

VAN PROVINCE DURING THE RULE OF GOVERNORS ISMAIL HAGG AND IZZET BEY (1911-1913)

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Abstract

The article presents the state of Armenians in Van province during the tenure of governors Ismail Hagg and Izzet Bey, in 1911-1913. After the dismissal of their previous governor, Bekir Sami Bey, from the autumn of 1910 to the beginning of 1911, the position of deputy governor of Van was temporarily entrusted to the former Chief Clerk (Devtertar) (position, which is also responsible for accountancy) of the province, who was replaced by Ismail Hagg Pasha in early 1911. However, soon Izzet Bey, who is of Kurdish origin, was appointed the new governor of Van province. In the study, with the help of relevant facts from the source, for the first time, the situation of Armenians in Van province during the rule of Ismail Hagg and Izzet governors was covered, the Armenian-Kurdish relations of Van province in this period were highlighted, the agreement signed between ARF and Ittihat on February 13, 1912 was presented - the pact by which the ruling party was obliged to fulfill its long-standing promises regarding the solution of Armenians' land, school, security and other problems. The article also revealed the elections of the Ottoman Parliament held in Van on April 6-8, 1912 and the mayor's elections held in Van in 1912.

Keywords: Ismail Hagg, Izzet, Armenian-Kurdish relations, Van census, Petros Gapamachyan, ARF-Ittihat alliance, land disputes, Ittihat, Ittilaf.

Introduction

From August 1908 to the autumn of 1910, the situation in the province of Van under the rule of the pashas Mahmud-Khair, Ferit, Yaver, Bekir Sami seemed to be bearable. During their reign, under the direct influence of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, certain measures were implemented to overcome illegalities and injustices in the province. At the initiative of the Turkish military of Van province, facts were collected and all the corrupt officials of the province were severely condemned after the investigations. During the reign of Governor Beki Sami, on July 27, 1909, a new conscription law was published and put into effect in August-September 1910, according

to which, for the first time in the history of the Ottoman Empire, Christian citizens aged 20-40 were subject to conscription, received the right to bear arms and serve in the Ottoman army. Conflicts between the old and new regimes emerged during the coup d'état of March 31, 1909, and the April 1909 massacres in Adana, as Armenians were the main exponents and defenders of the constitutional order. Following the example of the massacres in Adana, from April 7 to May 4, 1909, protests were also organized in Van and persecution of the Armenians, who were members of a party, began. Armenians had to forget about any revolutionary illusions and felt the true face of Ittihat, as violence, arbitrariness and prison persecution began to rule again in Van.

Temporary rule of “Devtertar”

The next event in Van's internal political life was the resignation of governor Bekir Sami Bey. Not being able to solve the problem of returning the occupied lands of the Armenians by the Kurds, he left for Constantinople in the autumn of 1910 and resigned from his position, being appointed the governor of Trebizond instead¹. Presenting the general description of the cunning policy of the Young Turks during the reign of Bekir Sami, in Van H. Yeramyan notes: “Several Turkish or mixed commissions in the Hurriyet period, under the pretext of studying reforms, as if on the one hand were feeding Armenians with empty hopes and on the other hand blowing dust in the eyes of Europe.”²

After the departure of Bekir Sami Bey, from the autumn of 1910 to the beginning of 1911, a disorganized and unimaginable situation reigned in Van, as Ismail Faziz Pasha refused to take over the position of governor of Van. The post of deputy governor of Van was temporarily entrusted to the former “devtertar” (Chief Clerk - A.H.) of the province, an “insignificant, lazy”, inexperienced and not influential young man who did not enjoy authority at all and who spent his time senselessly in the state with the “ghadi” (spiritual judge - A. H.), the military and Ittihat members³. Let us write about one incident regarding a salary increase in Van. He was slapped by an ordinary policeman in

¹ After serving in Trebizond, he held the posts of vali (governor) of Bursa, Aleppo and Beirut. Together with former influential members of the Young Turks party, he joined the secret Turkish nationalist “Karakolyan” society created in October 1918 to continue the underground activities of the Young Turks, including opposing the disclosure of the Armenian Genocide. On May 3, 1920, he was appointed the first minister of foreign affairs of Kemalist Turkey, and in February - March 1921, he headed the Turkish delegation at the negotiations in Moscow and London. In 1926 Bekir Sami was arrested in Izmir for the crime of organizing a conspiracy against Mustafa Kemal, but was acquitted. In 1927 he left politics and lived in the countryside. He died and was buried in Istanbul. For more details, see Chelahsaty 2009, also Shlykov 2014, also Bakdak, November 12, 1909, N 251, as well as <https://bit.ly/4brd7lv>, <https://bit.ly/4ePenSw>, also https://www.turkcebilgi.com/bekir_sami_kunduh

² Yeramyan 1929: 138.

³ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 10.

connection with it, and was unable to punish him, because the slapper was sponsored by the head of the police of the province, and the “devtertar” was not sure in the impartiality of the judicial system⁴. Such an official who could not protect himself, how could he guarantee the safety of the Armenians of the entire province?

Despite all this, he was in friendly relations with the ARF members of Van, who had promised him their mediation in the Interior Ministry when he was appointed as governor of Van⁵.

In order to settle the Armenian-Kurdish land disputes and collect information for reforms during the “devtertar” period, the first investigative commission arrived in Van, the members of which were the prominent figures of Ittihat of Thessaloniki, the financier Chavid, the governor of Bitlis, Ismail Hagg, and one of the main figures of the revolution, Eomer Naji. In fact, their main goal was to study the activities of secret organizations of Armenians⁶. In his newsletter, Eomer Naji declared that “the ones who sow the seeds of unrest in Asia Minor are the officials sent from Istanbul, who incite the Islamic and non-Islamic peoples against each other, when those peoples could live in peace and harmony with each other.”⁷

The tenure of Ismail Hagg

At the beginning of 1911, the temporary governor-“devtertar” was replaced by the Albanian Ismail Hagg Pasha, who was the governor of Bitlis province until then⁸. Mevlan Zade Rifat calls him “lame” Ismail Hagg⁹. The “Devtertar” was transferred to Bitlis because he was engaged in intrigues with the Kurds against the new governor¹⁰.

The very beginning of his tenure was marked by an important event, the outcome of which greatly contributed to the rise of the governor’s reputation among Armenians. Four adult students of the Turkish military academy take with them two Armenian students of the “itat” (secondary school - A. H.) to a cafe called “Bath Stones” and try to rape them. However, the Armenian boys, who were armed, kill one, then mortally wound the second, and the other two run away.

A new threat of pogrom and destruction was created. Although the murdered man’s father accepts and condemns his own son’s guilty act and justifies the actions of

⁴ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 22, also Mshak, 1911, April 7, N 73.

⁵ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 10.

⁶ Yeramyan 1929: 139.

⁷ Yeramyan 1929: 140.

⁸ For details, <http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/ismail-hakki-pasa>

⁹ Rifat 1990: 136.

¹⁰ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 67.

the Armenian boys¹¹, the French Turk-loving consul S. Zarzeki defends the Turks and describes the self-defense of the Armenian boys as disrespect and chauvinism, provoking the Turks against the Armenians. H. Yeramyanyan gave a strong answer to the Armenian-hating consul, stating that “Mr. Consul, children of a chivalrous nation or your citizens, do not provoke the situation with unjust accusations.”¹² In 1914, A. Vramyan also published a series of critical articles about the pro-Turkish behavior of the consul in “Azatamart” (Freedom Struggle)¹³.

Governor Ismail Hagg organizes the burial of Turkish students as “Shahids” (martyrs - A. H.), at the same time he treats Armenians kindly and with his wise prudence saves Van from impending danger, not allowing the public order to be disrupted.

After a very short term in office, Ismail Hagg moved to Adana, where he continued his benevolent attitude towards Armenians.

Izzet Bay's governing

In September 1911, Ahmed Izzet Bey¹⁴ of Kurdish origin was appointed as the new governor of Van Vilayet, but before his arrival, General Jabir Pasha¹⁵, the military commander of Van, served as a temporary vicegerent.

Izzet Bey was the step brother of the Kurdish Sayyid Pasha, the Kurdish Sherif, the editor of the “Meshrutiet” newspaper published in Paris, and the uncle of his brother Fuad Pasha, a Kurdish member of the Ottoman Parliament, a relative of Abdul Gater¹⁶, known for his liberal views, and he served in the Sublime Porte until he left for Van. According to the testimony of Jabir Pasha, at one time he was and still continues to be the spy of the French Embassy in Constantinople¹⁷.

The term of his governorship coincides with the first term of Ittihat rule, the term of Ittilaf and the second term of Ittihat rule¹⁸.

One of the important and interesting events of Izzet Bey's term of office was the pact signed between the ARF and Ittihat on February 13, 1912, by which the ruling party committed itself to fulfilling its long-standing promises regarding the solution of land, school, security and other problems of Armenians¹⁹.

¹¹ Yeramyanyan 1929: 141.

¹² Yeramyanyan 1929: 142-143.

¹³ Yeramyanyan 1929: 141.

¹⁴ Henning 2018: 258.

¹⁵ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 232.

¹⁶ Mshak, September 23, 1912, N 210.

¹⁷ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 266.

¹⁸ For more details see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurd_Ahmet_Izzet_Pasha

¹⁹ Horizon, January 10, 1913, N 6.

In the winter and spring of 1912, a census was held in Van, according to which the Armenian and Turkish population of Van and 33 suburbs was 24.000 people, of which 17.000 were in the city, and 7.000 lived in the suburbs²⁰.

The elections of the new mayor of Van

During Izzet's term of office, in 1912 Van mayoral elections were also held, in which two prominent public figures enjoying respect in the city, Avetis Terzibashyan and Petros Gapamachyan, put forward their candidacies.

Avetis Terzibashyan, who was a more educated and authoritative person, had a confident and convincing victory in the elections. However, soon he leaves Van due to work circumstances and transfers his position to Petros Gapamachyan, who receives the title of "bey" "Hachi Bey".

Petros Bey Gapamachyan was one of the rich and outstanding merchants of Van. Owing to his activities trade in Van received a big boost and branches of the trading companies were opened in villages and regions. He was also a district guardian of Van province, a trustee of monasteries and schools, a member of the provincial mejlis idare (administrative assembly - A.H.). At the same time, P. Gapamachyan founded the Van branch of Charity, became its chairman, helped the Armenian schools of this province and played a major role in the opening of the Van educational institution, allocating a large amount of money for its activities, and later also making a donation for that institution. Several hundred families in Van were surviving at the expense of his charity²¹.

P. Gapamachyan carries out quite successful mayoral activities and becomes one of the best mayors of Van. A. Yekaryan said that the city of Van has rarely had a good mayor like him²². And the columnist Vahan Minakhoryan (Mtrak²³ - A.H.) wrote the following about him: "He expressed his feelings in a sincere and fearless way, he was correct and impartial in his duties, and for that many people envied him. As an impartial, straightforward person, he did not shy away from speaking the truth and spoke boldly both in the government and national circles, a merit that was not given to many."²⁴

²⁰ Azatamart, March 7, 1912, N 840.

²¹ The ARF press, which had a different opinion about P. Gapamachyan, states that he was a highly arrogant, disrespectful and ambitious person, "he was an old man with old views and thoughts... he would not accept that other than him be recognized as the leader of the nation." According to the ARF, he took part in expelling Vazgen (Tigran Teroyan) and his friends from Van, and then also in arresting and deporting revolutionary youth. P. Gapamachyan sewed military uniforms with his personal funds for some of the soldiers of the Turkish army who suppressed the 1904 rebellion of Sassoon. During the 1908 Dava's betrayal, he had helped the police in uncovering weapons caches and had not contributed to the resolution of the land issue and the elimination of Kurdish exploitation. See Horizon, March 2, 1913, N 47.

²² Memories of Armenak Yekarian, Cairo, 1947, p. 169.

²³ Hovakimyan 2005: 302.

²⁴ Mshak, 1913, January 17, N 11.

The Third Ottoman Parliament Elections of 1912

On April 6-8, 1912, the second-class elections of the Ottoman Parliament were held in Van. In the Armenian environment, the struggle was going on between the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Hnchakyan-Constitutional-Ramkavar alliance²⁵. The opening of the second Ottoman parliament took place in May 1912 (according to another information, on April 12²⁶), in unfavorable foreign political conditions for Ottoman Turkey. As a result of the elections, 275 deputies were elected to the parliament, 6 of them were from the opposition²⁷. MPs from Van represented Ittihat supporters, Midhat-bey²⁸, and A. Vramyan²⁹.

After the elections, taking into consideration that the authorities refused to fulfill the pre-election covenant obligations of February 13, 1912, on May 5, 1912, the ARF officially broke off relations with the ruling party, Ittihat, entrusting the duty of relations with the state to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, even after that, the relations essentially continue to be preserved. In his letter of September 19, 1912 addressed to the ARF Western Bureau (Turkey's sector), Aram advised: "Decide your position towards the government, it is right to give the ultimatum..."³⁰ In other words, even in the autumn of 1912, the further actions of the ARF with the Ittihat were still not specified.

In 1912, the ARF Regional Assembly of Vaspurakan, examining the work done in the past 4 years after the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution, came to the conclusion that the Ittihat members had taken a hostile position towards the Western Armenians. Therefore, in order to prepare the people for self-defense, a military body was formed whose primary task was to protect the Armenian villages of Western Armenia from frequent attacks by Kurdish gangs. Mobile combat groups were created to help the endangered places³¹. At the same time, all Armenian villages were instructed to avoid bloody clashes in every possible way³².

During the reign of Izzet Bey, some interest was also shown in the regulation of financial and economic relations of the state. In 1912, 1.5 years after the departure of the Chavid Bey commission, a new commission headed by Oskan Effendi came to Van,

²⁵ For more details about this, read Harutyunyan 2019a.

²⁶ Cheredjian 2007: 43.

²⁷ Akmeshe 2005: 101.

²⁸ Later, during the trial of the district responsible secretaries and officials of the "Union and Progress" party on March 8, 1919, the military court deprived the Brusa responsible secretary of the "Union and Progress" party, Haji Hasan Ahmed Midhat Bey from Caesarea, of his military rank for dealing with political issues. See Genocide 1988: 131.

²⁹ NAA, fund 1457, inv. 1, file 86, sheet 1.

³⁰ Manukian 2021: 570.

³¹ Mesrobian 1930: 63.

³² Tashjian 1994: 179.

whose purpose was to study the financial situation of the eastern provinces of the empire, and in particular the governorship of Van³³.

Armenian-Kurdish relations

Izzet Bey spared no effort to woo the Kurds under his authority, to keep the criminals from being held accountable or to inflict only minimal punishment. Not hiding his bias towards the Kurds, he announced as soon as he arrived in Van that “I didn’t want the Kurds to be oppressed.”³⁴ As a result, under his rule, the Kurds received more energy in their actions and Kurdish detractors were more encouraged. And it was not accidental, because the new governor was a dictator like them, a thug like them. Thus, near the governor’s house in Archesh, as an expression of sympathy, he kisses the foreheads of the famous local Kurdish criminals Husei and Emin pashas and their sympathizers.

During his reign, Kurdish Sheikh Jalaledin, Hasan and Eomer aghas, imprisoned by the military authorities for looting in Abagha, were released from Van prison. Aghas Nejib and Husein, who assisted Kurdish bandit leaders Seyid and Mir-Mhe in killing Turkish officer Keazim, were also freed from prison sentences³⁵. Mir-Mhe and Mahme were also pardoned. And this was not by chance, because it was an integral part of the policy of the Kurdish governor of Van, Izzet Bey, to woo the Kurds and make them adapt to the peaceful life of Van.

On December 3, 1911, near Kerts village of Armenian Valley, three Kurdish peasants engaged in sheep trade were killed, and 170 liras were also stolen from them. Most likely, the criminal chased the traders from Vostan. But the misfortune was that after the murder, the police and gendarmes came to the neighborhoods of Van, surrounded Aygestan and prevented the villagers from entering the city. In addition to spreading fear and terror, they began to look for the diocesan inspector of Aghtamar, the ARF member Sargis Barseghyan (Nikol, Poghos Odabashyan - A.H.), who had the misfortune of being at the scene of the murder at that time. On March 28, 1912, the court and the police charged him with murder, who before that had shot the policeman who had unjustly abused him on the street³⁶. Van’s newspaper “Ashkhatank” (Labor) immediately reacted to the incident and showed that the government’s actions were reprehensible and dangerous. The chief of police immediately responded to the newspaper’s criticism and waited for reaction by Ruben Shatvoryan, a member of the Van court, who, however, did not dare to retaliate, fearing for his future tenure. As a result, the court charged Sargis Barseghyan as a “criminal” based on biased materials presented by police investigators. It seems that a good opportunity was created to get

³³ Yeramean 1929: 158.

³⁴ Horizon, 1912, November 28, N 263.

³⁵ Horizon, 1912, November 28, N 263.

³⁶ Azatamart, April 21, 1912, N 876.

rid of “dangerous ARF members”.

By the way, the cases of perjury were not random manifestations in Van, the direct result of which was the one and a half year unjustified imprisonment of four adult Armenians, one of whom even died in prison. In addition, Sargis Shahinyan, A. T. Mkrtchyan and 15 other Armenians, whose guilt issue was not even transferred from the interrogator to the court.

This incident was taken advantage of by the representatives of other parties in Van, who, manipulating the results of the parliamentary elections of 1908, posted a number of anti-ARF leaflets on the walls with the following content: “See how the Armenian Revolutionary Federation causes the massacre of the people... Long live the two parties that united for the interests of the nation and formed a bloc...”³⁷

Due to the Turkish bandit leaders and the Kurdish beys who were refugees and robbers, the desired peace and security was not established in Van, because the government, or the governor Hagg Pasha, tried in every way to woo them and show “merhamet” (mercy - A. H.).

It is true that the government spent much money to provide police and soldiers for the pursuit of gangs when necessary, but in reality, there was no serious intention to arrest them, and the orders issued in individual cases were bifacial. In fact, the policemen sent to chase the bandits just did an imitation of work. If necessary, they deliberately and confidently moved in the direction of the village from where the bandits had already left and tortured the local Armenian villagers, asking why they gave shelter to the bandits. And when the villagers pointed out that the robbers were in this or that place, they went the opposite way. There were also cases when government troops and Kurdish emissaries met and the commanders did not give the order to the soldiers to shoot at the Kurds, creating an opportunity for the bandits to leave peacefully. When, on a similar occasion, Archbishop H. Sarachyan expressed his concern to Governor Ismail Hagg Pasha, he replied with indifference. “...What can I do? The troops sent against Sayid, Mir-Mhe and other bandits do not want to shoot the bandits when they meet them, so it makes no sense to send restraining troops against them, and as a result the government’s treasury is just being wasted.”³⁸ This response was not only desperate, but disrespectful as it showed both indifference and incompetence and weakness of a senior government official.

The issue of the murder of Raphael Yeritsyan

On October 11, 1912, in a mountain gorge of Karchkan province, in the area between the villages of Tsoku (Tskor) and Khorrents-Karkar, a group of Kurdish bandits killed the ARF figure and inspector of education of Akhtamar region, Raphayel Yeritsyan, priest Ter-Martiros of the village of Hyuryuk (Hyurink) in Sparkert, and 5

³⁷ Azatamart, April 21, 1912, N 876.

³⁸ Mshak, 1912 August 9, N 174.

Armenians accompanying them. At first, one gets the impression that the motivation for the killing was religious. However, it turns out that the murder was carried out by Haji Yaghkub (Aghkub), Mullah Aim, Fakhka Charchis and Mullah Muheddin, the thugs of the Baghesh fanatic Sheikh Seyid Ali, who had great influence in Khizan, Karkar, Sparkert and their surrounding regions, whom Raphayel Yeritsyan in 1911-1912 during the inspection tour, at a meeting held in the house of a Kurdish named Tahsiltar Mustafa Bey in the village of Innerk Huryuk of Sparkert, “dared” to offer to stop the intimidation and destruction of the peaceful Armenian population of Van province by Sheikh Seyyed Ali, the son of Sheikh Jalaledin. Raphael’s funeral turned into an unprecedented political demonstration against the Turkish regime, which was an intense expression of the decades-long anger of Van Armenians against violence and arbitrariness, the crimes of tribal chiefs and sheikhs. As a result of the inter-ethnic conflict, Armenians and Kurds were killed needlessly in Karkar as a revenge operation, only because the government did not want to arrest and punish “Haji” Yaghkub, one of the main organizers of the murder of Raphayel Yeritsyan³⁹.

After Raphael’s assassination and the authorities’ deliberate anti-ARF propaganda, there seems to have been a certain change in political orientation in Van province. S. Olferev notes that “now all the Armenians of Van, not excluding the ARF, are on the side of Russia, which, according to them, is the only one capable of making the conditions of life of Christians of Turkey more bearable and safe. The majority sincerely dreams of the partition of Turkey and the day when Armenians will become Russian citizens...”⁴⁰

A. Vramyan had told S. Olferev several times that the Armenians no longer believe in either the Turks or their constitution, that the Armenians put all their hope exclusively in Russia, and that the allies refuse to defend Turkey’s policy in Persia⁴¹.

Attempts to settle Armenian-Kurdish land disputes

At the beginning of December 1912, in three of the instructions on the regulation of Armenian-Kurdish relations sent to the governors of the six provinces of Western Armenia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs drew special attention to the problems of solving the land disputes, according to which it was planned to form a commission under the chairmanship of Van governor Izzet Bey, which should include the Mufti of Van, spiritual leader Archbishop H. Sarachyan, dual representatives of Kurdish and Armenian leaders, including P. Gapamachyan and G. Chitechyan, the chairman of the court and military officers⁴². In an official letter dated December 27, 1912 addressed to the

³⁹ For more details about this, see Harutyunyan 2019b: 40-57.

⁴⁰ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, RF, fund 151, Political archive, 1911-1914, inv. 482, file 719, sheet 243.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Azdak, 1913 January 12/25, N 2.

Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop H. Sarachyan, the vicar of Van, informed that a commission was formed under the chairmanship of Governor Izzet Pasha and with the participation of himself, as well as Gevorg Chitechyan, Avetis Yeramyan, three Turks and one military officer to “examine and to solve the problem of illegally occupied lands”⁴³.

The commission should have made a fair decision after conducting an investigation on the land issue, and the party deprived of the land should have been given either monetary compensation or a certain piece of land from the state property. Both sides had to confirm their satisfaction with the decision with a receipt⁴⁴.

From the beginning, the people were skeptical about the activities of the commission, because they did not expect serious results from it. The point was that the government did not want to take strict measures against the Kurdish leaders, because it would be an opportunity for Kurdish unrests. Kurdish bandits were freely arming the Kurdish villages, and the governor “did not do anything to remedy it.”⁴⁵ That is why the activity of the commission did not give significant results and the issue of land seizures continued.

The threat of massacres in the second period of Ittihat administration (January 1913-July 1914)

The nightmare of violence, murders and insecurity against the Armenians of Van continued and gained new manifestations even after the power passed from the Ittilafists to the Ittihatians again on January 10, 1913. The re-opening of the Armenian Question, the resignation of Keamil Pasha's Ittilaf government and the re-establishment of the Ittihat led to a new wave of hatred towards Armenians in the Turkish and Kurdish socio-political circles.

In 1912-1914, the re-opening of the Armenian Question had a negative direct impact on the inter-ethnic relations of Van province. “The Times” newspaper (London) in its issue of February 6, 1913, stated that according to the telegrams received from Van and Sgherd, the relations between Armenians and Muslims are getting worse day by day⁴⁶. The Van correspondent of “Mshak” hastened to inform that “Turks view the raising of the Armenian Question in a very bad context and consider us Armenians khayinns (disloyal - A.H.), that we want to take advantage of a difficult moment of the Turkish government by raising the Armenian Question, when the time comes, they will certainly not forget this stubbornness of the Armenians and will punish them in the way that Hamid did.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Azatamart, January 16, 1913, N 112, also Mshak, January 20, 1913, N 14.

⁴⁴ Arajamart, December 21, 1912 / January 3, 1913, N 34.

⁴⁵ Mshak, 1913, April 18, N 81.

⁴⁶ The Times, Thursday, February 6, 1913.

⁴⁷ Mshak, 1913, February 19, N 38.

And the German ambassador in Constantinople, Hans Freiherr von Wangenheim (1912-1915), based on a letter from a high-ranking Kurdish official, in his telegram to Reich Chancellor von Bettmann-Hollweg on March 13, 1913, reported that after the signing of the treaty on the Armenian Question in the province of Van, where the governor was the Kurdish Izzet Bey, probably we should wait for the massacre of Armenians⁴⁸.

The threat of massacres is also evidenced by the information from the periodicals of the time that in just six months (January-June 1913) 106 people were killed, 88 people were injured, 59 women were kidnapped, 484 armed attacks were carried out on Armenian villages and many cattle were stolen in Van province⁴⁹.

Based on the situation in the province, the ARF of Vaspurakan issued a circular on behalf of the ARF, Hnchakyans and Ramkavars, in which it was specifically stated: "This great historical crisis that has plagued our motherland will impose an imperative duty on the active parties, while remaining within the boundaries of their program and point of view, to reach an agreement on issues of a nationwide nature."⁵⁰

The dismissal of Izzet Bey

In order to strengthen the state power and preserve his authority after Ittilaf's dethronement, Izzet Bey informs the foreign consuls of Van with false information that allegedly Mahmud Shevket Pasha from Constantinople addressed him by telegram and expressed his satisfaction for the quality of his administration and "administrative ability".⁵¹

At the same time, for the sake of preserving his position, he appeals to the Ittihatians who have taken over the reins of power again, with the hope of reuniting them and working together for the welfare of the country. However, his proposal was rejected and he was dismissed as a representative of the Ittilaf in April 1913. Before leaving, Izzet appeals to the members of the Van ARF, offering "reconciliation and Armenian and Kurdish solidarity", but A. Vramyan remembers that "we kicked him out, saying that we would not need his cooperation"⁵².

H. Tahsin Bey was appointed the new vali (governor) of Van instead of him⁵³.

⁴⁸ Mikayelyan 1995 (ed.): 38.

⁴⁹ Mshak, 1913, September 3, N 193.

⁵⁰ NAA, fund 1456, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 1.

⁵¹ Horizon, 1913, March 10, N 54.

⁵² Materials 2015: 289.

⁵³ Mshak, 1913, May 8, N 98. Erdeha 1975: 374, also Koyunoğlu 2008: 163.

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