Interpreting Relations between Armenian Nationalism, Marxism and the Armenian Apostolic Church
Ermeni Milliyetçiliği, Marksizm ve Ermeni Apostolik Kilisesi arasındaki İlişkileri Yorumlamak

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Abstract

This study aims to criticize the current view and propose a different perspective on Armenian nationalism by revealing that Armenian nationalism had been derived from Marxism, instead of the understanding that Marxism and Armenian nationalism are opposite from each other. The questions of the study are how Marxism formed the backbone of Armenian nationalism and how the Armenian Apostolic Church was affected by Marxism. Although Armenian nationalism seems to be anti-Marxist, it is interpreted as "left-wing peripheral" nationalism derived from Marxism considering the views to have been influenced by and the Marxist elements contained within Armenian organizations. On the other hand, Armenian nationalism also carries the dimension of "central nationalism" based on chauvinism, and this situation indicates that the revolution and class conflict cannot completely get rid of nationalism. Looking at the Armenian Apostolic Church, while the church had a conservative structure against Marxism, the influence of Armenian nationalists and Marxists increased within its own structure due to the situation created by the Armenian National Constitution, and ultimately the church began to act together with the Armenian nationalism based on Marxism.

Keywords: Armenian nationalism, marxism, left-wing peripheral nationalism, armenian apostolic church, armenian national constitution

Öz

Bu çalışma Ermeni milliyetçiliğinin Marksizm'den türediğini ortaya çıkartarak, Ermeni milliyetçiliğinin Marksizm ile zıt olduğuna dair mevcut görüşü eleştirmeyi ve Ermeni milliyetçiliği ile ilgili farklı bakışı önermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmada Marksizm'in Ermeni milliyetçiliğinin omurgasını nasıl oluşturduğuna ve Ermeni Apostolik Kilisesi'nin Marksizm'den nasıl etkilendiğine dair sorulara cevap vermeye çalışılmıştır. Ermeni milliyetçiliği Marksist karşıtı bir fikir gibi görülürken Ermeni örgütlerinin etkilendiği görüşler ve içerdikleri Marksist unsurlar dikkate alındığında Marksizm'den türeyen "sol çevre milliyetçilik" olarak yorumlanabilir. Diğer yandan, Ermeni milliyetçiliği aynı zamanda şovenizme dayanan "merkezi milliyetçilik" boyutunu da taşımakta ve bu durum komünizme yönelik devrim ve sınıf çatışmasının milliyetçilik ve ulusal kimlik meselesini tam olarak halledemeyeceğini açık şekilde göstermektedir. Ermeni Apostolik Kilisesi'ne bakıldığında, kilise başlangıçta Marksizm karşıtı muhafazakâr yapıya sahipken, 1863 yılında Ermeni Millet Nizamnamesi onaylandıktan sonra oluşan durumdan dolayı kilisenin kendi yapısı içinde Ermeni milliyetçileri ve Marksistlerin etkisi önemli derecede artmıştır. Sonunda Ermeni Apostolik Kilisesi Marksizm'e dayalı Ermeni milliyetçi hareketiyle beraber hareket etmeye başlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermeni milliyetçiliği, Marksizm, sol-çevre m illiyetçilik, Ermeni Kilisesi, Ermeni millet nizamnamesi

Introduction

Since the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire entered the process of disintegration, the Armenian issue has been a major problem for the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. Because of this situation, from the 1980s, especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, Armenian studies in Turkey have gained serious importance and the number of scientific studies on Armenia and Armenians has also increased quite rapidly. In this context, the structure of the Armenian nationalist movement, such as the Hunchakian and Dashnak Parties, has also been investigated, and it is now known that these parties have adopted both Armenian nationalism and Marxism. However, most of the studies carried out to date describe Armenian Nationalism and Marxism as opposing movements and could not answer the question: " "why have Armenians adopted Armenian nationalism and Marxism at the same time, which are opposite to each other? " In addition, the studies conducted to this day have not been able to explain that Armenian nationalism is currently supported by Liberal-Marxist groups such as HDP (People's Democratic Party). This study aims to criticize the current view and propose a different perspective on Armenian nationalism by revealing that Armenian nationalism had been derived from Marxism, instead of the understanding that Marxism and Armenian nationalism are opposite from each other.

The study will mainly include theoretical discussions on Marxism and nationalism, and in this context, it will examine the structure of Armenian nationalism and the characteristics of anti-Turkish sentiment. Therefore, in the study, a philosophical and sociological analysis of Armenian nationalism will be made based on the structuralist methodology in general. In theoretical discussions, books such as the "Communist Manifesto" and "The German Ideology", among the most important works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, will be utilized since the discussions about nationalism are usually based on Marxism. Additionaly, Tom Nairn's book "Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited" is of great importance to look at how Marxism tries to explain the nationalism movement, and the present study will usually be based on his theory. In addition, the books, Kadir Akin's "Ermeni Devrimci Paramaz (Armenian Revolutionary Paramaz)", Anaide Ter-Minassian's "Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement 1887-1912" and Gaffar Cakmakli's "Ermeni Düşünce Sistemi ve İdeolojileri (Armenian Thought System and Ideologies)" are very valuable to explore the structure of the Armenian nationalism movement.

The paper will include three sections and a conclusion. In the first section, which is the theoretical part of the study, information on the relations between Marxism and nationalism-national identity will be given. In the second section, a discussion will be included about the connection of Armenian nationalism and anti-Turkish sentiment with Marxism and class conflict. In the third section, it will be addressed why the structures that contradict with Marxism, such as the Armenian Church, are on the side of Marxism. In the conclusion part, all previous sections will be summarized, and it will be emphasized that Armenian nationalism is derived from Marxism and that structures actually contrary to Marxism, such as the Armenian Church, sided with Marxism to protect their own interests.

1. Relations between Marxism and National Identity-Nationalism

1.1 Karl Marx's Materialist Theory

After the French Revolution in 1789, two very important new intellectual movements have emerged. One is nationalism which has gained a political character with the revolution and has been interpreted differently by different thoughts and understandings. The other one is Marxism. Marxism, while emphasizing that nationalism is a phenomenon specific to the modern capitalist system, has not foreseen making the distinction according to the nation, such as the oppressed nation-oppressive nation distinction.

The Marxist theory accentuates that history continues to evolve according to the transformation of the production system and class conflicts. According to Marx, class distinction exists in every society in history. The class distinction is based on ownership of the means of production. Those who own the means of production constitute a social class. This class consists of slave-owners in ancient ages, landlords-feudalists in the medieval ages, and factory and business owners, i.e., bourgeois, in the modern age. Those who do not have this ownership form a separate class, the proletariat, which has to sell its labor to make a living in the modern capitalist system. Thus, the bourgeois-proletariat distinction has emerged. What it matters in class distinction is the economic measure. In addition, a common class consciousness arises among groups that are in the same situation in terms of living conditions, the role they play in the relations of production and economic interests, and this consciousness creates class conflict (Marx & Engels, 1969: pp. 100-107).

Marx emphasized that socio-economic development would eventually lead society towards the polarization of the two main classes. While different classes are formed within the Bourgeois and Proletarian classes, the inner classes gather around these two poles. The class that dominates the society economically also gains dominance in politics and in creating identity, because the superstructures such as politics and identity are formed from the "basic economic structure" (Marx & Engels, 1969: pp. 115-116).

Marx asserted that there was a conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the modern period and that while religious-local identity was dominant in the Middle Ages, national-ethnic identity became dominant under the modern capitalist system. According to him, in a communist society with no bourgeois class, the national-ethnic identity created to prevent the unification of the proletariat would vanish, and the unity within the proletarian class would strengthen. Marx alleged that the emergence and end of national issues would occur spontaneously while the production system undergoes change in the development process of history. Indeed, Marx predicted that the communist revolution would occur in countries where the modern capitalist system developed, such as Germany, France, and England (cf. Marx & Engels, 1969: pp. 98-137). Thus, Marx propounded that nationalism is a phenomenon produced by the bourgeois class in the development process of the capitalist system and would be eliminated after the communist revolution, and opposed the categorization of people as "oppressed nation-oppressive nation".

1.2 Marxist Theory and Nationalism According to Modernist Theories

Especially modernist scientists such as Benedict Anderson have addressed the relations between Marxism and nationalism in detail, and while supporting the Marxist theory in general, they have also voiced some criticisms. The modernist approach reveals the view that nations and nationalism are structures belonging to the modern age. It argues that nations and nationalism emerged as a product of modern processes such as the establishment of centralized states, industrial capitalism, urbanization and secularization. According to the modernist approach, it is not possible to consider nations and nationalism independently of these processes. In the ancient ages, there were no political and economic conditions that would have revealed nationalism. These conditions have emerged with the modern age. In other words; nations have not created nationalism, nationalism has created nations (Özkırımlı, 2008: pp. 96-97).

Benedict Anderson, in his book "Imaginary Communities", accentuates the contribution of religious communities and kingdoms to the organization of societies in the Middle Ages, while emphasizing that "nation" is the new community that emerged during the collapse of these systems. According to him, the establishment of the capitalist economic system and the development of communication technology, notably the media industry, have played the most important role in the development of national consciousness; because the media industry has formed the basis of national consciousness and enabled the establishment of a new "imagined community".

As communication and interaction between the members of this "imaginary community" intensified, a common consciousness of time and space has been formed and developed as a national identity. In addition, national-ethnic nationalism is based on a common language. Through this historical process, official nationalism based on language and "homeland" has been determined in the modern capitalist period (cf: Anderson, 1983). Anderson emphasizes that a secular national identity develops by sharing the common culture, language, "homeland" and history by the mass due to the expansion of the field of communication and the intensification of communication, and that this national identity and nationalism are determined by the bourgeois who retains the state and the state structure to protect their own system. Thus, while trying to elaborate Marx's theory on the development of history, Anderson has also attempted to criticize Marx's materialist theory.

Ernest Gellner also attributes the rise of secular nationalism to the transformation of the industrial structure. According to Gellner, national-ethnic identity and nationalism are constituted by sharing the "official culture" because of the spread of modern education to the whole mass and the intensification of communication. Many "official common cultures" have spread under the industrialized modern capitalist system, and this requires the state and "homeland" determining the common culture (cf. Gellner, 1983). In other words, Gellner, by elaborating Marx's theory, emphasizes that nationalism is the product of education and common culture that the bourgeois and intellectuals spread to the mass under the industrialized modern capitalist system, and is used to prevent the communist revolution.

Tom Nairn defines the theory of nationalism as a historical failure of Marxism while trying to elaborate Marx's materialist theory. He thinks that there is a failure both in theory and in practice. He has stated that this situation was not specific to the Marxists, indicating that the necessary conditions for such a theory were not formed at that time. However, in his opinion, nationalism is a concept that can only be explained from a Marxist point of view. The Marxist theory of nationalism needs to approach nationalism in positive and negative terms. Nairn has criticized the view that nations and nationalism emerged in the development processes of communities, and it was a mandatory stage. The origin of nationalism should be sought in the historical development process of the world not in the internal dynamics of communities. According to Nairn, nationalism is determined by the basic characteristics of the political economy model (Nairn, 1981: p. 340).

Nairn also stated that nationalism cannot be considered as a concept that emerged only as a result of industrialization and urbanization. Referring to the Marxist theory in the discipline of international relations, he emphasized that nationalism developed differently depending on the region as a result of the unbalanced development of the capitalist economy in the world. The nationalism of the developed countries, which are described as the central, such as the Western European countries, has unfolded in the form of superiority-based chauvinism against underdeveloped peripheral countries. However, nationalism in the peripheral regions such as eastern Europe, Asia and Africa has emerged as a reaction against the central region, using the theory of "class conflict" (Nairn, 2015: pp. 188-193).

In addition, according to Nairn, nationalism is based on past values such as "proud history", traditional culture and religion while aiming at the development of society. Thus, the spread of capitalism and the growth of the gap between regions have increased the importance of nationalism in class conflict and led to conflicts in between nations. As capitalism spread, the contradiction created by the attitudes of the peripheral countries against and in favor of the transformation expanded to the central countries as well. Consequently, it was indicated that as the basic contradiction grew due to the spread of capitalism to the world, international conflicts emerged rather than the struggle between classes (Nairn, 2015: pp. 121-124).

Modernist scholars such as Nairn, usually basing on Marx's theory, emphasize that the emergence and rise of national identity and nationalism, is inevitable in history. On the other hand, while Marx believes that

nationalism and national identity would be abolished during class conflict, Nairn, considering the unbalanced development process of the world economic system, asserts that it is inevitable for the class conflict to emerge as "oppressive central nation-oppressed peripheral nation" and that the theory of class conflict is on the basis of nationalism, especially in the peripheral regions.

Armenian nationalism, which started in the 19th century, was carried out under the slogan of class conflict against the "oppressive" Ottoman State and the Turks, and the Armenian nationalist parties, Hinchak and Dashnak Parties, also adopted Marxism. In addition, while they prioritized Marxism, they viewed the "past values" such as the Armenian language, culture and traditions as the elements on the basis of Armenian national identity. Considering this historical background, when analyzing Armenian nationalism in the context of Marxist theory, Tom Nairn's theory will be utilized.

2. Armenian Nationalism in the Context of Marxist Theory and Class Struggle
2.1 Armenians before the 19th Century

The history of the group defined as "Armenians" today started after they adopted Christianity in the 4th century and the word "Armenians" meant only "those belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church" until the 19th century. After Saint Gregory the Illuminator baptized King Tiridates III in the 4th century, Armenians began to bond with each other around Saint Gregory the Illuminator's interpretation about Christianity and adopted an identity based on the Gregorian Church. Under this situation, Armenian national culture and traditions were also shaped on the basis of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Armenians began to be dominated by Muslims after the 11th century and religious autonomy was recognized for them in exchange for paying jizya to the state. Armenians were administrated by Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate during the Ottoman period. While Armenians paid jizya to the Ottoman state under the "millet" system, the state gave extensive religious and cultural rights to Armenians.

In addition, until the French Revolution in 1789, religious identity was more prominent than ethnic-national identity, and people were often coming together around a common religious identity. The people in Ottoman State had been divided into Muslims and non-Muslims, and ethnic origin did not matter much among Muslims. Within the Armenian Community, it was enough to be affiliated with the Armenian Apostolic Church to be defined as Armenian, and ethnic origin was not at the forefront. The term "Armenian" had almost the same meaning as the word "Christian". Thus, the Armenian community housed people of various ethnic origins, and accordingly, the socio-cultural structures of Armenians differed considerably according to the regions they lived. In terms of language, Armenian and the Armenian alphabet were being generally used only in religious ceremonies, and Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Kurdish, Georgian and Russian were used in daily life (cf. Simeon, 1999). The Armenian society, under these circumstances, was being content with the preservation of religious autonomy only, and there was no question of the establishment of "Greater Armenia" and hostility against Turks and Muslims until the 19th century.

2.2 The Birth of Armenian Nationalism

On the other side, efforts were started toward establishing the basis of Armenian nationalism after the 17th century. It is considered that those efforts were initiated by the diplomat Israel Ori, who aimed to free Armenia from Safavid and Ottoman domination. He created an Armenian freedom plan and carried out on a pro-Russian line. He sought help from the Russian Emperor for this plan. Ori was sure that Armenians would gain their independence, and he encouraged Armenians to make propaganda in the region where they lived (Çakmakli-Mehdiyev, 2015: pp. 49-51). In addition, the interaction between Armenians and Western Europe

increased significantly due to the missionary activities of the Jesuits towards Armenians in the region at that time; and the Mekhitarists, made up of converts from the Armenian Apostolic Church to the Catholic Church, turned to developing the Armenian national identity by working intensively on the Armenian language and history (Yoshimura, 2009: p. 7). The Mekhitarists opened modern schools in Istanbul, endeavored to develop a new language based on the vernacular language of Istanbul instead of the old Armenian, and inclined to establish civil political organizations against the church administration (Şahin, 2008: p. 113). Their endeavors affected the formation of the Armenian national ideology.

Additionally, many Armenian schools were opened in Yerevan, Tbilisi and Moscow by the Russian Tsardom in the 19th century. The children of Armenians emigrated from Iran and the Ottoman Empire were educated in these schools and other schools in Europe. In the Ottoman Empire, especially the children selected from among the Catholic Armenians were sent to Europe for education and become acquainted with new intellectual movements such as nationalism and revolutionary movements in Europe (Yoshimura, 2009: 7).

After the start of the 19th century, as the interaction between Europe and Armenians increased, new Armenian nationalist intellectuals began to emerge. At the early 19th century, Khatchadour Abovian, by being influenced by German nationalism, formed the basis of folk literature based on Armenian nationalism. Afterwards, modern ideologies spread through the translation and introduction of European literature in Armenian communities in both the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Tsardom, and various magazines and newspapers were published within the Armenian communities (Yoshimura, 2009: pp. 7-8).

However, the goals of the Armenian movements within the Russian Tsardom and the Ottoman Empire were very different from each other. For example, in the Armenian community in the 19th century Russian Tsardom, Mikael Nalbantian turned to creating the Armenian national identity on the history of the former Armenian Kingdom and, based on this, expressed the importance of establishing an independent Armenia by uniting Armenians living in Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Thus, exclusionary ethnic Armenian nationalism became more dominant among Armenians in the Russian Tsardom (Yoshimura, 2009: pp. 9-10. Besides, about ethnic and civic nationalism, cf. Smith, 2013: pp. 61-64).

Meanwhile Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were looking for a different path. Krikor Odian, one of the leading Armenian intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire, played an important role in the Young Ottomans movement in the 19th century and participated in the creation process of Kanun-u Esasi (the Basic Law). Odian inclined to expand the rights of Armenians in the reform process of the Ottoman government rather than the establishment of an independent Armenia. Nubar Nubarian (Boghos Nubar's father), who was Egypt's foreign minister at the time, together with the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, at the 1878 Berlin Congress, demanded the support of Britain and France to improve the status of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. His declaration of June 1878 was aimed at improving the political freedom rights of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Nubarian accentuated in this declaration that it was pointless to compare Armenians in the Ottoman Empire with Armenians in the Russian Tsardom. As can be seen from this, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire predominantly turned towards increasing their level of political participation by expanding their political and cultural rights within the Ottoman state (Yoshimura, 2009: pp. 11-12). Also, while Armenians in the Russian Tsardom planned to establish the Armenian state based on exclusionary ethnic nationalism, those in the Ottoman Empire aimed at further improving political rights within the Ottoman Empire based on civic nationalism.

After the Berlin Congress in 1878, various privileges were granted to Armenians with the Regulation of the Armenian Nation. The organization process of Armenians was accelerated under this condition. The number of Armenian schools, magazines, and newspapers increased even more. The Armenian Patriarchate also

contributed to the formation of the Armenian national ideology. Thus, a favorable environment was constituted for the development of modern Armenian nationalism within the Ottoman Empire (Çakmakli-Mehdiyev, 2015: p. 54), and the Armenian nationalist movement, which aimed to unite Armenians in the world and establish an "Armenian State", rose rapidly in both the Russian Tsardom and the Ottoman Empire.

2.3 The Formation of Armenian Nationalist Movements and Marxism: Armenian Nationalism as a Left-Wing Nationalism

While the modern nationalism movement was spreading rapidly among Armenians in the world after the French Revolution in 1789, Marxism, which started to rise in the 19th century, significantly influenced the Armenian community and formed the ideological backbone of Armenian nationalism. In the context of class conflict theory, Armenians turned to developing their own secular national identity based on anti-Turkish/ Ottoman, and Armenian nationalism emerged as "left-wing Marxist peripheral nationalism" put forward by Tom Nairn.

As mentioned previously, many Armenian elites in the 19th century were educated in Europe and were influenced by modern ideologies such as nationalism and democracy there. The place where Armenians particularly gathered densely was Paris. Under this circumstance, Armenians in Europe were influenced by the 1848 Revolution that took place in France and spread the Marxist ideology as well as the modern nationalist movement to the Ottoman lands. Thus, on the basis of elites, the ground was prepared for Armenians to take action against the Ottoman State and the Armenian Patriarchate in the future (Ahmadov, 2018, pp. 49-52).

Moreover, on the basis of the people, a favorable setting for class conflict and revolution started to emerge in both the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Tsardom. Considering the socio-economic situation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, despite it was declared that Muslims and non-Muslims were legally equal in the reforms that have been going on since the 1850s, this principle was not implemented in all parts of the Ottoman Empire. Only Armenians living in the cities, especially the bourgeois and clergy in Istanbul, could benefit from these reforms, and the economic and social status of the Armenian peasants continued to deteriorate (cf: Krikorian, 1978: pp. 3-5). The predicament of the Armenian peasants and the agricultural problem were among the important elements of the Armenian Issue. While the Ottoman bureaucracy and tax system were reformed in accordance with the central state system, the feudal structures in the countryside were not completely removed. Under these circumstances, the economic pressure on the Armenian peasants increased significantly. In addition, after Russia captured the entire Caucasus in 1864, the resettlement of the North Caucasians and then the Balkan people to Armenian villages in Anatolia made the situation more complicated. In this process, tensions between Armenians ad Muslims began to rise and this situation affected the economic and social structure in the region (Ter Minassian, 2012: p. 17). While the economic situation of Armenians in the rural areas deteriorated, the Armenian peasants migrated to the cities and to the Caucasus under Russian domination to get out of economic and social problems. With the increase of Russia's influence on the Christians living in the Ottoman Empire, the position of Armenians, known as the "Millet-i Sadıka (loyal nation)", was jeopardized (Ter Minassian, 2012: pp. 17-18) and the Armenian peasants turned into the new proletariat class due to migration to cities. Thus, as the economic and social imbalance between cities such as Istanbul, "the central region" and the Armenian villages, the "peripheral region" grew, the reforms made to improve the Ottoman State turned into an oppressive system for the Armenian peasants, and an atmosphere favorable for class conflict between Armenians and the Ottoman State emerged.

There was a similar situation in the Armenian community in the South Caucasus, where most of the Armenians were working as workers in big cities such as Baku, Tbilisi and Batumi. With the Russian Industrial

Revolution that started in the 19th century, the Armenian worker population in the Caucasus increased rapidly. Meanwhile, the gap between the bourgeois class and the other class widened and the working class began to have difficulty in making ends meet. The Armenian workers in the South Caucasus were almost completely deprived of the protection of the law and organizations such as unions (Suny, 2015: pp. 139-140) and had no chance of contesting to the bourgeois class and the Russian Tsarist government. Besides, Armenians were generally in the minority in terms of population in the South Caucasus. The Russian chauvinism and anti-Armenian sentiment also increased especially at the end of the 19th century (Suny, 2015: p. 138). Thus, Armenians in the South Caucasus were also in an economically and politically disadvantaged position, and conditions became ready for the class conflict and revolution in both the Ottoman and Russian Armenian communities.

At this stage, the Armenian nationalist elites turned to establishing nationalism based on Marxism, especially the class conflict theory, to bring together Armenians with different cultural and sectarian structures. The Armenian theorists with the publications they made called especially Armenians under the Ottoman rule to revolt. According to Armenian nationalists such as Krikor Artsruni, the Armenian Issue is expressed as the struggle of the "oppressed" cultural and civilized races against the "oppressive" barbarian races, in other words, the class conflict between Armenians, "the oppressed class in the peripheral region" and the Muslims, "the oppressive class in the central region". The Armenian nationalists, influenced by Marxism legitimized the rebellion against the Ottoman Empire as a "reaction against the central structure" and emphasized the "liberation of Armenians from colonialism" and "the establishment of Armenia, consisting of the oppressed Armenian people, which is not an oppressive class and nation". This idea, based on the Marxist theory, laid the foundation of Armenian nationalism (Çakmaklı-Mehdiyev, 2015: pp. 57-62). In the direction of this idea, Armenians started uprisings in Zeytun in 1862 and later entered into clashes against the Ottoman government in Van and Erzurum. In addition, various organizations and associations such as the Liberation Union, the Black Cross Society and the Guardians of the Motherland emerged in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. These developments continued and in 1885, the first revolutionary party, the Armenakan Party, was founded in Van. This party aimed at "the liberation of the oppressed Armenian nation from the colonialist Ottoman Empire with an armed revolution" (Yoshimura, 2009: p. 13) and asserted that the Armenian peasants should be armed by conducting propaganda activities. It gained a significant influence in the region due to being very active in Van at the end of the 1890s (Yoshimura, 2009: p. 13).

However, the Marxist Armenian students studying in Europe established the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, which aimed at the independence of Armenia and the liberation of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire in the short term, and the integration of Armenia into the communist world in the long term. The Hunchakian Party, in the direction of the Marxist idea, directed Armenian peasants and workers against the Ottoman Empire to class conflict and arm themselves, and entered into clashes with the Ottoman Empire (Yoshimura, 2009: pp. 13-14). In 1890, the Hunchakian Party organized a large-scale demonstration in Istanbul's Kumkapi district, and also caused some incidents in Eastern Anatolia (Nalbandian, 1967: p. 108-109).

The Dashnaktsutyun Party founded in Tbilisi at the end of the 1890s did not put a clear emphasis on Marxism to receive support from Western countries (Libaridian, 2015: pp. 131-132), it turned into the main revolutionary party because of including all revolutionary Armenian organizations. The Dashnaktsutyun Party, like the Hunchakian Party, also adopted Armenian nationalism based on Marxism. While the Hunchakian Party envisaged the integration of Armenia into the communist world in the long term, the Dashnaktsutyun Party was concentrating more on the independence of Armenia.

This party applied an anti-Turkish propaganda to the Armenian peasants and called them to the class struggle against the Ottoman Empire for the "liberation of Armenians from the colonial Ottoman Empire" and the "establishment of an independent Armenia where the people are not exploited", as a consequence, continued the bloody clashes against the Ottoman government after 1892 (Ilter, 1995: pp. 24-28). In 1896, the Dashnak Party, under the leadership of Karekin Pastirmaciyan, raided the Ottoman Bank, and also fought against the Ottoman government and Muslims in Eastern Anatolia. In 1915, during the First World War, the Dashnak Party by siding with Russia came into a conflict against the Ottoman Empire and applied oppression and cruelty against the Muslims in the region to purify the East and Southeast Anatolia from Muslims.

ASALA, which was founded in the 1970s and adopted nationalism based on Marxism, while committing various terrorist acts against Turks, in the long term, it had a similar view with the Hunchakian Party in aiming to unite the Armenian geography, which covers a significant part of Anatolia, with the Soviet Union and the communist world. According to the statement made at the end of 1981, its goal was "the establishment of a united Armenia under the leadership of a democratic, socialist and revolutionary government" (Karas, 2007: pp. 44-45). ASALA clearly aimed to unite the Armenian world in some way with the USSR and turn into a boundless communist system, and considered Armenia under the domination of the USSR as a base for the people's revolution. While declaring those who were against Marxism to be enemies, even if they are Armenians, in the political program, ASALA supported those who reject the Turkish imperialism backed by international imperialism and the hegemony of dominant classes, even if they are Turks. The first priority of ASALA was the liberation of the "Armenian people and their lands" from the Turkish state, which is within the central system, and it emphasized that it was necessary to carry out the violent revolution cooperating with communists all over the world to achieve this goal (Karas, 2007: p. 45). As seen here, ASALA built its own theory of Armenian nationalism based on class conflict and asserted that Marxism and Armenian nationalism were inseparable.

Thus, modern Armenian nationalism, which started to dominate the Armenian community in the 19th century, emerged as a reaction against the "central structure", the Ottoman Empire; it carried the characteristic of "peripheral nationalism" put forth by Tom Nairn, and developed as "left-wing nationalism" derived from Marxism, as seen in other peripheral nationalist movements. Armenian nationalism as "peripheral nationalism" based on "Marxism" is also clearly reflected in modern Armenian national historiography. For example, clerics such as the Armenian Patriarchs of Istanbul, Megerdich Khrimian and Zaven Der Yeghiayan, who openly internalized anti-Turkism and supported the use of violence against the Ottomans and Muslims, were considered "Armenian national heroes", while those who opposed conflict with the Turks, such as Khoren Ashikian, were accused as "traitors" (Cirik, 2015: pp. 236-237). In addition, the figures such as Hambartsum Boyajian, Andranik Ozanian, Hamazasp and Dro, who organized terrorist activities and massacres against the Ottoman Empire and Turks-Muslims, were appreciated by Armenian nationalists for their "great contribution to the liberation struggle against the Turks", and the Armenian committee members were become mythologized in the literature such as poems and folk tales (Cirik, 2015: pp. 237-245). Moreover, the militants such as Monte Melkonian and Gurgen Yanikian, who played a central role in ASALA, were buried in Yerablur Military Memorial Cemetery as "national heroes" in Armenia. As can be understood from this situation, modern Armenian nationalism based on the "reaction to the Turks" and class conflict theory emerged as "left wing-peripheral nationalism" derived from Marxism.

On the other hand, theoretical contradiction exists between Marxism and Armenian nationalism which emerged as a "left-wing peripheral nationalism." While Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels claimed that nationalism and national identity in the long run would be eliminated in the conflicts occurring in the process

that progressed towards communism, Nairn criticized the theory of Marx and Engels, asserting that nationalism played a highly important role in uniting the people in class conflict and revolution. Looking at the Armenian nationalism derived from Marxism, it can be seen that Armenians mostly turn to Armenian chauvinism with an emphasis on the "proud history of Armenians and civilized traditional culture". While embracing the theory of class conflict, the Armenian nationalists such as Krikor Artsruni frequently verbalized the superiority of Armenians over the Turks and Kurds. They excluded Muslim Turks and Kurds in the nation-state building project of Armenia and placed themselves at the center of Armenia's system. In addition to the Dashnaktsutyun Party, the Hunchakian Party and ASALA also prioritized their own people in their policies and accentuated the "superior culture and heroism" of Armenians. Thus, Armenian nationalism also carries the structure of "central nationalism" espousing chauvinism, and the Armenian nationalist-revolutionary movement clearly demonstrates that class conflict and revolution cannot get rid of nationalism.

3. Why did the Armenian Apostolic Church Come Close to Armenian "Left-Wing Nationalism"?

3.1 The Armenian National Constitution and the Opening of Church's Administration to People

According to the theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, religious institutions such as the Church are the constructs created by those who dominate the economic structure to maintain their supremacy and will be abolished after class conflict and revolution. In other words, Marxists and religious institutions are theoretically contrary to each other. However, especially after the 20th century, it is seen that the cooperation began to take place between the Armenian religious institutions and the opposite pole, the Armenian nationalist movement derived from Marxism. In this part, it will be analyzed why and how the contradicting Armenian religious institutions and Armenian nationalism turn towards cooperation. The main structure of the Armenian Church reveals that it was never actually Marxist or anti-Ottoman. The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, after being founded in the 15th century provided the relations between Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman government. It was in a politically more superior position than the Catholicos of Echmiadzin and Sis. Since the main concern of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire until the 19th century was the maintenance of religious autonomy, the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire put up a struggle against other sectarians such as Protestant and Catholic Churches rather than Muslims (Sezgin, 2005: pp. 50-54). In addition, until the establishment of the Armenian National Assembly as a result of the ratification of the Armenian National Constitution in 1863, the people, from among the secular elements, could not interfere in the affairs of the church (Sezgin, 2005: 54; cf. Artinian, 2004). Therefore, until that time, elements such as secular nationalism, Marxism and anti-Turkism could not have entered the Armenian Apostolic Church in the Ottoman Empire and it has been able to stay independent of the influences of foreign states.

However, after the ratification of the Armenian National Constitution in 1863, the situation began to change substantially. With this constitution, the process of the patriarch election underwent a great change, and the Armenian Patriarch began to be elected by the Armenian National Assembly. Thus, most of the patriarch's powers were transferred to the assembly formed by secular Armenian intellectuals and tradesmen (Köksal, 2014: pp. 23-26), and the notables of the people began to intervene in the process of bringing the patriarchs to office.

Moreover, Armenians in the Amira class who gathered tax on behalf of the state also began to be involved in the decision-making mechanism of the patriarchate over time (cf. Barsoumian, 2013). Meanwhile, the Armenian businessmen who grew up in places such as Erzurum, Van, and Agri (about Russia's policy

towards Echmiadzin, cf: Güllü, 2016) where the influence of the Etchmiadzin Cathogicos, which came under the control of the Russian Tsardom, was intense, constituted the second group in the patriarchate. The third group that took part in the administration of the Armenian patriarchate was the intellectuals who were educated in Europe. This group, which became acquainted with European political systems, nationalism and revolutionary movements, acted as defenders of freedom when they returned to Istanbul (Çakmaklı-Mehdiyev, 2015: p. 52).

Under these conditions, the Armenian community, which was previously ruled by clergy began to be governed by a mixed assembly of forty people. This would have meant that nationalists and Marxists had had an opportunity to achieve a say over the Armenian Church in governing their own people. Armenian nationalists-Marxists started to use the church structure as a tool, and in this direction, by intervening with the church administration, and enabled Armenian nationalism and revolutionary ideologies started to be taught in Armenian schools in the Ottoman Empire (Ahmadov, 2018: p. 59)

One of the most important of such initiatives is the works started by Aram Manukian, a member of the Dashnaktsutyun Party, after the Van Revolt in 1896. After moving to Van in 1904, Manukian united all Armenian groups there and established the Armenian Insurrection organization. This organization abrogated the traditional system of the clergy school under the control of the Akdamar Catholicosate, which had great influence on Armenians in the region and established a new system. After that, the Armenian Insurrection organization placed its Marxist-Armenian nationalist cadres both as teachers and representatives in that school. Moreover, Manukian appointed someone outside the church as the Akdamar Church Catholicos (Oktay, 2002: p. 91). Thus, the Dashnaktsutyun Party, which embraced Marxist-left-wing nationalism, took advantage of the Armenian National Constitution and seized the structure of the Armenian Church, which opposed to Marxism, and this situation facilitated the intervention of foreign states such as Russia into the Armenian Church. The Armenian National Constitution, approved by the Ottoman government in 1863, allowed people unrelated with clergy to intervene with the structure of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and consequently the church structure began to become weakened. In this situation, in the Armenian Apostolic Church, the influence of organizations such as the Hinchak and Dashnak Parties, which espoused Marxist-left-wing nationalism, increased, and they eventually took over the Church. Hence, The Armenian National Constitution played a very important role in increasing the influence of Armenian Nationalism and Marxism within the church structure and the Armenian Apostolic Church's coming close to Marxism-left-wing nationalism.

3.2 Threats Towards the Armenian Apostolic Church

Assuredly, there were objections and discontent within the Armenian Apostolic Church against the weakening of church structure and the growing influence of Marxists-Armenian nationalists in it. Accordingly, the Armenian Apostolic Church was faced with the loss of its own dominance over the Armenian community. While the Armenian Apostolic Church was trying to prevent the increase of the influence of the Marxists-Armenian Nationalists within its own structure, The Armenian nationalist organizations started to arm themselves by being supported by foreign states such as Russia. Thus, Armenian nationalists-Marxists tended to threaten those who oppose them through violence, relying on great military power (Oktay, 2003: pp. 443-447).

While Marxism and Armenian nationalism spread rapidly within the Armenian community, seeing that the majority of Armenians were still strongly attached to the church, Armenian nationalists and Marxists turned towards taking over the church thorough violence. They wanted to seize the churches and use them as a tool for nationalism, by assassinating the clergy in the church. Priests and other clerics, especially patriarchs,

were exposed to these attacks. Some patriarchs and clerics reacted to the activities of Armenian militants. They prevented those militants from engaging in activities against the Ottoman Empire and did not hesitate to report those involved in this activity to the government. Thus, Armenian nationalists, who saw that these attempts of the patriarch and the clerics were against them, wanted to eliminate those clergymen by assassination attempts. In the attacks organized in Istanbul and executed in the city centers and in the countryside, many clergymen were either killed or injured. Khoren Ashikian, the Armenian Patriarch, was a loyal clergyman to the state. Church members, such as Ashikian, who sided with the Ottoman Empire, stated that they would welcome the punishment of the Armenian militants by the government when they saw their activities (Karacakaya, 2017: pp. 33-34). Conservative structures, such as the Armenian Church in question, were actually against these activities of Armenian militants.

The attacks of Armenian militants on the clergy began in 1890 at the Armenian Patriarchate in Kumkapi. Artin Jangulian, a member of Hunchakian Party raided the Istanbul Armenian Partiarchate in Kumkapi during ritual and demanded the patriarch Khoren Ashikian to join a procession heading to Yildiz Palace and to meet the Sultan Abdulhamid II. The patriarch was saved from the militant with the intervention of the law enforcement officers. Upon the audacity of the Armenian militants, the leaders of the Armenian community recoursed to Sultan Abdulhamid II and showed their loyalty to the state by declaring that the Armenian Church had no connection with the ongoing terror and riots. After this incident, the Hunchakian Party increased its hostility towards the Armenian Patriarch Khoren Ashikian, who was loyal to the state, and the second assassination attempt on Khoren Ashikian took place. Afraid of the assassinations against him, Ashekian resigned. Consequently, the Hunchakians achieved their aim. Even though they could not eliminate the Patriarch, they succeeded to make him resign from the post. In place of Ashikian, Mateos Izmirlian, who was supported by the committees but disregarded by the government, was elected as the patriarch. After Izmirlian became the patriarch, disorders broke out in many provinces of Anatolia and riots grew like an avalanche. During this period, the assassinations of Armenian militants against Armenians loyal to the state increased even more. The Armenian Patriarchate began to massacre the clergy loyal to the state who reported the Armenian committee members and their supporters to the Ottoman government (Karacakaya, 2017: p. 35-45). The Patriarchate and the committee members started to come close in this period and the committee members who carried out illegal activities were hidden in the patriarchate. The Ottoman government, on the other hand, had stated that the clergy in the churches with such undesirable acts would have been punished.

In order to achieve their goals and find supporters for themselves, the committee members put pressure on their own nation, threatened those who did not want to join the committees and killed those who did not submit them. Since the Armenian militants saw the Armenians' devotion to the church, they tried to seize the church and use it in their favor by assassinating the clergy (Karacakaya, 2017: pp. 157-158). As a consequence, the power of the church began to decline against the Armenian Nationalists-Marxists. The Armenian Apostolic Church could not have resisted the Marxists-nationalists and lost its support within the Armenian community. In other words, the situation created due to the ratification of the Armenian National Constitution significantly facilitated the intervention of foreign states into the Armenian community, and foreign countries increased military support to Armenian Nationalist-Marxist organizations. Under these conditions, Armenian nationalists-Marxists turned to seize the Armenian Apostolic Church by also military means as well, and established their dominance over the system by threatening church officials using violence.

Nevertheless, the church tried to maintain its own legitimacy by siding with Armenian nationalism to protect its own interests. When the influence of the church oppressed by the Armenian nationalists decreased, the influence of the Armenian nationalists within the church increased even more. Since Armenians were a church-

centered society, the Armenian Church had to be seized in order for Armenian nationalism to be supported by the Armenian community. Once the Armenian Church lost its power to resist Armenian Nationalism-Marxism, it had to submit Armenian nationalists-Marxists to maintain its own legitimacy and protect its own security. In this context, although the Armenian Apostolic Church was actually anti-Marxist, it came close to Armenian nationalism based on Marxism.

Conclusion

On the development of national identity and nationalism, Marxist theory claimed that national identity was produced by the bourgeois class during the development of the modern capitalist economic system and that nationalism would be abolished with the class conflict and revolution taking place during the transition to the communist system. On the other hand, the modernist scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Tom Nairn, in elaborating the Marxist theory, explained why genuine class conflict and revolution did not occur, by focusing on the social role of national identity and criticized the Marxist theory. Tom Nairn in particular asserts that due to the uneven development of the world economic system, class conflict occurs in the form of "oppressive central nation-oppressed peripheral nation" and nationalism especially in peripheral regions is "left-wing nationalism" based on class conflict theory and derived from Marxism.

Looking at its transformation process, the Armenian identity existed only as a religious identity until the 19th century and the concept of homeland remained weak. However, when the nationalism movement that emerged with the French Revolution in 1789 became widespread among Armenians in Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian elites intensified the efforts towards uniting Armenians in the world and establishing an "Armenian State" based on a common homeland.

In addition, because of the acquaintance of the Armenian elite with Marxist ideology and the transformation of the economic-social system in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, Marxism formed the basis of Armenian nationalism. Modern Armenian nationalism aimed at the "liberation of the oppressed Armenian people from the colonial Turks" and the "establishment of Armenia in which there is no exploitation", and in this direction, the organizations such as Hinchak and Dashnak Parties and ASALA committed acts of terror against the Ottoman and the state of Republic of Turkey. The Armenian national historiography also defines the figures who committed cruelty and massacres against the Turks as "national heroes" because of their "contribution to the struggle of Armenians against the central structure which is the Turks", and this shows that Armenian nationalism is "left-wing peripheral nationalism" derived from Marxism.

On the other hand, Armenian nationalism derived from Marxism frequently emphasized the superiority of Armenians over Turks and Kurds, and in the nation-state building project of Armenia, the nationalists explicitly excluded Muslim Turks and Kurds, and placed themselves at the center of the system. Thus, Armenian nationalism, which emerged as a Marxist-based peripheral nationalism, also carries the dimension of "central nationalism" advocating chauvinism, and the Armenian nationalist-revolutionary movement clearly demonstrates that class conflict and revolution cannot get rid of nationalism.

The Armenian National Constitution, which was approved by the Ottoman Empire in 1863, played a very important role in the Armenian Apostolic Church's coming close to Armenian nationalism-Marxism. Due to this constitution, Armenians outside the church structure became more effective in the church administration and the Armenian community, and Armenian nationalism based on Marxism began to gain influence within the church. Furthermore, after the Armenian National Constitution was approved, the intervention of foreign states into the affairs of the Armenian community became easier, and Armenian Nationalist-Marxist organizations supported by foreign countries also established dominance over the church through violence. Thereby, once

the Armenian Church lost its power to struggle against Armenian Nationalism-Marxism, it had to submit Armenian nationalists-Marxists to maintain its own legitimacy. Consequently, the Armenian Apostolic Church came close to Armenian nationalism based on Marxism.

In conclusion, although Armenian nationalism seems to be anti-Marxist, it is interpreted as "left-peripheral" nationalism derived from Marxism considering the views to have been influenced by and the Marxist elements contained within Armenian organizations. On the other side, Armenian nationalism also carries the dimension of "central nationalism" based on chauvinism, and this situation indicates that the revolution and class conflict cannot completely get rid of nationalism. Looking at the Armenian Apostolic Church, while the church had a conservative structure against Marxism, the influence of Armenian nationalists and Marxists increased within its own structure due to the situation created by the Armenian National Constitution, and ultimately the church began to act together with the Armenian nationalism based on Marxism.

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