

popular Patriarch, and elected a new Supreme Civil Council.<sup>95</sup> It also elected a new Constitutional Committee to examine the draft submitted by the previous committee to the Civil Council. The new committee worked hard, meticulously studying each article.

As in 1725, when a large general assembly had been called by Patriarch Golot, a similar large National Assembly was convoked on 22 March 1857 by Patriarch Hagopos to discuss and approve the revised version of the *Regulation*. The Patriarch invited over three hundred delegates, representing the clergy and all the segments of Armenian society in the capital, to take part in the deliberations and the formulation of a final resolution.<sup>96</sup> After lengthy discussions, during which each article was scrutinized and some changes were made, the Assembly approved the draft of the *Regulation* presented. All the participants signed the document “with joy, contentment and blessing.”<sup>97</sup>

The *Regulations*, which had received the unanimous support of the National Assembly, were submitted to the Sublime Porte for official ratification. The sanction, however, was being delayed; finally, the Porte announced that it was refusing to ratify the *Regulations*, stating that it could not tolerate the existence of “a state within the state.”<sup>98</sup> But this was not the real reason for the rejection; the Porte was well informed of the drafting of the *Regulations* from the beginning, and had not chosen to interfere. In fact, it had given its tacit approval by dispatching one of its officials to preside over a general assembly called to discuss the topic of *Regulation*. The constitutionalists knew that the rejection by the government was only the official and apparent cause, and that true opposition came from the *amiras*. Balian, Dadian, Eramian, Serverian and others considered the *Regulations* “too

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<sup>95</sup> First **Alboyadjian** (“Sahmanadrutiune,” p. 361), and then **Artinian** (“Historical Development,” p. 80) claim that in this Supreme Civil Council “for the first time, the *amiras* were absent.” The sources cited by the latter do not lend support to such a claim (**Ormanian**, *Azgapatum*, col. 2707, which is more proper to cite as 3:4018-4020, and **P. Ketchian**, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, pp. 94-95). Boghos Ashnanian was an *amira*, although **Alboyadjian** cites him as *aga* in his list of the council members on p. 319.

<sup>96</sup> *Masis*, 28 March 1857, no. 270.

<sup>97</sup> **P. Ketchian**, *Patmutiun Hivandanotsin*, p. 95.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*