

caravan was stopped in front of the government building, all boys and girls were taken from their mothers and led into rooms; the caravan was forced to continue on its way. Announcements were made in the surrounding villages for everyone to come and choose from these children.³⁶

An unknown factor worth investigating is the circumstances surrounding Armenian orphans in Turkish orphanages. What is known is that very young children with no recollection of their origin were brought up as true Muslims. This campaign was led and overseen by Talat himself, and coded telegrams he sent to each and every district throughout the Empire relayed his instructions on how to treat these children. Of course, the priority was to send them to Turkish orphanages (*bizim yetimhaneler*—our orphanages, as opposed to the orphanages run by missionaries) to ensure their Muslim upbringing. But these orphanages did not have sufficient capacity and instructions were to place them in well-to-do families away from places where Armenians still lived, and if such families were not found, then to give the children to Turkish and Kurdish peasants and pay them 30 kurush from the refugee funds to compensate their expenses.³⁷ Thousands of these children were absorbed into these families, leaving no trace of awareness of their origin. But how were those who were brought up in groups in orphanages where Turkish upbringing was emphasized integrated into mainstream society? What is evident is that the government kept track of all these orphans, and that the practice of

³⁶ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (2002), p. 88.

³⁷ See Köker, "Ermeni Kadın ve Çocuklarının" (2007).