greek Orthodox in (Heybeliada) island near (Istanbul), according to article number 24 of the constitution and the third article of the Higher Education law, which point out that religious education is provided only by the state. The Turkish law also forbids any political activity of minorities, for it is stated in article number 81 of the political Turkish parties law that any political party established by minorities should be prohibited under the pretext that these minorities exist under a national, religious, sectarian or a different linguistic basis. Consequently, this article caused many political parties to be shut down, which can be considered as a violation of article number 11 of the universal declaration of human rights that was both signed and approved by Turkey¹⁸.

Religious minorities

Turkey didn't commit to the Treaty of Lausanne regarding minorities since signing the treaty, the official system also didn't change its definition of minorities in Turkey since 1923, except for adding Bulgarians (Christians of Bulgarian origins) in Istanbul to the minorities list. This agreement between Turkey and Bulgaria was done in 1925 and it states that the Treaty of Lausanne articles are applicable to the ethnic Bulgarians in Turkey and vice versa. According to this agreement, the flow of immigrants to Turkey has reached 218.998 by the end of 1949. After the declaration of the people's republic of Bulgaria in 1946, the number of Bulgarian immigrants to Turkey 156.063 immigrant between 1949 and 1951.

And by the exchange of relatives' agreement signed between Turkey and Bulgaria, Turkey received 116.521 immigrants between 1968 and 1979¹⁹. The official Turkish system dealt with minorities without referring to them, for there is no such word as "minorities" in the Turkish constitution, as it was marginalized. Perhaps article number 10 of the 1982 Turkish constitution was the only article concerning minorities' rights, even if it was indirectly, because that article states that the equality of everyone before the law was insured, without any discrimination regardless of the language, ethnicity, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect or any other category²⁰. With that said, there are no laws that protect minorities other than this sole

article, nor there are any insurances that prevent them from being discriminated, not even the minorities agreed upon in the Treaty of Lausanne.

The following are the religious minorities:

1- Alawites

Alawites are one of the 2 Shia sects in Turkey. They are also the largest Shia sect in the country, with about 70% of the Shia population in Turkey, the Imami Shia comes in second after the Alawites. Also, the Alawite Shias in Turkey make half of the Alawites across the world.

Alawites are one of the Islamic sects derived from the Shiite Islam, they claim that they belong to Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). A part of Turkey's Alawites claim to be an independent religion from Islam, as they have special temples called (Aljami' house), they also have different rituals and beliefs from Muslims which they call (the Geem). They don't pray like Muslims nor they fast Ramadan nor make pilgrimage to Makka, they replace these Islamic worships with their rituals and practice them in their temples. They also fast the first 12 or 14 days of the month of Muharram and they make the pilgrimage to the tomb of (Bcktash Wali), A Sufi that died in 646 After Hijra, between 1248 and 1249 AD. Alawites live in various places in Turkey distributed among nationalities of Turks²¹ and Zazas²² who are mostly Kurds and Arabs.

Alawites are located in Azerbaijan, Albania and especially in Turkey, they are different from the Alawites located in Syria. The Alawites are also known as (Nusairiyah) after AbiShu'aib Muhammed Bin Nusair who died in 270 Aft Hijra, between 883 and 884 AD²³. Alawites' statistics in Turkey differed because the demographic census in the country doesn't refer to the citizen's religion or doctrine, because that violates the secular orientation which was outlined by the Turkish constitution. Although some official Turkish sources claim that according to the 2005 census, they are no more than 6 million of the total population, as for the presidency of religious affairs, they estimate their numbers as 7 million. There are other estimations that say estimates their numbers like 8 to 10 million, which is about 12% of the total population. If we took into consideration the Alawites' claims that they are one third of the Turkish population, it then seems that the last number is the closest to be right²⁴.

In regards to the ethnic distribution, 61% of the Alawites are Turks, 22% Kurds, 8% of Turkish origins in Middle Asia and 3% Arabs. This contradicts with the statistics that show 54% of Alawites consider Kurdish as their mother tongue, while 36% believe it is Turkish and 8% believe it is Arabic. Geographically, Alawites in Turkey are distributed according to the following: one-third of them in Istanbul, in what can be considered as a high percentage, while 24% of them live in the middle of eastern Anatolia area, 15% in the White Mediterranean Sea areas and 7% in Aegean sea area. As for the rest, they live in eastern Anatolia and the Black sea. Thus Alawites in Turkey are divided into 2

basic groups: the first of which live in the area near Syria, especially in Hatay (İskenderun). This group is an extension of the Alawites in Syria and some Arab countries, according to some estimations their numbers are roughly about 250000 people, most of them are located in Hatay, Adana and Mersin, in addition to few thousands in Ankara. Arabic is their mother language because İskenderun province was previously attached to Syria. Turkish is the second language²⁵.

The second Alawite group are known as “the Alawites of Anatolia”, they are located among Turks and Kurds. The Kurd Alawites are the larger portion of the Alawite population, they are located in Bingöl, Tunceli, Erzincan, Sivas, Yozgat, Elazığ, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri and Çorum²⁶.

2- Armenians

Armenians are the second acknowledged sect by the Treaty of Lausanne, the Armenian minority issue caused a huge controversy in what was called (the extermination of Armenians) both in and out of Turkey, the Armenian minority took advantage of this issue to gain both external and internal sympathy. Regardless of how credible were the Armenian and the Official Turkish stories about the event, for the Armenian story, After the Ottoman State took part in the world war 1 (1914-1918), was defeated by the Russian army in addition to Eastern Anatolia being occupied by Russia, the Ottoman government stated that the Armenian nationalists were cooperating with the Russian forces to establish an independent state in Anatolia. Afterward, the Ottoman government declared shutting down what was known as the Armenian revolutionary committees on April 1915 and deporting many Armenian prominent figures. Armenians consider this day a memorial in which they shout against exterminating more than 1.5 million of them who were either displaced or killed and ask consecutive Turkish governments to acknowledge it and pay compensations for it²⁷.

As for the Turkish governments, they didn't acknowledge this story, and they said that this procedure wouldn't have covered all these big numbers driven by Armenians in this specific date, the 24th of April 1915. However, on the 27th of May 1915, the Ottoman State did deport both Armenians the those who are affiliated with the Russian invasion to other areas of the Ottoman lands. Many innocent Armenians were dead due to war conditions and famines at that time, in addition to the internal fighting with the revenge-driven internal groups, the Armenian casualties were estimated to be approximately 300 to 500 thousand, as for the Turkish casualties, it was the same number²⁸.

Regardless of the 2 stories mentioned above, Armenians in Turkey in most of the statistics are estimated to be 60000 to 70000, most of them live in Istanbul and it is considered the largest religious minority in the city. The head of the Turkish Orthodox community archbishop and the Armenian Orthodox archbishop offices are also located in Istanbul²⁹. The vast majority of Armenians in Istanbul are Christians who follow the Armenian Orthodox Church with a

minority of 3450 Armenians who follow the Armenian Catholic Church. A lot of none-Muslims lived in some Allies and neighborhoods in Istanbul in the past, such as Samatya ally which was mostly inhabited by Orthodox Armenians and Kumkapı ally. Also, the headquarters of their patriarchal is located in Kumkapı in a sub-headquarters in Rumelihisarı in In Istanbul as well as other branches in Kayseri, Diyarbakır and Hatay provinces. Armenians have 18 schools in Istanbul to teach 3000 student, 34 Churches, 2 hospitals (Surp Pirgiç Armenian and Surp Agop) and 2 newspapers in both Armenian and Turkish languages, in addition to the apostolic Armenian church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople which is considered the spiritual, civilized and cultural center for the Turkish Armenians in Istanbul³⁰.

Armenians presence in Turkey does not stop in Istanbul. About 1000 other people are living in the capital Ankara, who speak Armenian. Other Armenian families live in southern Turkey. The Saint Geragos Armenian Church in the Kurdish majority city Diyarbakır was opened in 2011 after nearly 100 years since it was closed³¹. Many Armenian Church-goers still hide their identity outside the Church, becoming Kurds before they become Armenians inside the Church. Aram Khajikiian, the Church's bell-ringer, confirmed that when his grandfather was a kid he survived 1915's events and was adopted by a Kurdish family. He was raised as a Muslim and chose a Kurdish name for himself. Khajikian's father also confirmed that the grandfather had long suffered from racism and was labeled as "infidel", giving the fact that he had Armenian origins. **(I still remember the first day I stepped inside the Church.)** Khajikian says, **(My heart was beating hard and I felt a great joy, as if I had found myself after losing it. As for the rest of the family, they still hesitate to go to the Church).** Local officials in Diyarbakır municipality confirmed that Armenian population in the province is no more than 300. Some of them lived in the middle of Anatolia, embraced the Alawite doctrine and started going back to their roots. Miran Bergeg GulTikken asserts that his family protected themselves from the events of 1915, by embracing the Alawite doctrine. After a while, however, the family was displaced following the repression of the Alawite tribes in Tunecli Dersim in 1937, killing some members of the family and displacing others. 10 years later they returned to the city and took Islamic names for themselves, with that his name became Abraham Ibrahim³².

Armenians in Turkey had gone through harsh times due to societies' hatred for them since the end of World War 1. However, things were starting to really brighten up and it started to reflect of their lives and societies, most of which chose to settle in Istanbul after Turkish Armenians were emigrating a lot outside Turkey due to the pressures they suffered from during the past decades. Even though things didn't brighten up as much as Armenians hoped, it created a tangible change that was felt through some of the Armenian Church statements even though these statements contained contradictions and mutual accusations

between the members of the Armenian church by the orthodox Armenian Patriarch and the protestant Armenian church. The orthodox Armenian Patriarch stated that there are a lot of difficulties facing Armenians and their society in Turkey, and the Armenian Patriarchate doesn't have a legal position as an institution. Also, the Patriarchate no longer has a school for clergymen and they criticize how the courts and Turkish people in general view the Armenian society. It is worth mentioning that the church didn't witness any cooperation from the state nor the consecutive Turkish governments, on the contrary, the Turkish governments had always interfered with appointing and electing the Armenian religious leader³³.

3- Jews

The Jews lived in various places of the Ottoman State especially after they were welcomed, the successful in the money business and industry, by the Seljuk state than later on the Ottoman State. The Ottomans welcomed the idea of Jews owning their allies in exchange for paying the (Kharaj) tax ,(a tax where the non-Muslims of the Ottoman State citizens had to pay), to increase the number of Jews in Istanbul, Izmir and Edirne. Also, a school for teaching Jewish religion was established in Edirne, which became a cultural and educational center for Jewish students from all over the country, this was enough reason for the Jews of the Levant, Egypt, Byzantine State, Hungary, and France to find a shelter for them in the Ottoman State. However, since they were displaced from Spain after 1492 to the Ottoman State due to Inquisitions, their relationship with the power center caught the attention of historians and researchers. They were also given credit for a prominent role in various historical determining turning points in modern Turkish history³⁴.

But, many of them immigrating to Israel decreased their numbers, thus remained 25000 only, after they were roughly about 80000 in 1927 all over Turkey. That, however, didn't stop the Jews from having a central role in the economy of Turkey, because they had the biggest role in the industries of fabric, rubber, socks, silk, umbrellas, boots and tanning since the 40s. They were also pioneers in the industries of cars, chemicals, pharmacy, media sector and the ready-made garments³⁵.

Furthermore, 1989 was an important turning point in the history of the Turkish Jews, when they went entirely public by establishing what was named "the center of the 500" marking 500 years since they went out from Spain in (1492) and came to Turkey. They were encouraged by the open policy followed by the late Prime Minister of Turkey Turgut Özal, and his desire to strengthen his relationship with the United States of America by gaining the empathy of the Jewish lobby in America, thus supporting the Turkish Jews. The new climate helped to increase the Jewish presence in Turkey, especially in the fields of economy and the written and visual media, because some of the effective media were owned by Jewish media, in addition to the fact that the Jews themselves

published newspapers and magazines of their own in Turkish, the weekly Shalom paper being the most notable³⁶.

Furthermore, the Jews in Turkey were able to get one of their businessmen, (Cefi Kamhi) son of the famous businessman (Jak Kamhi) to the Parliament, and in 1995 elections on the True Path party list of Istanbul circle. But Kamhi resigned from the party in 1997 after he objected the Islamic approach followed by Necmettin Erbakan's government, which the True Path party was a part of. And in fact, the Jews in Turkey in the past were able to get nine of them to the Parliament in different times between 1935 and 1960. But none of them succeeded in any of the later Parliamentary elections³⁷.

Most of the Jewish Parliament members who won had been chosen to represent Istanbul, the main center of the Jewish presence in Turkey. Furthermore, 1992 estimation states that the members of the Jewish community in Turkey are no more than 25000, 18000 of them are located in Istanbul, while 2000 are located in İzmir, as for the rest are located in Ankara, Bursa, Çanakkale and Edrine. It is worth mentioning that the Jewish presence in Istanbul is concentrated in Nişantaşı, Şişli, Sa'dia, Burgas, Heybe and Büyükkada allies, the Beyoğlu ally in Istanbul is considered a main center of the Jewish business activity³⁸.

When the Jews came from Spain to Turkey, their main language was Jewish-Spanish, but the number of people who knew this language kept decreasing gradually until it became 10-15% of their total population nowadays. This is why "Shalom" paper dedicates one of its pages for them in Jewish-Spanish.

All the Turkish Jews speak Turkish as their mother tongue, but only 8% of them know Hebrew. This called for opening Hebrew courses lately and teaching it in the Jewish schools in Istanbul. As for the common foreign languages among them, they: French, English, Greek and German; and few of them who used to live in the south east part of the country know Arabic and Kurdish³⁹.

As for the Sectarian level, Turkey's Jews are divided into three sects: Sephardi, Ashkenazi and Krymchaks (after the Jews whom origins go back to Crimea).

Jews have 18 Synagogues in Istanbul, the oldest of which go back to the mid-15th century, in which they have a school and a hospital, and they also have Synagogues in İzmir and Bursa. As for Istanbul, the office of the chief Rabbi Rav David Asio is located⁴⁰.

4- Greeks

The third sect acknowledged as a religious minority by the Treaty of Lausanne, is the Greek sect, which, due to this agreement, gained the right to establish its institutions such as Churches, schools, printing houses and the likes. However, this was faced by many obstacles as explained previously. Also, the open disputes between Turkey and Greek, which go back deep in history, geography and civilization, gave the Greek minority presence in Turkey a

special delicacy. It was often faced with constraint, depending on the political developments between Greece and Turkey, a thing which pushed many Turkish Greeks to immigrate to Greece and other European countries.

However, this changed later on, between 1945 and 1955 Turkey has witnessed a relative breakthrough about to minorities including the Greek minority. The ruling people's republican party announced its intention to amend a group of Turkish laws including policies which were described as hostile towards non-Muslims. After the system transition in Turkey to multi-party, the Democratic Party reached power in Turkey in 1950 elections. The Democratic Party also announced in its program that it supports minorities especially in the economy, a thing which reflected on Greeks in Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey and Greece negotiations to enter NATO in 1951 had a clear effect on the improvement between the two countries, which also reflected positively on the condition of the Greek minority⁴¹.

This change, however, didn't last long, as the situations in Turkey toward the Greek minority changed due to curious events 1955 and the Turkish-Greek conflict in it, in addition to the events of the 6th and 7th of September of the same year in Turkey which was explained previously, a thing which caused a lot of Greeks to immigrate out of Turkey.

Furthermore, a dramatic decrease of the Greek population in Turkey was witnessed in mid-1960 due to the deep effect of the Cypriot issue on the Turkish-Greek relationships, this year witnessed huge unrest in the Cypriot island caused by the conflict between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots⁴². This encouraged Greece to unilaterally activate the agreement of January 1930, which ordains mutual deportation of Turks and Greeks in both countries. And it did deport Muslims Turks out of Greek soil, a thing which forced Turkey to do the same thing to a lot of the Greek citizens in Istanbul in direct response. Due to this procedure and the numerous emigrations, the number of Greeks had drastically decreased, which forced many of the Greek minority in the rest of Turkey to go to Greece and the other European countries⁴³.

The number of the remaining Greeks in Turkey is estimated to be somewhere near 50000 and 80000, despite some who estimated this number to 10000 only. Most Greeks in Istanbul live in Galata, the near Beyoğlu, Princes Islands, Burgas, Büyükkada and Heybeliada, in addition to some few thousand in Turkish islands near the Greek islands, such as Çanakkale, Gökçeada and Bozcaada. Despite the wide immigration that resulted in their numbers decreasing, the Greeks still play an important role in the business movement in Istanbul.

Turkish Greeks belong to the Orthodox Church, the world headquarters of which is located in Fener in Istanbul. While a small minority belongs to the Catholic and Protestant Churches⁴⁴.

The acute political conflicts between Ankara and Athena, about the condition of Fener Patriarch and its role in the religious life of the Orthodox in the world, had risen in past few years. This was triggered by the downfall of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe states, the strong comeback of Orthodox to Russia, and Turkey's accusing Greece, Russia, Bulgaria and others of establishing an Orthodox religious alliance that its goal is to surround Turkey, in addition to Greece attempting to change the legal condition of the Patriarch of Istanbul for Orthodox people in the world to something like the legal condition of Vatican in Rome for the Catholic people of the world, which means ,according to Turks, establishing another state inside Turkey⁴⁵.

5- Syriac Assyrians and Chaldeans

Despite the fact that Assyrians are Christians, they were not able to benefit from the rights stipulated by the Treaty of Lausanne regarding minorities listed by the treaty that limited them to Jews, Armenians and Greeks, thus, nearly 45000 of them immigrated to Germany and Sweden, and since the end of World War 2, they were constantly decreasing because the consecutive Turkish governments did not acknowledge them and had always ignored transgressions done to them, as they lacked their own schools, especially preliminary education, and other institutions related to the Assyrian-Syriac community.

Syriacs, who are originally Orthodox Syrians, live in places near the Syrian borders, especially Mardin, Nusaybin, Midyat, Savur, Namlet, Ideland Diyarbakır. But most of them immigrated to Istanbul, where they are nearly 20000. Furthermore, large numbers of them left to Europe. Turkish Syriacs speak Syriac and other dialects derived from Aramaic⁴⁶.

As for Chaldeans, they are estimated to be 10000. They live in the adjacent places to the Syrian-Iraqi Borders in Turkey, especially in Mardin (in the cities of Idel and Silopi), Hikkari (the cities of Oluderei and Youth House), and Siirt (Burvary and Şırnak). In addition, some of them live in Diyarbakır, Midyat and Istanbul. They speak Chaldean and follow the Pope of Rome, but their Archbishopric is located in Istanbul and their great Patriarch is in Mosul in Iraq⁴⁷.

Conclusions

It seems that Turkey's policy towards minorities has gone through several phases. These phases have changed depending on which government is in power in Turkey. We can see the differences in policies followed by the people's republican party under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, which lasted since the establishment of modern Turkey until 1948, where multi-parties were officially approved in Turkey. The people's party was in power during this time, and the state's policy towards religious minorities which was set by the Treaty of Lausanne was tough. As a result, these minorities suffered from difficulty of both the adaptation and getting the rights which the Turkish state had always stated

that it's eager to execute what was mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne in relation to the religious minorities. But reality was different from these statements, because the governmental procedures and routines on one hand, and the procrastination and rejection on the other hand, lead to both the obstruction and prevention of establishing and building private institutions related to these minorities.

As for the second phase that Turkey has witnessed towards minorities, it lasted from the time when establishing parties was approved until the 90's of the 20th century. Minorities, tried to organize parties to accomplish their ambitions or reduce their suffering, but they were faced with rejection and dissolution by the policy of the Turkish state. It even went further to the point where they chased and arrested their leaders. And if you look at the reality of the Turkish state in that period, you won't see much difference in how it treated religious and ethnic minorities in comparison with the earlier period of time except the allowance of establishing parties, which were later controlled by the policy of the Turkish state that had always ignored the legitimate claims of religious minorities.

The 3rd phase that the policy of the Turkish state has gone through has witnessed a remarkable breakthrough in the beginning of the 90's, as we have explained earlier. The Turkish state witnessed the legislations of series of laws that allow using local languages and publishing minorities newspapers.

It seems that these phases, which the Turkish state has gone through, was the result of external improvements and pressure elements used by the authorities in relation with these minorities. In addition to alliances and international conditions that have witnessed World War 2 in the first phase of the Turkish policy, as well as the world splitting into two camps, Capitalist and Socialist, and the following cold war between the two camps that accompanied the second phase of the Turkish policy towards its minorities. The 3rd phase of the Turkish policy came after the collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 90's of the last century, and consequently the collapse of the Socialist camp, Turkey entered alliances and treaties which changed its internal and external policies. These changes included the conditions of minorities there.

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الاستنتاجات :

يبدو ان سياسة تركيا تجاه الاقليات الدينية مرت بعدة اطوار، وقد تغيرت هذه الاطوار بحسب الحكومات التي تسلمت دفة الحكم في تركيا، فنرى هناك بعض الاختلاف في السياسات التي انتهجها حزب الشعب الجمهوري بقيادة مصطفى كمال والتي امتدت من تكوين الدولة التركية الحديثة حتى عام ١٩٤٨ الذي اقرت فيه رسميا تعدد الاحزاب في تركيا. اذ شهدت هذه المدة سيطرة حزب الشعب على مقاليد السلطة وكانت سياسة الدولة في ذلك الوقت تجاه الاقليات الدينية التي حددتها معاهدة لوزان تتسم بالتشدد، اذ عانت هذه الاقليات من صعوبة التكيف والحصول على الحقوق التي طالما صرحت بها الدولة التركية بانها حريصة على تنفيذ ما جاء في مؤتمر لوزان بخصوص الاقليات الدينية، الا ان واقع الحال كان يختلف عن التصريحات اذ شهدت الاجراءات الحكومية والروتين تارة والتسوية والرفض تارة اخرى عرقلة ومنع تشييد وبناء المؤسسات الخاصة بهذه الاقليات.

اما الطور الثاني الذي شهدته تركيا اتجاه الاقليات فقد امتد من المدة التي سمح فيها بتشكيل الاحزاب الى بداية التسعينيات من القرن العشرين، اذ حاولت الاقليات الدينية تنظيم احزاب تعمل على تحقيق طموحاتها او العمل على التخفيف عن معاناتها، الا ان سياسة الدولة التركية واجهت هذه الاحزاب والتجمعات بالمنع والحل بل تعدت ذلك الى ملاحقة واعتقال اصحابها. والناظر الى واقع الدولة التركية خلال هذه المدة لا يرى اختلافا كثيرا في تعاملها مع الاقليات الدينية مع المدة التي سبقتها الا من

خلال السماح بإنشاء الأحزاب والتي طالتها أيضا فيما بعد سياسة الدولة التركية التي طالما تجاهلت المطالبات المشروعة من الأقليات الدينية.

أما الطور الثالث التي مرت به سياسة الدولة التركية فقد شهدت انفراجا ملحوظا في بداية التسعينات كما بينا فقد شهدت الدولة التركية إصدار مجموعة من القوانين التي تسمح باستعمال اللغات المحلية وفتح صحف خاصة بالأقليات ، واستمر هذا الانفراج التدريجي في تغيير حال بعض الأقليات الدينية وتحسين أحوالها.

ويبدو أن هذه الاطوار التي مرت بها السياسة التركية كانت نتيجة التطورات الخارجية وعوامل الضغط التي كانت تمارسها الجهات ذات العلاقة بهذه الأقليات ، ونتيجة التحالفات والظروف العالمية والتي مرت بالحرب العالمية الثانية في الطور الأول للسياسة التركية وانقسام العالم الى معسكرين رأسمالي واشتراكي وما تبعها من حرب باردة بين المعسكرين والتي رافقت الطور الثاني من سياسة تركيا تجاه اقليتها ، أما الطور الثالث من السياسة التركية فقد جاءت بعد انهيار وتفكك الاتحاد السوفيتي في مطلع التسعينيات من القرن الماضي وبالتالي انهيار المعسكر الاشتراكي ، فقد دخلت تركيا في احلاف ومعاهدات ادت الى تغيير سياساتها الداخلية والخارجية وشمل هذا التغيير اوضاع الأقليات فيها.

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