

**A PAN-ISLAMIST IN ISTANBUL:  
JAMAL AD-DIN AFGHANI AND  
HAMIDIAN ISLAMISM, 1892-1897**

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## ABSTRACT

### A PAN-ISLAMIST IN ISTANBUL: JAMAL AD-DIN AFGHANI AND HAMIDIAN ISLAMISM, 1892-1897

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Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani was a prominent pan-Islamist of the nineteenth century. His appeal of Muslim unity as a common front against the West and call for a regeneration of Islamic societies opened up the way for a new type of politics in Muslim lands and constituted a model for the Islamist discourse. This study examines his stay in Istanbul as a guest of the Ottoman Sultan, Abdulhamid II, between 1892-1897.

The rule of Abdulhamid involved policies centered around the Caliphate. His enthronement coincided with the dramatic changes of the period 1876-1882. Under the external and domestic circumstances of the era Abdulhamid developed his own Islamism with pan-Islamic overtones. His ideology was primarily intended to ensure the integrity of the Empire. Its external aspect involved pan-Islamic appeals to Muslims outside the Empire as an intended weapon against Western powers.

In this study, the stay of Afghani in Istanbul is analyzed with respect to the background of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism and Afghani's personal history. Afghani's main involvement during his residence was the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* programme in 1894 that included communication with Shiis in the name of Islamic unity. The thesis argues that the presence of Afghani in Istanbul relate to the Shii and Arab policies of the Ottoman government rather than any large-scale pan-Islamic projects. In addition, Afghani's stay also provides clues regarding Ottoman-Persian

relations, the Armenian Question, and the emergence of opposition movement in the Empire.

Keywords: Afghani, Pan-Islamism, Hamidian Islamism, Ottoman Shi'i Policies, Ottoman-Persian Relations.

## ÖZ

### İSTANBUL'DA BİR PAN-İSLAMCI: CEMALEDİN AFGANI VE ABDÜLHAMİD DÖNEMİ İSLAMCILIĞI, 1892-1897

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Seyyid Cemaleddin Afgani ondokuzuncu yüzyılın önde gelen pan-İslamcılarında biridir. Onun Batı'ya karşı ortak bir cephe olarak İslam birliği çağrısı ve İslam toplumlarının kendi içinde yenilenmesi yoluyla uyanışı yolundaki istemi Müslümanlar arasında yeni bir tür siyasetin çıkmasını açmış ve İslamcı söylem için bir model oluşturmuştur. Bu çalışma Afgani'nin, 1892-1897 yılları arasında, Osmanlı Sultanı II. Abdülhamid'in konuğu olarak İstanbul'daki ikametini incelemektedir.

II. Abdülhamid'in saltanatı halifelik merkezli politikalar içermekteydi. Onun tahta çıkışı 1876-1882 arası dönemin köklü değişimleriyle çakışmıştı. Dönemin iç ve dış koşulları karşısında Abdülhamid kendi pan-İslamcı söylemler içeren İslamcı siyasetini geliştirmişti. Abdülhamid dönemi ideolojisi öncelikle imparatorluğun birlik ve bütünlüğünü sağlama amacı güdüyordu. Bu ideolojinin dışa dönük yanısıra, Batılı güçlere karşı siyasi bir silah olarak, imparatorluk toprakları dışındaki Müslümanlara yönelen pan-İslamcı çağrılarını içeriyordu.

Bu incelemede, Afgani'nin ikameti, Abdülhamid dönemi (pan-) İslamcılığının arka-planı ve Afgani'nin kişisel geçmişi çerçevesinde değerlendirilmektedir. Afgani'nin İstanbul'da kalış süresi boyunca üstlendiği başlıca görev, Şii ulema ile İslam birliği adına iletişime geçilerek bir Sünni-Şii yaklaşması gerçekleştirmeyi hedefleyen 1894 yılındaki programa dahil olması olmuştur. Bu tez çalışması, Afgani'nin İstanbul'da bulunmasının herhangi bir büyük-ölçekli pan-İslam projesinden ziyade, Osmanlı hükümetinin Şii ve Arap politikalarıyla ilgili olduğunu

savunmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, Afgani'nin ikameti Osmanlı-İran ilişkileri, Ermeni meselesi ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda muhalif hareketlerin ortaya çıkışı üzerine ipuçları sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Afgani, Pan-İslamcılık, Abdülhamid Dönemi İslamcılığı, Osmanlı Şii Politikaları, Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri.

To Raif Atasoy and Şaziye Atasoy



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA	: Bařbakanlık Osmanlı Arřivleri
Y.A.HUS	: Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı
Y.PRK.ZB	: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Zabtiye Nezareti Maruzatı
Y.MTV	: Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı
Y.PRK.EŐA	: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Elçilik Őebenderlik ve Ateőemiliterlik
Y.PRK.AZJ	: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Arzuhal Jurnal
Y.EE	: Yıldız Esas Evrakı
Y.PRK.BŐK	: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Bařkitabet Dairesi Maruzatı
Y.PRK.MYD	: Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Yaveran ve Maiyyet-i Seniyye Erkan-ı Harbiye Dairesi
A.MKT.MHM	: Sadaret Mektubi Mühimme Kalemı Evrakı

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The position of Islamic religion as a political power has been a recurrent theme of politics in the Middle East in the modern era. Whereas today Islam as a religion is attributed an inherent political dimension, the transformation of it to a political factor was a novel development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> The discourse of the solidarity of Muslim societies emerged as a result of the imperialism of European powers as intellectuals in various parts of Muslim lands struggled to respond to the threat they perceived from outside and express the popular mood in their homelands. Pan-Islamic appeals of unity among Muslim societies were voiced out which were to give way to political Islam and Middle Eastern nationalisms of the subsequent decades following up to our time. One of the prominent pan-Islamist figures of the nineteenth century hailed today as a precursor by contemporary Islamists is *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani*.

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838/1839-1897) was a Muslim thinker, religious reformer and political agitator, who stands out as the major ideologist of pan-Islamism during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. With his effortful propagation of the ideas of Islamic unity, that Muslim states should come together under the banner of religion as a common front against the West, and of an internal revival that Muslim societies needed to achieve through a combined adaptation of Western science, technology and contemporary political principles, and a reform and regeneration of Islamic religion; he became the foremost figure influential in transforming Islam to a political factor.<sup>2</sup> Throughout his life he also championed the idea of nationalism in Muslim lands, sometimes equated with religion and sometimes defined in linguistic terms. In both ways, he is considered to have opened the way for

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<sup>1</sup> Adeeb Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice: The Rhetoric of Muslim Unity and its Uses," *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 201-202; Nikki R. Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July, 1994), p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia G. Haim, "Introduction", *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, Sylvia G. Haim (ed.), (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 9-10.

a novel type of politics in the Middle East; and he either trained as his pupils or prepared the ground for the ideas of many pan-Islamists, religious revivalists, nationalists, liberals and constitutionalists in Egypt, Syria, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia in the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup>

During the course of his life Afghani travelled extensively and stayed in Afghanistan, India, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Egypt, Britain, France and Russia. Through these trips and residences he established contacts with prominent figures from diverse groups including religious reformers; early Arab nationalists; British, Russian, Ottoman and Persian government officials; Persian constitutionalist oppositionals, exiles, and dissidents; Shii jurists (*mujtahids*); Babis and Bahais; members of the Young Ottomans, and, then, the Young Turks; and European intellectuals and political theorists. While his oratory skills and personal magnetism both as a learned man of religion and as a man of politics enabled him to gather around himself many devoted followers wherever he stayed, he also managed or attempted on many occasions to work with statesmen to realize his desired ends. He engaged in journalistic activities and intellectual debates; wrote political, social and religious tracts and articles; and acted on his own initiative as an agent in the conjuncture of Middle Eastern politics.

Though Afghani was never *the* originator of pan-Islamic and reformist ideas for the Muslim world, what made his reputation as the foremost nineteenth century Pan-Islamist was that he conveyed the message of the indispensability of Islamic unity against growing Western encroachments repeatedly and towards various audiences, suiting his appeal at any particular time to the specificities of the country that he operated in. On the one hand, his message was essentially anti-Western, while on the other hand he conceded that Islamic societies, in trying to achieve internal regeneration and revival, should borrow and benefit from European science, technology and philosophy, and adopt the values of modern Western polity. The fact that Afghani had to work in different political environments forced him to switch his tone to match the particular circumstances leading to apparent inconsistencies in his thought throughout his personal history: at times he advocated parliamentary politics, but at other times he was ready to work with absolutist rulers; he sometimes saw the

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<sup>3</sup> Ignác Goldziher, "Cemaleddin Efgani", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, A. Adivar, R. Arat and A. Ateş (et al.), (Eskişehir: Anadolu Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi, 1997), pp.81-84.

Ottoman Caliph as legitimate and tried to configurate a Muslim union centered around it, while on other occasions he seemed to support the claims for Arab Caliphate; even though he was notoriously anti-British he was on particular cases ready to cooperate with British officials and agents; and moreover, it seemed hard to follow when he would put forward Islamic religion as the only possible nationalistic bond for Muslim umma or otherwise when he would be favoring local nationalist tendencies.<sup>4</sup>

Afghani's reputation as the best known Muslim thinker of the nineteenth century comes from the fact that he championed anti-imperialist pan-Islamic ideas in the political context of the nineteenth century imperialism when there was the perceived threat and popular and intellectual reaction to growing Western pressures. He was also an early critic of orientalism challenging the notion held by Europeans that Muslim Middle East was backward because of the "essential" features of Islam. On the one hand, he sought to glorify the earlier achievements of the Islamic civilization; and on the other hand, he was apologetic in trying to explain the downfall of Muslim societies. In many ways, he laid out the arguments and the rhetoric to be used by later nationalists and anti-imperialist Islamists in the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> Beside his ideas on Muslim unity, Afghani was also influential regarding his thoughts on Islamic revival, involving both reform and purification of religion, and borrowing from the West for the improvement of Muslim societies. In this respect, he desired that Islamic societies develop their own philosophical reasoning referring to their own sources and traditions. In that, he assigned central place to Islamic

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<sup>4</sup> The detailed account of Afghani's thoughts and political activities can be found in the following biographical works about him. Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "Al-Afghani"*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1972). Homa Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani*, (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1969). Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, (London: Frank Cass & Co.Ltd, 1966). Elie Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1966). Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin Hatıraları*, Translated by Adem Yerinde, (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2006). Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). There are also a number of works on Afghani in Turkish. See for example: Mümtaz'er Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afgani*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1994). Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi Hayatı Üzerindeki Etkileri*, (İstanbul: Osmanlı Yayınevi, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "Introduction: Keddie's Contribution to Iranian Studies", *Iran and Beyond, Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie*, Rudi Matthee and Beth Baron (eds.), California: Mazda Publishers, 2000, pp. 5-6.

religion and sought to transform religion into a social and political force.<sup>6</sup> Thus, while he was a remarkable man during his life Afghani became a legendary figure after his time, with his call for Islamic regeneration through solidarity remaining as a model. Today he continues to maintain his reputation among contemporary political Islamists who regard him as a precursor.<sup>7</sup>

It is under the light of the ideas, reputation and personal history of this pan-Islamist figure that his arrival in Istanbul to spend the last five years of his life, 1892-1897, becomes a case deserving profound analysis, especially when one considers that these years coincided with Abdulhamid II's regime which was fundamentally one that sought centralization and legitimation centered around Islamism with pan-Islamic overtones. These concepts, Islamism and pan-Islamism, are used as two distinct but interrelated concepts throughout this thesis. Whereas the extensive and variational usage of these concepts does not allow precise and standard definition, the former refers to the ascension of the role of religion in social and political spheres so as to make Islam a dominant and decisive factor as ethics, politics and system of thought, whilst standing against Western domination.<sup>8</sup> The latter refers to organized activity to achieve, in practical terms, the ideology of Islamic unity toward the political union of Muslims everywhere – around the central position of the Caliph.<sup>9</sup>

The Ottoman Sultan pursued sort of policies that were appealing to Afghani; and, vice versa, Afghani represented a remarkable figure better to be won over by the Sultan to his side. Upon his accession to throne, the Sultan had lived through the turmoils of 1876-1882 when the Empire suffered consecutive territorial losses in the Balkans and North Africa, and reduced to be a predominantly Muslim one. In these circumstances, the Caliphate represented an important asset that the Sultan possessed, as he switched to a policy of Islamism and leaned on his Caliphal position to achieve and maintain the solidarity of his regime and the integrity of his territories

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<sup>6</sup> Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), pp. 28-30.

<sup>7</sup> Rudi Mathee, "Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and the Egyptian National Debate", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21 (1989), pp. 151-153; Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam...", p. 485.

<sup>8</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi Hayatı...*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization*, (Oxford, England : Clarendon Press; New York : Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 5-6.



and subjects. In addition, using the Caliphate he conveyed pan-Islamic appeals to Muslims outside the boundaries of the Empire, that were intended as a weapon against the Great Powers of Europe. Thus, the Hamidian regime followed a combination of Islamism and pan-Islamism as part of an integrative survival strategy for the Ottoman Empire. This aspect of Abdulhamid has up to our day been a matter of controversy regarding the true nature of his policies and his pragmatism.<sup>10</sup>

The presence of Afghani in Istanbul between 1892-1897 was the meeting of a pan-Islamist with the Caliph who had an Islamism and pan-Islamism within the framework of his own regime. In this respect, this combination was a test on both sides regarding their ideas and political aims. This thesis carefully aims to set up the context of Afghani's stay on both the side of Hamidian regime and the side of Afghani's past endeavors, ideas and aims, so as to be able to make an accurate analysis of the motives and developments throughout these five years. While doing that, this study makes use of present secondary sources, and it refers as well to primary sources, which are documents from the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Yıldız Collection. The biographical studies of Afghani generally incorporate British Foreign Office and Arabic and Persian sources whereas Ottoman sources related to the period of Afghani's residence in Istanbul are neglected. This thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature by making use of Ottoman archival documents so as to be able to demonstrate the viewpoint of the Ottoman government in particular issues within the coverage of the study. The archival work for this thesis involved searching of the catalogues of Yıldız Collection in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, and reading and interpreting the relevant resources for an approximate period of three months. Besides, the reference to the primary sources also involved scanning of the newspaper *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* and *İkdam* for a period of one month following the date of the assassination of the Persian Shah. This was helpful in understanding the Ottoman view of the incident, and their attitude in the

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<sup>10</sup> For the structuring of Hamidian regime around Islamism and pan-Islamism based on the Caliphate, see Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998); François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, Translated by Ali Berktaş, (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2006); Selim Deringil, *Simgeden Millete, II. Abdülhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e Devlet ve Millet*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007); Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2001; Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*; Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877-1924*, (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997).

diplomacy with Persia thereafter. In addition to archival documents and newspapers, memoirs and published articles of a number of relevant figures of the era were examined.

The main argument of the thesis is that it is not possible to associate the meeting of Abdulhamid II and Afghani between 1892-1897 with any grand pan-Islamic schemes, but that it rather concerns the Shii and Arab policies of the Ottoman government in that era. Thus, it provides insights to the inner workings of Hamidian policies related to Arabs and especially Shiis in Basra and Baghdad as the main responsibility assigned to Afghani was a program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. The analysis aims to locate the events and attitudes of the five years of Afghani's stay within the framework of Hamidian Islamism and pan-Islamism. Therefore, it intends to elaborate the framework of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism as well as the personal history and Persian antecedents of Afghani and his Persian associates in Istanbul to be able to demonstrate how the main involvement of Afghani during his five year presence in Istanbul related primarily to the Shii aspect the Sultan's regime. The analytical framework also questions in what ways Afghani's personal contacts and earlier endeavors put him into relation with Arab policies. Besides, there are sections in the thesis devoted for aspects of Afghani's political personality that related to reformism and constitutionalism, and also a detailed analysis of his links with the assassination of the Persian Shah in 1896, that became a fact in the course his relations with Abdulhamid turned to a negative way. Hence, the study of Afghani's five-year stay in Istanbul as a guest of the Ottoman Sultan also handles the issue with respect to Ottoman-Persian relations and the common political agenda of the era.

Within the framework provided above, the initial chapter of the thesis is devoted to the political and ideological mood in the Ottoman capital when Afghani arrived in 1892. The analysis begins with Afghani's first stay in Istanbul between 1869-1871, and his later endeavors in relevance to the Ottoman Empire. The ensuing study of the political and ideological context of Afghani's arrival in 1892 incorporates an account of the historical background for Hamidian Islamism, that was based on Caliphal politics with an overtone of pan-Islamic appeal; including the outcomes of the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War, growing expansion of imperial West and the popular reaction against the reforms of Tanzimat, that, combined together, led to a change in the main ideology for the integrity and survival of the

Empire. Also, the ideological background for Islamist and pan-Islamist ideas in the Ottoman Empire will be traced back to 1860s and 1870s. Apart from the historical and intellectual background, there is an analysis of what type of policies Hamidian Islamism actually involved in practice – as part of domestic policy and foreign policy. In sum, the first chapter sets the background for the workings of Hamidian regime into which Afghani would be incorporated.

Building on the context constructed in the initial chapter, the following chapter provides a discussion of the motives of Abdulhamid in inviting Afghani to Istanbul. It presents an account of the process of invitation and also a comparative analysis of Abdulhamid's and Afghani's views of pan-Islamism, underscoring the points they matched and mismatched. Regarding the considerations of the Sultan in inviting Afghani, attention is paid to the debate on the question of Arab Caliphate which constituted an obvious threat for the legitimacy of the Ottoman Caliph position. Both the opportunities and threats of the era arising out of the ideology of the regime had their share in motivating the Ottoman government to invite Afghani to Istanbul, therefore the real content of his arrival and stay in Istanbul is carefully illustrated. Moreover, the chapter includes an overview of Afghani's first year in Istanbul and his general status in the Sultan's *entourage*, as this provides clues to how he was articulated to the regime of the Hamidian era.

The next chapter goes on to present an analysis of Afghani's main involvement during his stay in Istanbul. His presence in the Ottoman capital was not marked by a commitment in large-scale pan-Islamic schemes addressed to Muslims outside Ottoman territories. Rather, in line with the internal aspect of Hamidian Islamism to employ the notion of Islamic unity to hold together Muslim subjects of the Empire and ensure their loyalty to the Caliph seat, it was directed to the Shiis of Iraq.<sup>11</sup> Upon an imperial memorandum on the issue of a *rapprochement* with Persia in the name of *ittihad-ı Islam*, Islamic unity, Afghani engaged in forming up a circle of Persian exiles, and initiated correspondence with Shii ulama, merchants, and notables in Basra and Baghdad, and Persia. The main idea of this project was to communicate with the Shii ulama who had considerable political influence over

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<sup>11</sup> Iraq, in modern sense, was not present as an entity during the Ottoman administration, though, when used, it refers to a particular region. 'Ottoman Iraq' is a term used rather to denote the three Ottoman provinces Baghdad, Basra and Mosul for the sake of convenience in this thesis.

Persia, instead of the Shah, to achieve a reconciliation of sects and win over the loyalty of the Shia to the Ottoman Caliphate. Therefore, the chapter includes an account of Afghani's Persian antecedents, the historical background of ulama involvement in Persian politics, and that of Afghani's associates in Istanbul, alongside with the growth of anti-Shah reaction and radical-religious alliance in Persia particularly focusing on the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892. Moreover, included is a detailed analysis of the Shii policies of the Ottoman government before and during 1890s, while the framework of Hamidian Islamism and pan-Islamism constructed in the initial chapter provides the relevant context. In this respect, the chapter makes critical reference as to how Afghani presented a valuable asset with his Persian contacts for the Ottoman government, and matched with projected Shii policies directed to Shii *mujtahids*, i.e. ulama.

The final chapter of the thesis intends to discuss the final two years of Afghani's stay in Istanbul and study the changes in the viewpoint of the Ottoman government of Afghani. Despite the fact that he was assigned responsibility for a period in 1894 in the Caliphal propaganda directed towards the Shiis of Iraq, Afghani remained quite pacified for the rest of his residence. It was a deliberate preference of the Ottoman government to keep him under surveillance and restrict his activities. An important incident in 1896, the assassination of the Shah of Persia, turned out to be a case to provide insights to the Ottoman official opinion on Afghani as the Persian government blamed Afghani of being the instigator of the deed and demanded his extradition. In this respect, this chapter analyzes the diplomatic transaction between both states trying to infer the reasons why Afghani was not handed over to Persian authorities whereas three of his Persian associates were. The study makes reference to the main issues in the political agenda of the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman-Persian relations at that period. Here, there is an elaboration of the mind-set of Afghani and his society of "Young Persians" in Istanbul, demonstrating the ways they came to stand in conflict with the Hamidian regime. As such, the Persian aspect of the Armenian Question as a matter of diplomacy is analyzed as well as how Afghani and his Persian associates represented diplomatic assets vis-à-vis the Persian government at that point. The analysis of the motives of the Ottoman government throughout the diplomacy with the Persian side help in

explaining the reasons for the downfall of Afghani, the prominent pan-Islamist, who failed to live up to his expectations in coming to Istanbul to the service of the Caliph.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AFGHANI'S ARRIVAL IN ISTANBUL

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani arrived in Istanbul, in the summer of 1892, upon two successive invitations of Sultan Abdulhamid II, the first of which Afghani turned down whereas he accepted the second. These letters of invitation both contained promises as well as disguised threats, and they were conveyed by Rüstem Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador in London, and Abu'l-Huda as-Sayyadi, the leader of the Rifai order and a chief religious confidant of the Sultan. Afghani opted to respond positively to the second, perhaps because he thought the opportunities of being close to the Caliph outweighed the disadvantages in going to Istanbul.<sup>12</sup>

Though it is an aim of this thesis to analyze the motives of the Sultan in inviting Afghani to Istanbul, and the compatibility or incompatibility of his pan-Islamism and Afghani's ideas, it is important first of all to understand fully the historical context of Afghani's arrival. Such a comprehension requires a survey of the political circumstances the Ottoman Empire was in then, and the ideological groundwork for Afghani's ideas, going back to the times of Young Ottomans. While this thesis is not a biographical work but rather intends to focus on the years 1892-1897 of Afghani's life, it is also necessary to detect aspects of Afghani's personal history that directly relate to his arrival and stay in the Ottoman capital, beginning with his first stay in Istanbul, 1869-1871.

#### 2.1 The First Stay of Afghani in Istanbul, 1869-1871

Whereas Afghani arrived in Istanbul as a guest of Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1892, he was a visitor to Tanzimat secularists in 1869.<sup>13</sup> His stay between 1869 and 1871 coincided with the last phase of Tanzimat reforms when Ali and Fuad Pashas, nearing the end of their lives, were busy with contemplating and implementing judicial and educational reforms in line with their Ottomanist ideology incorporating

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<sup>12</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "Al-Afghani"...*, pp.370-372.

<sup>13</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), p. 265.

secular aspects. In line with that, Afghani, through his contacts among reformers such as Münif Pasha, Tahsin Efendi and Safvet Pasha, was associated with the opening of the new university, *Darü'l-fünun*, where he gave a series of speeches one of which brought about a great matter of controversy. In fact, Afghani represented the type of “new ulama” Tanzimat reformers needed on their side: the reformers were not only after secularizing the educational and judicial system but also trying to tackle religious conservatives; therefore they needed their own open-minded and rationalist men-of-religion – such as Afghani – which they could present against the established ulama and *Şeyhülislam* Hasan Fehmi Efendi. It is in this respect – the struggle between religious conservatives and reformers – that the rationalist and modernist content of one of Afghani’s speeches, namely the fact that he chose to present prophecy as a type of “art”, formed the pretext for harsh attacks of *Şeyhülislam* and ulama on Afghani, and on the reform-minded cadre and their *Darü'l-fünun*, resulting in Afghani’s dismissal from his responsibilities and expulsion from Istanbul, and the subsequent closure of the university.<sup>14</sup>

However, apart from the fact that Afghani was in Istanbul as a visitor to the reform-minded cadre of Ali and Fuad Pashas, this two-year stay also facilitated Afghani’s coming into relation with the Young Ottomans and their ideas. He had contacts with Young Ottomans.<sup>15</sup> Not only the pan-Islamic ideas of Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, Ali Suavi and the likes that had already started to be voiced out in 1860s and the first years of 1870s,<sup>16</sup> but also their attempts to reconcile modern western values with Islamic principles by finding precedents in the the religion and religious law left their mark on him. It is true that Young Ottomans gave inspiration to a generation of Muslim intellectuals who were eager to reconcile Islam with modern values, in a sense among them being Afghani.<sup>17</sup> Thus, though Afghani’s ideas showed differences from that of Young Ottomans on many points, it is possible to say that he was influenced from them who formulated relatively coherent political

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<sup>14</sup> Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afğani...*, pp.19-37.

<sup>15</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri, 1895-1908*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p.2; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “Al-Afğani”...*, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 144.

ideas.<sup>18</sup> As a result, while Afghani's preaching of Islamic revivalism, borrowing from the West in the struggle against the West, and Islamic unity contributed to the Islamic and anti-western sentiment in 1870s, his ideas showed parallels to Young Ottomans.<sup>19</sup>

Beside the function of Afghani's first Istanbul visit in bringing him to contact with Young Ottomans, the significance of Young Ottomans in the emergence of Islamism as opposed to the Ottomanist principle of the Tanzimat era, and their preparatory role in the formulation of Abdulhamid II's Islamism will be analyzed in more detail below in this chapter.

## **2.2 Aspects of Afghani's Other Travels and Endeavors Relevant to the Ottoman Government**

Afghani had spent the years between 1871 and 1892 in various parts of the Middle East, India, Russia and Europe engaging in different political, journalistic and intellectual activities that were commonly anti-Western and pan-Islamic, calling for Muslim unity against imperialistic policies of the Great Powers. The fact that he lived in India, Egypt, European capitals like London and Paris, Persia, Russia and the Ottoman Empire as a prominent personality makes it inevitable that he adapted his ideas and rhetoric to varying situations. Though he was generally an oppositional figure and called for reform, on some occasions he was prepared to work with absolutist rulers and statesmen. At the same time, he also left aside his anti-British prejudices on several occasions and preferred to stay in contact with British officials. The same was also valid for his attitudes towards Russians against which he was ambivalent. Moreover, while he was never an orthodox figure of religion, on particular occasions he contemplated reform or even went on to disregard religion totally for the sake of philosophy and development, and the desired revival of Muslim societies. Yet, he was sometimes ready to leave aside his radical reformism or dilute his pan-Islamic fervency when circumstances compelled – such as when he was in the Ottoman capital to work on the side of the Caliph. In this respect, the reason for his apparent switch of attitudes stemmed from the fact that he operated in

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<sup>18</sup> Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi Hayatı Üzerindeki Etkileri...*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>19</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, (New York: Gordian Press, 1963), p. 271.



different political environments in multiple states, struggled to appeal to diverse audiences, tried to respond to changing moods and aspirations throughout the years. In sum, it is needless to say that his life account incorporated dimensions relating to the Ottoman Empire before his arrival in 1892, that all contributed to the Ottoman government's view of Afghani.<sup>20</sup> Although it is not the aim of this thesis to analyze Afghani's complete life course in relevance to the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman viewpoint of Afghani before his arrival in Istanbul in 1892 might partly be inferred from several official documents, and these might be useful to present alongside the historical context of Afghani's invitation to the Ottoman capital.

Ottoman government kept an eye on Afghani's activities, be it in Egypt, India or the British capital, and his ideas, remarks, contacts and doings, and even his way of dressing were reported on various occasions.<sup>21</sup> First of all, when Afghani was in India between 1879 and 1882 to support emerging Indian nationalist movement against the British, and combat a prominent pro-British "Sir" Sayyid Ahmad Khan that rejected Ottoman Caliphal claims, and benefit from and provide assistance to the positive feelings towards the Ottoman Caliph and ideas of Islamic unity,<sup>22</sup> these did not go unheeded by the Ottoman government, and it is possible to see that official documents mention of Afghani as "an Afghan scholar who resided in India for a certain period of time"<sup>23</sup> and "as a scholar person who during his stay in India had a series of political involvements against the British government and for the favor of Islamic religion and India's redemption from British yoke, and was consequently forced to leave India".<sup>24</sup>

However, the real part of Afghani's travels and activities that Ottoman government remained apprehensive pertained to his contact with the Arab world through his stay in Egypt between 1871-1879 and his journalistic propaganda activity related to Egypt, Sudan and Arab nationalism in Paris, between 1883-1885, and in

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin Hatıraları*, ... pp.3-32.

<sup>21</sup> BOA. Y. PRK. BŞK. 36/47. Afghani's pictures with and without turban that appeared in English newspapers in London were sent by Süreya Pasha later during the former's stay in the Istanbul. The document is dated 20 Mayıs 1310 (1 June 1894).

<sup>22</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "Al-Afghani"*..., pp. 143-181.

<sup>23</sup> BOA. Y. PRK. ZB. 11/58.

<sup>24</sup> BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 10/44.

London, between 1891-1892. During the years 1883-1885 Afghani issued a newspaper in Arabic, *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* (The Indissoluble Bond), together with Muhammad Abduh, which concentrated on Egypt and Arab world in an anti-British and pan-Islamic tone. In his articles, Afghani, on the one hand, occasionally developed arguments against Ottoman Caliphate whereas, on the other hand, he gave emphasis on unity and self-strengthening of Arab societies and refrained from criticizing the Ottoman government.<sup>25</sup> It was in those years that Afghani entered into ulterior relations with the Sultan through intermediaries such as *Ibrahim Muwailihi* and *Ismail Cevdet*, both prominent figures in Egypt.<sup>26</sup> But the fact that he was involved in the debate for Arab Caliphate, and established contacts with British in the case of anti-imperialist Mahdi movement in Sudan, and, moreover, with Wilfrid Blunt, an “Arabist” British agent in Egypt, led to a negative Afghani view, and a suspicion of Ottoman officials and the Sultan that he was involved in British schemes to undermine the authority of the Ottoman Caliphate.<sup>27</sup> It is as a result of these apprehensions that some researchers claim that Abdulhamid II invited Afghani to Istanbul in 1892 primarily to keep him away from British designs of Arab Caliphate and any possible and most-feared Arab separatist movement, and this partial motive of the Sultan is also apparent in his own memoirs.<sup>28</sup> This point is nonetheless an important one; therefore it will be analyzed in more detail later in Chapter 2, as part of the Ottoman standpoint in inviting Afghani to Istanbul.

### 2.3 Hamidian (Pan-)Islamism

When Afghani arrived in Istanbul, it was upon the request of Sultan Abdulhamid II, and throughout his stay in Istanbul between 1892-1897 he stayed in Nişantaşı,<sup>29</sup> a district where part of the guests – being mostly from Arab lands and/or

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<sup>25</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “Al-Afghani”...*, pp. 182-228.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 267.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp. 229-270, 349.

<sup>28</sup> Orhan Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2005), p.373; Pakdaman, *Djamel-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani...*, pp. 169-171; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “Al-Afghani”...*, p.373; Asaf Atalay Yılmaz (ed.), *Abdülhamid’in Hatıra Defteri*, (Ankara: Alter Yayıncılık, 2009), pp. 70-71.

<sup>29</sup> BOA. Y. MTV. 80/120.

as chiefs of religious orders – of the Yıldız Palace resided,<sup>30</sup> as a guest of the Sultan. Therefore, he was to be a part of Hamidian way of politics, and the main themes of Hamidian Islamism, which at times assumed pan-Islamic aspects, were to form the broader framework for his activities during his five year stay.

It is possible to make a distinction of Islamism and Pan-Islamism as two different ideologies. Pan-Islamism, which is also implied by coinages such as “Muslim unity”, “Islamic unity”, or in Ottoman case, as “ittihad-ı Islam”, refers to politics centered on the theme of the unity of Muslims of the world around the Caliphal authority against Western imperialism, and as a more advanced phase, the union of Muslim states. As such, Islamism refers to the attempt to make Islam not only as belief and religion, but also as ethics, politics, and system of thought, the dominant factor in social life; and also to redeem Muslims from western domination and despotic rulers, in a combination of modernist, activist and eclecticist ways, with the idea of progress being in mind.<sup>31</sup> Thus, while pan-Islamism acts “an ideological basis for cooperation between, or beyond, individual political units in a political struggle under the banner of Islam” linking them to the Caliphate in an essentially anti-European way,<sup>32</sup> Islamism points to the emphasis on Islamic elements and a Caliphate-centered politics in the absolutist reign of one ruler – in the Ottoman instance, Abdulhamid II.<sup>33</sup>

In the Ottoman case, Islamism and pan-Islamism were intertwined in each other – as part of a survival strategy of the Empire. As the culmination of a long preparatory period of a combination of factors of internal and external politics such as Western domination and territorial losses, failure of “ittihad-ı anasır” (unity of elements) principle of the Tanzimat Era, and the search for a popular base to consolidate the regime,<sup>34</sup> Hamidian Islamism emerged emphasizing religious themes and the Caliphal seat as a pivot for the integrity of the Empire occasionally switching

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<sup>30</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, p. 157.

<sup>31</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi Hayatı...*, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Reid, “Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.26, No.2 (Feb., 1967), p. 267.

<sup>33</sup> Cezmi Eraslan, *II.Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği: Osmanlı Devleti'nin İslam Siyaseti, 1856-1908*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 1992), p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 37-38.

to pan-Islamic rhetoric and appeals. Although there are researchers who prefer to separate Hamidian Islamism and pan-Islamism as two different policies pursued in distinct periods,<sup>35</sup> historical evidence reveals that the two ideologies were interrelated, and served rather as two faces of a common policy, one being rather domestic-oriented and the other one being external-oriented,<sup>36</sup> and supported one another throughout the Hamidian period not allowing any clear-cut periodizations.

Another aspect of Pan-Islamism is that it is not monolithic, neither heterogenous. The fact that it is a product of colonialism and anti-colonial struggle means that Pan-Islamism appeared as a multi-dimensional ideology, depending on who concentrated on it or constituted the main drive in it as a counter-movement. In this respect, what constitutes the “Pan-Islamism” can be held under three categories each of which also relate to an aspect of the ideology: pan-Islam as understood by Europeans; pan-Islamism as an Ottoman state policy (state Pan-Islam); and public pan-Islam. This model by Adeb Khalid not only achieves in grasping multiple components of pan-Islam with their distinctions but at the same time points to the fact that “pan-Islam” is the totality of the interaction of those components.<sup>37</sup>

To be able to give a complete picture of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism, therefore, this thesis takes Khalid’s model as an example and utilizes a similar model. The following sections attempt at analyzing Hamidian (pan-)Islamism on three different aspects: historical background; ideological development and popular base; Hamidian (pan-) Islamism in practice.

### **2.3.1. The Genesis of Hamidian (Pan-)Islamism: Historical Background**

(Pan-)Islamism in the Ottoman Empire was the result of historical circumstances and major political events during Abdülhamid II’s accession to the throne and throughout 1880s and 1890s. Hamidian policy of Islamism which tactically involved pan-Islamic overtones was in a sense a continuation of earlier practices and at the same time attempted to reinstitute tradition in line with the

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<sup>35</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri...*, p. 76. Mardin, referring to Young Turks and especially Ahmed Rıza, claims that Abdulhamid II followed an “ittihad-ı Islam” policy, in other words, pan-Islamic policy, after 1892 that must be kept separate from his “emr-i hilafet” policy, in other words, Islamic policy, which he followed between 1876 and 1892.

<sup>36</sup> Khalid, “Pan-Islamism in Practice...”, p.203.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 201-202.

construction of Caliphal legitimation and emphasis on religious elements. Besides, the policy fed on ideological developments and popular moods, such as the reaction against European imperialism and Muslim dissatisfaction with the reforms of the Tanzimat era, while it was also an outcome of the observation of international politics and trends, and anti-Western defensive sentiments among world Muslims. As such, the whole policy of Islamism and pan-Islamism were the components of a response of the Empire to a survival crisis: European encroachments on the Empire had reached a peak by the successive disastrous 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War and the Berlin Treaty, the takeover of Cyprus, and the invasion of Egypt and Tunisia, alongside with nationalist rebellions of non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, making apparent for the Empire that 'ittihad-ı anasır' was dead, and there was no alternative left but to rely on Muslim elements for survival.<sup>38</sup>

When Abdulhamid II ascended to throne in 1876, the Ottoman Empire was going through the Great Eastern Crisis that was to go on for the first years of Abdulhamid's reign: the Empire faced not only wars with European powers and suffered military blows and land losses, but provincial revolts, power struggles in the government were also undermining the unity of the Empire alongside with financial collapse. In addition to all of these was the sign of withdrawal of collective European support for the Empire's territorial integrity,<sup>39</sup> in total contradiction to the fact that the Tanzimat Era was a product of relations with the Great Powers.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it had turned out to be the most fundamental question of Abdulhamid II's reign that there was the urgent necessity to consolidate the Empire. As such, the Sultan had to consolidate his position against oppositional forces, bureaucracy, the deposed Sultan Murad V, and any potential challenge to the legitimacy of his sultanate.

Abdulhamid II had ascended to throne thanks to his Young Ottoman contacts.<sup>41</sup> His collaboration with these liberal forces, especially the powerful Midhat Pasha, Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, was through his promises of the proclamation of the constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi*, and the establishment of the parliament, while

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<sup>38</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 40-44.

<sup>39</sup> F. A. K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy, Abdulhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878-1888*, (İstanbul: The ISIS, 1996), p.13.

<sup>40</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45.

this whole strategy was also intended to facilitate British support against Russian military threat and cope with European pressures. Nevertheless, Abdulhamid abandoned this policy completely when he suspended the parliament during the 1877-1878 Russian War, and this meant that his reign not only departed from a possible British model and the Ottomanist ideal but he faced the risk of clashing with the liberal forces that had earlier been his main support. Especially, Midhat Pasha, who possessed more established political power compared to the Young Ottoman intellectuals such as Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, came to be perceived as a real threat, and while Abdulhamid sought to strengthen his position against Midhat Pasha and supporters of *Kanun-i Esasi* he aimed at a deliberate policy of promoting the Palace of Yıldız at the expense of Bab-ı Ali, in other words against the bureaucracy that had dominated the Era of Tanzimat.<sup>42</sup> Yet, it was all throughout the first years of his regime a perceived insecurity that there might be British and liberal backed attempts to restore the previous Sultan, Murad V.<sup>43</sup>

However, one of the main historical dynamics leading to the emergence of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism was the international decline of the Empire that was mainly conditioned by power relationships. The Empire's geographical position and the number and location of its potential enemies meant that it was inherently burdened with vast territories, large populations and political arrangements which had turned out to be a problem in a period of decline. The Ottoman Empire was stuck in the power struggle of European states, and ensuring the continuity of the Empire as a means of preserving international stability formed the essence of the Eastern Question that became a daily political reality for Istanbul. First, Britain saw Ottoman Empire as a buffer state, respecting its integrity while at the same time demanding and pressuring for reforms. As such, Russia utilized Tanzimat reforms as a legal pretext by which they could interfere in the Empire on behalf of Orthodox subjects – in line with their policy of pan-Slavism. Besides, the influence of France and Britain was apparent in Arab lands, with Syrian Christians becoming protege of France while Britain sought to extend its political aspirations to Iraq and Arabia.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>42</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, pp. 69-81.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>44</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, pp. 2-11.

intervention of European powers increasingly encouraged the rise of nationalist feelings and separatist tendencies among the non-Muslim subjects. Moreover, the main tactic of the Ottoman government to play the politics of balance of power among the Great Powers was rendered less practicable as the power balance had changed in Europe, when Abdulhamid ascended to throne, with the emergence of Germany as a new power, and Great Powers entered into mutual concessions as a way of settling conflicting interests. Britain, France and Russia were forced to enter into new arrangements, and the unfavorable circumstances for the Ottoman Empire reached a peak between 1875-1878, when the Empire was faced with rebellions in the Balkans, engaged into war with Russia and suffered large territorial losses.<sup>45</sup>

In this respect, 1878, the year of Berlin Congress, represents a fundamental shift in the Ottoman self-view; because, in combination with the financial bankruptcy of the Empire, the institution of *Düyun-u Umumiye* (Public Debts Administration), and the reaction to Tanzimat reforms, the harsh outcomes of the Berlin Congress led to an unprecedented mistrust of the West and an urgency to contemplate a new basis for the survival of the Empire.<sup>46</sup> Thus, this year is seen by many researchers as the beginning of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism.<sup>47</sup> Yet, the pressures, tensions and reactions to the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878 were to be further reinforced by what to transpire thereafter: the occupation of Tunisia by France in 1891, and Egypt by British in 1882.

The main result of those consecutive losses was a switch from Ottomanist ideology to an Islamist one regarding the integrity of the Empire. The everyday reality the regression against the conquests of Britain, Russia and France, and rising separatist tendencies within the Ottoman lands brought was a dramatic demographic change.<sup>48</sup> Large territorial losses caused not only loss of non-Muslim population in detached lands but also Muslim influx from those regions alongside with the

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<sup>45</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 40-42.

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (May 1973), p. 139.

<sup>47</sup> Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p. 341; Selim Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No.1, (1993), p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Mehrdad Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late Nineteenth-Century Iran", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No 1, (1996), pp.30-31.

departure of non-Muslims from Ottoman domains such as Armenians leaving for Europe and America.<sup>49</sup> Through all these together, the Empire went on to become a predominantly Muslim one compared to earlier decades when the population of Muslims and non-Muslims were rather balanced.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the politics of reasserting Islamic identity and relying on Muslim element as a way to preserve the integrity of the Empire was compelled by the demographic changes brought about by the successive events between 1875-1882.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, the war with Russia and the Berlin Congress had shown Abdulhamid that British support had faded.<sup>52</sup> The Sultan had, in the beginning of his reign, had the idea of leaning on British support and playing a game of using France and Russia to obtain from them what he wanted.<sup>53</sup> But, during the 1877-1878 war, the relations between Britain and Russia had proven that it was no longer such effective to lean on British backing. Ottoman efforts to bring Britain into war, such as communicating with Afghan and Indian Muslims as a way to arouse British interest against Russian advances, went unheeded by Britain.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, a clear sign of a new way of British-Russian politics of settling conflicting interests through mutual concessions became apparent as Britain allowed Russian gains in exchange for settlement in Cyprus.<sup>55</sup> Later on, the disillusionment of Abdulhamid II, who had been brought up as pro-British, were to be further exacerbated when Britain occupied Egypt in 1882.<sup>56</sup> In fact, these successive events were the manifestations of a deviation in British policies regarding the Ottoman Empire. The two main currents in British politics, one being an isolationist mentality unless British security directly

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<sup>49</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 367.

<sup>50</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p.178.

<sup>51</sup> Kemal Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3. (Jul., 1972), p.272.

<sup>52</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *A History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 131.

<sup>53</sup> Arminius Vambery, *The Story of My Struggles: the Memoirs*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905) , p.354.

<sup>54</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 112-114.

<sup>56</sup> Vambery, *The Story of My Struggles...*, p. 355.



threatened, and the other one being a moralizing mentality refraining from supporting regimes considered to be less-than-liberal, no longer seemed to be favorable for the Ottoman government.<sup>57</sup> After 1876 and throughout 1880s, both the governments of Salisbury and Gladstone, and the sides they represented in the British parliament were in conviction that the Ottoman Empire was doomed to collapse, and Britain had to seek for ways to acquire its share of Ottoman territories – and respect the integrity of what was to be left.<sup>58</sup> Thus, while Salisbury government saw the earlier “buffer-state policy” as a mistake and settled in Cyprus and continuously came up with conditions of Anatolian reform directed to Armenians in return for protection against Russian aggressions,<sup>59</sup> Gladstone administration went on for the invasion of Egypt – which seemed to Abdulhamid worse than any Russian wrongdoings.<sup>60</sup> Added to that list was British policies in 1880s undermining the unity of the Empire in the Middle East, such as those involving Arabs and attempting to formulate a Caliphate as alternative to the Ottoman Sultan, that contributed to Ottomans’ British distrust.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the Empire was in a position to contemplate a new pivot for its international politics, while at the same time managing to secure survival and internal solidarity.

The combination of factors emanating from internal circumstances of the Empire, and the new view of the total population upon consecutive land losses, alongside with socio-economic deterioration as a result of international economic depression as well as soaring Ottoman debts as a result of war indemnities to Russia and the institution of *Düyun-u Umumiye* (Public Debts Administration),<sup>62</sup> and the ongoing legitimacy crisis<sup>63</sup> and the threat of the restoration of Murad V made

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<sup>57</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman...*, p. 131.

<sup>58</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 111.

<sup>59</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>60</sup> Vambery, *The Story of My Struggles...*, p. 366.

<sup>61</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman...*, p. 135.

<sup>63</sup> Halil Ege Özen, “Cemaleddin Afgani: Hangi İslam Birliği”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 155, (Kasım 2006), p.74

apparent by the “Çırağan Incident”,<sup>64</sup> together conditioned Abdulhamid II to opt for the emphasis of Islamic elements and the seat of Caliphate as state policy – in other words, Islamism. Thus, Ottomanism underwent a change to become Hamidian Islamism, and Sultan’s position as the Caliph operated as a new integrative icon: The Caliphate became a key element for the Empire, that was not only under threat from outside but also from the Muslim population inside.<sup>65</sup> In this respect, Abdulhamid’s Islamism was centralization-oriented.<sup>66</sup> While the personage of the Sultan was made to acquire a certain aura of sacredness, the policy of Caliphate, in fact, stemmed from secular considerations aimed at survival. As such, it is possible to argue that Hamidian Islamism should be considered as an instance of “official nationalism”: Ottoman nationality came to be envisioned in more and more secular terms despite the religious language it was enfolded in, and the social engineering which took the Sunni-Hanefi *mezheb* as the basis of religiosity was intended to form an “official belief”.<sup>67</sup> This was the reflection of a trend the likes of which were observable in the Russian and Austria-Hungarian Empires of the same era.<sup>68</sup>

However, it must be noted in this connection that Islamist and pan-Islamist practices of Caliphal policies, even leaving aside the ideological background and popular base, were not a novel invention of the Hamidian era; on the contrary, it is possible to find its precedents in earlier periods, though not as coordinated, intensive and central as in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. First of all, Ottomans had claims on Caliphate since 16th century, since the conquest of Egypt and Arab lands.<sup>69</sup> Yet, it was, as many studies have demonstrated, the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) which, as a milestone, provided the Ottoman Empire the real

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<sup>64</sup> Çırağan Incident (1878) was an attempt, by an oppositional group, to overthrow Abdulhamid II and bring back Murad V, that was led by the Islamist Young Ottoman Ali Suavi. Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>65</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains...*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>66</sup> Selim Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal İmajının Dönüşümü: İdeolojik Meseleler ve Tepkiler, 1876-1908”, *Simgeden Millete, II. Abdülhamid’den Mustafa Kemal’e Devlet ve Millet*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 111.

<sup>67</sup> Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”, pp. 5-14.

<sup>68</sup> Orhan Koloğlu, “Dünya Siyaseti ve İslam Birliği”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 14, No.83 (1990), p.270; Vambery, *Struggles*, p.367; Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”, p. 28.

<sup>69</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, p. 46.

pretext for the Sultan's Caliphal claims over Muslims, which was to be supported later on by rising ideas of Islamic unity as a result of the threat of Russian and British expansionism.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, after the treaty the Ottoman Empire on many occasions received appeals from Muslims outside its boundaries.<sup>71</sup> Besides, the symbolic role of the Sultan as Caliph had been demonstrated in the era of Tanzimat for the first time. Beginning with Abdulmecid, Ottoman sultans started to dress with the sword of Omar on their *cülus*, i.e. accession to the throne, as a sign of Caliphate, and likewise, *Surre-i hümayun alayları* (procession of imperial donations) delivered gifts to Hicaz.<sup>72</sup> After that, it was during the reign of Abdülaziz, the ruler that preceded Abdülhamid II, that there were more tangible attempts for Caliphal politics. In this period, the source of pan-Islamic sentiments were Central Asian Muslims who had been responsive to Russian expansions of 1860s and 1870s. Although their appeal to the porte remained unresponded except for symbolic receptions, the recognition of Abdulaziz as the Caliph by Turkistanis was a significant development.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, it is a sign of Abdulaziz's contemplation over pan-Islam that Meclis-i Meşayih was established in 1866 that would serve for the Ottoman government to control and channelize the activities of sufi orders;<sup>74</sup> and that the first of documents upon the possibilities of Caliphal politics appeared in his reign – a pamphlet by Esad Efendi named "The Union of Islam".<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, a society to protect Muslim interests was set up in 1872.<sup>76</sup> Thus, although these developments were not as integral parts of a policy as in the era of Abdulhamid II, it is possible to put forward that the trend toward pan-Islamism pre-dated Hamidian rule, and the Sultan capitalized on this

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<sup>70</sup> Keddie, "The Pan-Islamic Appeal: Afghani and Abdulhamid II", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (1966); p. 48; Mehrdad Kia, "Pan-Islamism in the Late Nineteenth Century", p. 30; Selim Deringil, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Geleneğin İcadı: Muhayyel Cemaat (Tasarımlanmış Topluluk) ve Pan-İslamizm", *Simgeden Millete*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Nikki Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (March 1969), p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 260.

<sup>73</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>74</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 149.

<sup>75</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>76</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 48.

trend.<sup>77</sup> In a sense, to the extent that Caliphal policies can be accepted as a direct manifestation of centralization and regime-consolidation, it can be argued that the centralist tendency of Hamidian era made use of the setting of earlier reforms of Tanzimat period in a way to strengthen the position of the Sultan.<sup>78</sup> In this regard, throughout the nineteenth century the autocratic authority of the central government had been increasing as many other intermediary powers had been eliminated: Janissaries, feudal sipahis, provincial notables, ulama.<sup>79</sup> However, this centralization had been for the favour of the newly-emerged bureaucratic class. Actually, what Abdulhamid II sought was to ensure the leverage of the Yıldız Court over the Sublime Porte, and restore the authority of the Sultan.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, he was after reversing the Ottomanist attitude that had reached its peak with *Kanun-i Esasi*'s principle of a relatively decentral administration and *milli temsil* (communal representation), and substituting it with Islamism, being the *hami* of non-Muslims as *zimmis*.<sup>81</sup> In that, a clause in the same constitution granted the Sultan the judicial status as the Caliph that became useful for his Caliphate policy.<sup>82</sup>

However, the crucial point that made Hamidian policies both Islamist and pan-Islamist was that the institution of Caliphate became an element of both external and internal politics, and appeals under the name of Islamic unity were used as a way to have influence over the lost territories with Muslim population.<sup>83</sup> For those Muslim elements within the Empire, the loss of European provinces had made the situation in their minds as the Muslim world being under European threat, and Islamic legitimation acted as an essentially defensive mechanism.<sup>84</sup> Thus, Islamic elements served to fill the vacuum of lacking common nationalistic feelings in the

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<sup>77</sup> Duguid, "The Politics of Unity...", p. 140.

<sup>78</sup> Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II, 1876-1909", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 23, No. 3, (1991), p. 347.

<sup>79</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, p. 134.

<sup>80</sup> Özen, "Cemaleddin Afgani...", p. 74.

<sup>81</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 372-373.

<sup>82</sup> Deringil, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Geleneğin İcadı...", p. 29.

<sup>83</sup> Özen, "Cemaleddin Afgani...", p. 75.

<sup>84</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, pp. 47-48.

Ottoman Empire, and create a nationalism of its own by the Sultan referring to the Caliphate not only in his domain but also in the Islamic world.<sup>85</sup> In this sense, the propaganda of Muslim solidarity and loyalty to the Caliph was directed at blocking proto-nationalist and separatist activities among Muslim Ottomans, such as those in Egypt, among Syrian intellectuals, and Albanians that had become apparent with the formation of League of Prizren:<sup>86</sup> Islam was the nationality, and the Caliph was presented as the legitimate sovereign for Muslims – Arabs and Turks alike.<sup>87</sup>

As such, Abdulhamid II saw the opportunity in using pan-Islamic propaganda against those Western powers who had gained lands from the Ottoman Empire and held Muslim populations under their imperial rule. The Sultan believed that what happened since 1875 to the Empire was the collective work of foreign powers, against the Islamic *milla*, with *religion* being the major motive.<sup>88</sup> In line with that, he was calculative of the historical circumstances that were the motor of pan-Islamic feelings. He was a careful observer of Muslim reaction to European expansion, and rising ideas of Islamic solidarity: he knew that it was the conquests of Russia in Central Asia in 1870s that initially gave way to pan-Islamism and expressions of loyalty to the Caliphate, while Indian Muslims also contemplated *jihad* against Britain.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the nationalist awakening in India called for an attachment to the Caliphate,<sup>90</sup> and Indian Muslims had appealed to the Sultan-Caliph for the first time.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Muslim lands under the threat of becoming dominions turned their faces to the Ottoman Empire,<sup>92</sup> and demonstrated their moral and

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<sup>85</sup> Kia, *Pan-Islamism in the Late...*, p. 30.

<sup>86</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, pp. 142-143; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 27.

<sup>87</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, p. 275.

<sup>88</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 62.

<sup>89</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, p. 274. See also Khalid, “*Pan-Islamism in Practice...*”, p. 201, for the supporting argument that pan-Islamism was connected to the contemporary political concerns of various groups in different Muslim societies, rather than being rooted in religion alone.

<sup>90</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the ...”, p. 273.

<sup>91</sup> Keddie, “Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism...”, p. 19.

<sup>92</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 87. Dwight E. Lee, “The Origins of Pan-Islam”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (January 1942), p. 283.

financial support during 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, French and British advances in Tunisia and Egypt aroused fierce anti-Western reaction.<sup>94</sup> It was in this context that Caliphal policies and pan-Islamic appeals came to be used as a bargaining lever against European powers that had Muslim subjects.<sup>95</sup> Abdulhamid II acted as a realist politician in recognizing the potential political power of Caliphate in international arena.<sup>96</sup> Berlin Congress did not solve the interest conflicts between Great Powers, and Abdulhamid played politics of balance of power successfully in the aftermath of 1878.<sup>97</sup> Thus, he had survived the Great Eastern Crisis consolidating his authority,<sup>98</sup> and had a new asset to employ in international politics: He knew that he could appeal to Muslims who had fallen under foreign domination and regarded himself as the Caliph all the Muslim world. Therefore, the Sultan thought of using Islamic unity as a weapon against Britain, Russia, France and Holland.<sup>99</sup> In that, the influence of Caliphate would be no direct diplomatic leverage but something European powers who possessed Muslim populations had to take into consideration.<sup>100</sup> As a result, pan-Islam operated as defensive weapon to hold the Empire together – and an offensive weapon as well against those imperial powers that the Ottoman government desired to interact as an equal.<sup>101</sup>

On another aspect, imperial powers of Europe also contributed to Hamidian pan-Islam in two indirect ways. First, it is not possible to separate pan-Islamism from the imperialistic rivalry of Western powers,<sup>102</sup> in the sense that, on particular

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<sup>93</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 29.

<sup>94</sup> Keddie, “Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism...”, p.20.

<sup>95</sup> Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State...”, p. 350.

<sup>96</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 32.

<sup>97</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, pp. 44-45; Vambery, *The Story of my Struggles...*, p. 379.

<sup>98</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>99</sup> Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratım*, (İstanbul:Dergah Yayınları, 1987), p. 178; Şadiye Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid: Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, (İstanbul: Leyla ile Mecnun Yayıncılık, 2007), p. 120.

<sup>100</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 49.

<sup>101</sup> Selim Deringil, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve 19. Yüzyıl Rus İmparatorluğu’nda Pan-İslamizm”, *Simgeden Millete*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 251.

<sup>102</sup> Lee, “The Origins of Pan-Islam...”, p. 283.

occasions their policies inspired ideas of collective defense or they intended to use pan-Islam as tools against each other: British tried to exploit pan-Islamic sentiments to stop Russian advances in Central Asia<sup>103</sup> and to win the hearts of Indian Muslims, while Russian pan-Slavism caused emergence of pan-Islamic reaction.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, German pan-Islamism of 1890 would come out as a counter-move against Britain, France and Russia.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, the turns Ottoman standpoint took vis-à-vis Great Powers after 1878 continuously fed on influence from Great Powers themselves as part of maneuvers against one another.<sup>106</sup>

Secondly, the establishment of the term pan-Islam owed much to the imperial West. The contemporary works of European orientalist and journalists,<sup>107</sup> and diplomatic correspondence of the officials of Great Powers<sup>108</sup> led to the popularization of the term, and furthermore its “overload”. The essence of European understanding of “pan-Islamism” was that they located it squarely in religion.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, while Muslims preferred utilizing terms like *ittihad-ı İslam* and *vahdet-i İslam* (Islamic unity), and Hamidian understanding of pan-Islamic appeal was rather to keep it on hand as a potential force externally and to unite his own Muslim subjects internally, Europeans never hesitated to use the term pan-Islam, intended firmly to mean a political unity under a common religious leader – building upon the resistance they experienced in their dominions with Muslim population<sup>110</sup>. Thus, pan-Islam, in a sense, arose out of European paranoia of collective resistance under the name of Islamic religion, i.e. *jihad*, that they might face in their colonial lands:

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<sup>103</sup> Keddie, “Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism...”, p. 19; Azmi Özcan, “Sultan Abdülhamid ve Hindistan Müslümanları”, Sultan II.Abdülhamid ve Devri Semineri: 27-29 Mayıs 1992, (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1994), p. 128.

<sup>104</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>105</sup> Özen, “Cemaleddin Afgani...”, p. 74.

<sup>106</sup> Geogon, *Sultan Abdulhamid*, p. 102, 350; Eraslan, *II.Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 331; Vambery, *The Story of my Struggles...*, p. 381

<sup>107</sup> Lee, “The Origins of Pan-Islam...”, pp. 278-281; Geogon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 241.

<sup>108</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Pan-İslamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid: Yanlış Bir Görüşün Düzeltilmesi*, (X. Türk Tarih Kongresinden Ayırbaşım), (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), p. 1331.

<sup>109</sup> Khalid, “Pan-Islamism in Practice...”, pp. 202-203.

<sup>110</sup> Koloğlu, “Dünya Siyaseti ve İslam Birliği”, p. 269.

official Ottoman and popular Muslim reaction to developments in Tunisia<sup>111</sup> and Egypt;<sup>112</sup> Sanoussi movement in Northern Africa and Mehdi movement in Sudan;<sup>113</sup> or any counter-move by Ottoman government<sup>114</sup> were interpreted as wholesale pan-Islamic movements. Moreover, the “fictional pan-Islam” of Europeans served to extend their imperial interests further and legitimize their claims by providing them a pretext for their interventions. Even on occasions that the Ottoman government avoided coming up against Great Powers despite popular Caliphal support, such as against Britain in India, imperial policies made use of claims of pan-Islam as diplomatic instruments.<sup>115</sup>

### **2.3.2. The Genesis of Hamidian (Pan-)Islamism: Ideological Precedents and Popular Base**

The results of 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War marked the collapse of Tanzimat ideology of Ottomanism, leaving way for the emergence of a new type of state policy; and for the Empire, the view of which had become one with Muslim population in majority, (pan-)Islamism ascended as the central policy serving as a centralization and regime consolidation framework for the Hamidian rule.<sup>116</sup> This change was, however, not an abrupt and compartmental one: the end of Ottomanist ideology and the rise of Islamism shows continuity in the sense that it was based on the Muslim reaction to Tanzimat era. Thus, the domestic aspect of Hamidian (pan-) Islamism emphasizing the Caliphate as the point of unity for Muslims – *the state, the nationality itself* – had fed on a popular base and a decade-long process of ideological preparation.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, pp. 41-42.

<sup>113</sup> Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit Gerçeği*, p. 365-366.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 359.

<sup>115</sup> Karpat, “Pan-İslamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid...”, pp. 1349-1350; Özcan, “Sultan Abdülhamid ve Hindistan Müslümanları...”, pp. 125-130.

<sup>116</sup> Bayram Kodaman, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Doğu Anadolu Politikası*, (İstanbul: Orkun Yayınları, 1983), p. 23.

<sup>117</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism...*, pp. 267-268.



When Abdulhamid ascended to the throne, the gulf between the state and society had become wider than ever – the domination of the government by a group of pashas and their reforms had aroused widespread discontent.<sup>118</sup> Tanzimat culture had not penetrated the society deeply, bringing about a tense dualism, while the differential pace of modernization broadened the gap between elites and masses.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, Tanzimat reforms, inclusion of the Ottoman Empire in the world system, land reforms in the direction of centralization had given way for popular dissatisfaction.<sup>120</sup> The socio-economic reality of the transformation of Tanzimat period for common Muslim people was that the Turkish-Muslim peasant became isolated while the Christian peasantry prospered; and likewise, the ones that mainly benefited from international trade were non-Muslim merchants. In sum, as an important disparity, Muslim political supremacy in the Ottoman Empire had turned to be disproportionate to their real economic and educational standing, and there was a lack of Turkish-Muslim middle class to compete with Christians.<sup>121</sup> Thus, while common Muslim people attached to religion as a group solidarity, in the bureaucracy, among intelligentsia and popular ulama there was debate on the need for a new social base for the survival of the Empire.<sup>122</sup> The critique of bureaucratic centralism of the Tanzimat period was essentially conservative and Islamic.<sup>123</sup> With the foundations of a new Turkish Muslim middle class appearing together with its new communal leaders and intellectuals, the failure of the Ottomanist ideology gave way to the transformation of it, by Muslims, into their own nationalism: Islamism.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Engin Akarlı, “Abdülhamid II’s Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System.” *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, D. Kushner (ed.) (Jerusalem: Yad Ben- Zvi, and Leiden: E. J.Brill, 1986), p.74.

<sup>119</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman...*, p. 105.

<sup>120</sup> Karpat, “Pan-Islamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid...”, pp. 1332-1343.

<sup>121</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman ...”, pp. 249-250; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 10.

<sup>122</sup> Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”, p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman...*, p. 113.

<sup>124</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman...”, pp. 260-261.

The new ideology had already taken shape in the beginning of 1870s, and the interpreters of the new order were the Young Ottomans.<sup>125</sup>

The Young Ottomans were a loose group of individualistic intellectuals that were commonly opposed to the political dominance of Ali and Fuad Pashas. They demonstrated resentment at the European interference in the Ottoman Empire, represented outspoken Muslim reaction to the Tanzimat reforms and Western pressures, and participated in literary renaissance.<sup>126</sup> Among the most prominent members of the group were Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, and Şinasi. They speculated on an ideology for emerging modern institutions in terms of Islamic political tradition, and proposed restructuring of state institutions as well.<sup>127</sup>

The Young Ottomans were not a monolithic group. But the common denominator that brought them together was their critic of the Tanzimat period and the adoption of European laws at the expense of the *sharia*, the Islamic law, that resulted, in their opinion, in tyranny. Thus, they contemplated a constitutionalism based on Islamic notions “commanding right and forbidding wrong” and consultation, and sought to respond to western modernity with a reconciliation of Islamic concepts of government with the works of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Danton.<sup>128</sup> In their view, Islamic law (*sharia*) represented the framework within which parliament and any other political reform must fit; and, likewise, they pointed to the possibility that constitution and parliament could be grounded in Islam – through the Islamic principles of *shura* and *meshveret*.<sup>129</sup> Thus, Young Ottomans gave inspiration to a generation of Muslim intellectuals who were eager to reconcile Islam with modern values.<sup>130</sup>

Young Ottomans, mainly through the works of Namık Kemal, also shaped up the understanding of patriotism for the Ottoman Empire, referring to language,

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<sup>125</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 23.

<sup>126</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, p. 163.

<sup>127</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman...”, p. 262.

<sup>128</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>129</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>130</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, p. 144.

history and motherland;<sup>131</sup> and they introduced concepts like *vatan* and *millet*.<sup>132</sup> They shared the common concern for the integrity of the Empire, and their patriotism regarding the Ottoman motherland incorporated Islamist elements.<sup>133</sup>

Through their journalistic activities, Young Ottomans reflected and shaped up the majority of the ‘public opinion’ themselves.<sup>134</sup> *İbret* and *Basiret* became the main organs for the Muslim middle class, and what Young Ottomans put forward were expressions of their concerns.<sup>135</sup> Despite the fact that they were not a political party, the ability of Young Ottomans in representing and nurturing the public opinion, and influencing politics within the Empire, and the attention they drew in Istanbul and other provincial cities were what made Young Ottomans significant.<sup>136</sup>

Beside the fact that the ideas of Young Ottomans became the main voice of the reaction against Tanzimat Era and they proposed a new way of modernization in line with Islamic principles, the group were also the first to put forward pan-Islamic arguments. They had been employing the term *ittihad-ı İslam* since late 1860s, and *vahdet-i İslam* and *cemiyet-i İslam* were also similar expressions. It was mainly the works of Namık Kemal, as well as Ziya Pasha, Ali Suavi and Mizancı Murat among the Young Ottomans that proposed a Muslim union as the remedy for the Ottoman Empire.<sup>137</sup> This was a reflection of public opinion in the sense that there was an expectation of Muslim support against Russia in 1860s, not only in press but also among ordinary people.<sup>138</sup> While Namık Kemal and his associates championed Islamic unity defending that the claim to the Caliphate under Ottoman possession meant that Ottomans could be the leaders in a political alliance, they became

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<sup>131</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, pp. 193-194.

<sup>132</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman...”, p. 264.

<sup>133</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p. 196.

<sup>135</sup> Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman...”, p. 276.

<sup>136</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, p. 219-220.

<sup>137</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 2-3.

<sup>138</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 87-88.

influential in shaping pan-Islamic sentiments.<sup>139</sup> In this period, the newspaper *Basiret*, in Istanbul, became the voice for Muslim world and expressed pan-Islamic sentiment, though not in the name of political alliance, with news coverage related to Muslims in China, Algeria, India, Dutch East Indies, Sumatra. At this time *Basiret* was representative of a large segment of Turkish population, and it was the most widely read newspaper.<sup>140</sup> This was an instance of the relationship between public pan-Islam and the role of newspapers, and it would also present a contact point of public pan-Islam and state pan-Islam.<sup>141</sup>

Namık Kemal was the most prominent among the Young Ottomans that wrote on pan-Islam. The main bulk of his writings on Islamic unity are in *İbret*, a noteworthy newspaper of the time, that was published in 1872. For instance, in articles “Medeniyet” (civilization) and “Teşyid-i Revabıt” (strengthening of bonds) the author analyzes French, German, Russian, Italian, British and Austrian ways of nationalism and how they achieved unity, and suggests ways for Ottomans to copy the same model for political and military unity.<sup>142</sup> In line with that, it is possible to encounter comments on Islamic unity in Namık Kemal’s passages in the newspaper.<sup>143</sup> The Ottoman Empire was seen as a natural center for Islamic unity as it is the Caliphal centre,<sup>144</sup> and *ittihad-ı İslam* meant Muslim solidarity in the Empire regarding Turks and Arabs.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, considering Muslims of the world, Kemal thought that the idea of Islamic unity had become a common goal, and believed that sectarian division had to be left aside so that Arab and African lands would be united under a central authority creating an enormous military power as a counterbalance against Western dominance.<sup>146</sup> In this respect, he saw a potential even among

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<sup>139</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p.62; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, p. 142-143.

<sup>140</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, p. 276; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 152.

<sup>141</sup> Khalid, “Pan-Islam in Practice...”, pp. 204-205.

<sup>142</sup> Mustafa Nihat Özön, *Namık Kemal ve İbret Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1997), pp.37-38, 92.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 85-89.

Muslims in Kashgar.<sup>147</sup> Thus, he considered the unity of subjects within the Ottoman Empire alongside with Islamic unity with Muslims worldwide,<sup>148</sup> and in addition to his conception of European nationalisms based on land, language and race, he thought of the potentials of Islamic solidarity, and regarded Caliphate as a means to ensure Arab loyalty.<sup>149</sup>

Another leading figure of the same period, who furthered pan-Islamic ideas was Ali Suavi. Though not the most popular, Suavi was the most fervent spokesman of *ittihad-ı Islam* among Young Ottomans, through his writings in the newspaper *Muhbir*. Already back in 1860s he was interested in Muslim communities outside the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, and he thought that Muslims whether in Sumatra or India or Semerkand or Hokand turned their faces to the Caliph in Istanbul.<sup>150</sup> While Suavi's ideas resembled that of Young Ottomans regarding the compatibility of western modernism with Islamic principles, he was more radical in reserving a politically-central position to the Sultan-Caliph, who, in his idea, had to appeal to the Muslims of the world, in Arabia, Turkistan, India or China.<sup>151</sup> He was in the conviction that the question of the East was *ittihad-ı Islam*, and viewed the aim of the Muslim society being the unification of 200 million Muslims.<sup>152</sup> It is in this respect that, Suavi would later on blame Abdulhamid II during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 for not exploiting the power he possessed, and failing to call Muslims for holy war against Russians.<sup>153</sup>

Alongside, Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi, another intellectual to give voice to pan-Islamic ideas was Mizancı Murad. He saw Islam as a political force and he had realized the propaganda power of religion. This aspect of Murad is what justifies his epithet as pan-Islamist. He perceived that Muslim lands were more close to a union compared to Christians. In fact, Mizancı did not have profound religious knowledge:

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<sup>147</sup> Özön, *Namık Kemal ve İbret...*, p. 100.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, p. 133.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>150</sup> Hüseyin Çelik, *Ali Suavi ve Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), pp. 488-489.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, p. 434, 568-569.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 624-625.

<sup>153</sup> Çelik, *Ali Suavi...*, p.409, 433.

he regarded Islam as an identity and self-defense mechanism, and his resort to Islamic values was instrumental as he had realized the potential of Islam as a political force.<sup>154</sup>

Thus, a new concept of patriotism containing Islamist themes had emerged in the last decade of the Tanzimat Period, with the idea that Ottoman Empire should assume a leading role in the Muslim world and colonial world as well. Those pan-Islamic ideas shared by Young Ottomans and Midhat Pasha led towards the 3rd clause in the constitution of 1876 that recognized the Sultan as the Caliph of all Muslims – a clause that would give Abdulhamid II the pretext for his pan-Islamic appeals.<sup>155</sup>

In sum, Caliphate and *ittihad-ı Islam* were already two important themes at the time of Abdulhamid's accession to throne.<sup>156</sup> The period 1871-1875 had been marked by a desire to strengthen the Empire against European pressures and separatism, with a combination of Ottoman patriotism, Islamic conservatism, anti Westernism and some pan-Islamism.<sup>157</sup> Abdulhamid took over as the heir of all the Tanzimat reforms preceding himself, and he furthered legal, administrative and educational reforms toward fruition and climax. In that, what he sought was a new unrestrained centralization.<sup>158</sup> Besides, continuing the trend of 1860s and 1870s among Young Ottomans and common to popular Muslim base, his main policy became one intended to increase the throne's power, emphasizing his role as the Caliph, and legitimizing his powers through reinterpretation of Ottoman Islamic political theory. He employed a reassertion of Islamic identity in order to preserve the integrity of the Empire by relying on the Muslim element.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, he tried to win the loyalty of middle class as a balancing factor for himself against the bureaucrat class, and therefore intended to appeal to their mind-set, while historical developments such as successive Western occupations functioned as catalysts for the

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<sup>154</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>155</sup> Kia, "Pan-Islamism in the Late...", pp. 31-32; Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 40.

<sup>156</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, p. 223.

<sup>157</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, p. 277.

<sup>158</sup> Lewis, *Emergence of Modern...*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>159</sup> Karpat, "Transformation of the Ottoman...", pp. 271-273.

establishment of his policies.<sup>160</sup> Yet, the Sultan always wanted to keep the potential forces in check and found ways to win over and pacify oppositional liberals and pan-Islamists among Young Ottomans such as Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi and Mizancı Murat so as to be able to be the sole guide of the workings of his (pan-)Islamism.<sup>161</sup>

### 2.3.3. Hamidian (Pan-)Islamism in Practice

The (pan-)Islamism of Abdulhamid II developed as the state policy in the Ottoman Empire under the circumstances given in detail above. Therefore, the ideology derived its character from the new view of the Empire and political developments in the international stage, as well as the popular mood and intellectual trends in the Ottoman lands and among Muslims worldwide. Besides, Abdulhamid II's personal experience through his accession to throne and during the first years of his reign that he survived consequent political blows conditioned his way of politics that represented a new direction after the decades of Tanzimat era. The Sultan realized the necessity to preserve the integrity of the Empire while also strengthening his regime, by relying on religion and especially Caliphal seat as a uniting factor in the Empire. In this respect, emphasis of Islamic elements and calls of attachment to the Caliphate served to ensure the loyalty of Muslim elements in the Empire. Moreover, through communicating with world Muslims with appeals of Islamic unity, this attitude also provided the Sultan with a potential power that allowed him to counterbalance European powers in diplomacy.

In order to be able to understand the full content of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism, it is necessary to analyze what it involved in practice, in other words, how it operated, alongside with the previous analyses of its historical and ideological background. Such a task would reveal what Hamidian (pan-)Islamism *was* and *was not*; so that it would be possible to locate in its full context the arrival and stay of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, a radical international pan-Islamist, in Istanbul, between 1892-1895.

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<sup>160</sup> Karpat, "Pan-İslamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid...", pp. 1354-1357.

<sup>161</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, pp. 294-297.

### 2.3.3.1. Pan-Islamism and Domestic Policy

Abdulhamid's decision to emphasize Islam emerged as a manifestation of his concern to stabilize the state by governing in accordance with the characteristics of his subjects. He had realized the potential of religion as a powerful social and political force, and preferred to utilize it as a pivot in his policies.<sup>162</sup> In building up his regime, he regarded territorial losses as facilitating consolidation: with what was left on hand he would concentrate on an "internal conquest" in Anatolia and Arab lands – a model quite reminding of the Russia of Alexander III that was based on centralization, social control by police, press censorship, and religious emphasis.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, in foreign politics, Abdulhamid sought stability and security so that he would be able to focus on essential reforms. To be able to keep the powers at bay, he sought for ways to benefit from disparities in the interests of Great Powers, and for assets to deter them rather than direct military power.<sup>164</sup> He believed that in the long term the weakness of the Empire could be overcome through modernization, centralization, education, and the promotion of the Muslim element.<sup>165</sup>

The position of the Sultan as the Caliph constituted the center of Abdulhamid II's construction of his regime. This involved redefining basic Islami institutions, the *sharia* and the Caliphate to form the legitimate basis of the new imperial identity. As the pretext to his religio-political claims, Hanefi school of jurisprudence assumed the role of *mezheb-i resmiye* (official sect), with the Hanefi interpretation of the Caliphate being a major theme.<sup>166</sup> According to Abdulhamid, the Caliphate incorporated four functions: the capacity to appeal to all Muslims; a leverage against Russia, Britain, France, and the Netherlands; a conflict-solving authority for Muslims; the sole authority concerning religious subjects.<sup>167</sup> This meant that the Sultan saw in Caliphate an important asset both in domestic and foreign politics, and he sought ways for the promotion of his role as Caliph. In a sense, this

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<sup>162</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*..., pp. 24-25.

<sup>163</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*..., p.304, 308.

<sup>164</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*..., p. 41.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>166</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*..., p.48.

<sup>167</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdulhamid ve İslam*..., p. 199-201.



involved the engineering of the personality of Sultan-Caliph through a “reinvention of tradition”: Ottoman customs and relevant Islamic themes were reshaped and their uses were broadened with an imperial significance similar to European courts. Thus, rituals, ceremonies, Friday prayers all underlined Sultan’s role as the Caliph. As such, the Sultan assumed the new title of *hilafetpenah*, the Shelter of the Caliphate, which became of frequent use in official correspondence;<sup>168</sup> and the titles *Emirü’l-Müminin* (the commander of believers) and *Hadimü’l-Haremeynü’ş-Şerefeyn* (the servant of Holy places) were also emphasized.<sup>169</sup> The utilization of Islamic symbols also extended to tangible and visual artefacts such as architectural elements, sacred objects or medals etc.<sup>170</sup> Likewise, the Sultan attached special importance to the visibility of Ottoman Caliphate in Hijaz region.<sup>171</sup>

Nevertheless, it is not possible to consider this trend as a return to pre-Tanzimat practices and mentality. On the contrary, glorification of the Caliph as a pivot of unity and regarding his sovereignty should be viewed within the framework of centralization efforts.<sup>172</sup> Parallel to that, despite the Islamic tone of the Abdülhamid’s rhetoric, little interest was paid to religious doctrines and institutions. There was never an issue of Islamic reform, but instead, Sunni conformism. Moreover, no steps were taken to promote the role of ulama, and, on the contrary, the Sultan remained quite defensive against men of religion.<sup>173</sup> There was never reference to *Şeyhülislam* in political issues.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, there was no room left for any serious religious debate, and Islamic intellectuals suffered under the Hamidian regime, in the end being forced to work with forces of opposition.<sup>175</sup> Finally, Abdulhamid never encouraged or allowed meeting of pan-Islamic

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<sup>168</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late ...*, pp. 126-128.

<sup>169</sup> Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...”, p. 127.

<sup>170</sup> Selim Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Simgesel ve Törensel Doku: ‘Görünmeden Görünmek’”, *Simgeden Millete*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 57.

<sup>171</sup> Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”, p. 21.

<sup>172</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, p. 128.

<sup>173</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 232; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 27.

<sup>174</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 35.

<sup>175</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, p. 140.

congresses.<sup>176</sup> The reason for all these restrictions was that Abdülhamid always wanted to keep Islamism in check and under his control, as he had experienced, during the days of 1876 and also in the Çırağan incident, the attempt to restore Murad V by an opposition group led by Ali Suavi, how powerful the movement could be when coordinated.<sup>177</sup>

In this respect, (pan-)Islamist policy of the Sultan went parallel to his efforts of regime consolidation. In a sense, he intended to continue, selectively, with the trends of Mahmut II's reign and the Tanzimat era. In the lack of well-educated subjects, ethnic and religious affiliations and lack of bourgeoisie that identified their interests with that of the State, Abdulhamid sought an emphasis on centralization through a combination of autocracy, conservatism, reformism and Islam.<sup>178</sup> The Sultan's reforms to consolidate his authority gained pace after mid 1880s,<sup>179</sup> one of the most remarkable changes being the return of Sublime Porte to its former subordinate administrative role.<sup>180</sup> This was a manifestation of the transfer of the decision-making from government departments and the bureaucrat class to Yıldız Palace, which compromised, outside the *mabeyn*, a group of permanent guests, such as religious dignitaries from Central Asia, Arabia, India, Bosnia, North Africa, that were present there as part of (pan-)Islamic policies.<sup>181</sup>

Thus, the political power moved from the Porte to the palace; and, coming to 1890s, Abdulhamid had successfully consolidated his authority.<sup>182</sup> The centralist tendencies of the Sultan became also apparent in the priority given to efficient administration by a strong cadre of technocratic bureaucrats, establishment of statistical bureaus, and linking provinces to the capital by means of telegraph. Similarly, loyalty to the Caliph became an indispensable criteria for employment in

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<sup>176</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 34.

<sup>177</sup> Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p. 348.

<sup>178</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, pp. 20-21; Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 201.

<sup>179</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 279.

<sup>180</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, p. 123.

<sup>181</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 35; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>182</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 171.

bureaucracy.<sup>183</sup> The programme of centralization was to be further reinforced by administrative reforms that demonstrated a clear deviance from the relatively decentralist principle of *Kanun-i Esasi* towards an intended absolutism.<sup>184</sup> In this regard, new communications, railways, telegraph all served as instruments of centralization,<sup>185</sup> while *Hazine-i Hassa*, the Sultan's personal treasury, became the financial basis for Hamidian regime.<sup>186</sup>

Hamidian policy of stressing Islamic element within the Empire became apparent in spheres of governmental office, education, public propaganda, tribal politics, and economic opportunities. The main signs of an Islamism as such were deducible in the appointment of devout Muslims to high ranks in the court; reliance on *qadis*, teachers and similar ulama as both administrative and educational device while pensions and salaries were awarded to ensure their loyalty; repair activities on religious institutions, holy places and tombs of saints; educational reforms focused on promotion of religious motives.<sup>187</sup> As such, the Sultan tried to harness the whole *sufi* structure to his policies, benefiting from the social role and propaganda value of religious orders as a political tool for the solidarity of Muslim subjects. This intention was reinforced further by the fact that the Sultan reserved primary place to religious leaders and representatives of fraternities among his circle of advisers and confidants at the palace of Yıldız.<sup>188</sup> In fact, relations with *sufi* orders was nothing new, but Abdulhamid II intensified it by various rewards, endowments, granting of honors, and, above all, by promoting *sufi* leaders to high governmental ranks. Thus, men like Sheikh Muhammad Zafir, Sheikh Abu'l-Huda, Sayyid Ahmad Asad, Sheikh Rahmetullah, Sayyid Husayn al-Cisr and Sayyid Fadl rose to prominence regarding their political authority as associates of Hamidian (pan-)Islamism.<sup>189</sup> These were

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<sup>183</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late...*, p. 125.

<sup>184</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>185</sup> Lewis, *Emergence of Modern...*, pp. 184-187.

<sup>186</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>187</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 37-38.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 217-218.

consulted by the Sultan on Arab issues and used as intermediaries in dealings with local population and also for propaganda in favor of the Caliphate.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to religious figures in the court, Abdulhamid II had other major associates that were from bureaucracy. These state officials acted as assistants in Hamidian policies of Caliphal emphasis and Islamic unity, and thus were actually among the ones that formed up pan-Islam through their participation. One of them was Hayreddin Pasha, a Tunisian, who arrived in Istanbul in 1870s with the intention of securing support against French threat, and later on became one of the outstanding Arabs in Hamidian regime serving as an important adviser in pan-Islamist policies. Another one was Izzet Pasha al-Abid who in late 1880s was responsible for the construction of Hijaz railroad – an important project linking Arab lands with the Ottoman heartland.<sup>191</sup> As two other important statesmen to dominate the period up to 1891, Küçük Mehmet Sait Pasha, a centralizer with Islamic patriotism, and Kamil Pasha, with his important tasks in the issue of Egypt, were also important supports for the Hamidian regime.<sup>192</sup> In addition, the formation of Hamidian pan-Islam owed to the works and reports of various men-of-religion and government officials who were consulted on the issue of Islamic unity and religious and cultural homogenization. Likewise, it is also possible to see their work as the manifestation of a common attitude. One man as such was Süleyman Hüsni Pasha who compiled a “book of beliefs” (*Kitabü'l-Akaid*), and with his memorandum he wrote down in Iraq proposed ways to integrate heterodox elements into the official belief through conversion, and disseminate the “official faith” of Sunni-Hanefi *mezheb* to outlying parts of the Empire.<sup>193</sup> Another example was the report of Osman Nuri Pasha that presented Turks as the main Muslim element in the Empire while Arabs, Kurds and Albanians were as secondary to them, and spoke of a “civilising mission” of Ottoman government.<sup>194</sup> Finally, the Sultan, on various occasions, benefited from the

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<sup>190</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 30.

<sup>191</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 70.

<sup>192</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>193</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains...*, p. 49.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 51; Selim Deringil, “Osmanlı’dan Türk’e: Türkiye’de Kimlik ve Sosyal Mühendislik”, *Simgeden Millete*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 99.

content of reform proposals, an instance of which was a report, in 1880s, of Muhammad Abduh, the closest associate of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani in Egypt, on education that was in line with Hamidian policy of Caliphal emphasis.<sup>195</sup>

The aspect of popularization of Hamidian Islamism required the stress on the Caliphal position as a central theme. This meant that the visibility of the Ottoman Caliphate and its legitimacy figures in Hicaz had to be promoted, and the association of the Sultan with the Islamic religion, the *hajj* and holy places be well-established.<sup>196</sup> Abdülhamid II viewed the Caliph as being the sole authority concerning religious subjects,<sup>197</sup> therefore Caliphal policies brought about an attempt to monopolize religious reference and interpretation, such as the printing of Koran,<sup>198</sup> an issue in which Iranian and Russian Muslims applied to the Sublime Porte for eligibility.<sup>199</sup> The attention paid to religious books and texts was extended further, by the activities of *Matbaa-i Osmani* (The Official Printing Office), and the formation of a delegation of religious authorities to prepare and authorize a list of religious books. This represented, in a sense, a combat with neighboring Persia on religio-political issues.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, on one occasion, the Ottoman government even experimented with the idea to reinforce the centrality of Istanbul in religious matters through the planned convening of an Islamic conference.<sup>201</sup>

Within the Empire the attempt to homogenize religion led the government to think of conversion to the Sunni Hanefi mezheb in parts of Anatolia, Iraq and Arab lands.<sup>202</sup> The same attitude was apparent even in the way attention was paid to religious buildings trying to make them uniform.<sup>203</sup> Moreover, the continuity, from

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<sup>195</sup> İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *II. Abdülhamid'in İslam Birliği Siyaseti*, (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 1989), pp. 25-41.

<sup>196</sup> Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition...", p. 21; Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman...", p. 351.

<sup>197</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği ...*, p. 201.

<sup>198</sup> Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition...", pp. 23-24.

<sup>199</sup> Deringil, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...", p. 128.

<sup>200</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği ...*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>201</sup> Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman...", p. 350.

<sup>202</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains...*, p. 68.

<sup>203</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği ...*, p. 225.

Tanzimat to the Hamidian rule, of the intention of the state to penetrate deeper into the society<sup>204</sup> brought with it the regulation of social life in line with Islam, including practices of alcohol ban, moral rules, defense of Islam against insults, and control on women dressing.<sup>205</sup>

Part of Hamidian Islamism necessitated Caliphal propaganda and manipulation of public opinion. In this regard, press assumed an important role. Abdulhamid had realized the importance of public opinion and therefore exercised control over press. In fact, governmental control over press and publishing had began in the Tanzimat Era, and censorship had become already well-established in the time of Abdulaziz. Abdulhamid II maintained and reinforced the practice of monitoring on the one hand while on the other hand he tried to make use of journalists, the most important being Ahmed Midhat for the shaping up of public opinion in line with his own regime.<sup>206</sup> Newspapers also served to support the Caliphal image of the Sultan as the protector of religion and holy places.<sup>207</sup> Besides, the propaganda function of press facilitated defense of Islamic unity in Arab lands – such as the government-subsidized Arabic newspaper of *Al-Jawaib* in 1870s and 1880s, and *L’Osmanli*, a newspaper in French published in Istanbul, in the first half of 1880s.<sup>208</sup>

Education constituted an important pillar of Hamidian pan-Islam. The cultivation of popular feelings for the favour of the unity around the Caliphate proved to be a central task in the reign of Abdülhamid. In fact, education became a field on which the Ottoman government concentrated efforts throughout the period of Hamidian rule. The primary aim of educational enterprise was the installment of the concept of Caliphate in the mind-set of Ottoman citizens. In this respect, part of implementations to implant the love of religion and attachment to the Caliphate were directed to religious education: more funds were made available for religious education, higher pensions and salaries for ulama were made available, mosques and

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<sup>204</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 361.

<sup>205</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği ....*, pp. 227-233.

<sup>206</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 187; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, p.187; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği ....*, p. 185.

<sup>207</sup> Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”, p. 25.

<sup>208</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, pp. 58-62.

religious institutions were restored and provided with better maintenance, and Arabic received favorable treatment as the language of religion.<sup>209</sup> Besides, the same attitude was also apparent in public education. The curricular content of Hamidian school system was marked by an emphasis on religion, loyalty to the Sultan, and Islamic patriotism. The content of the textbooks attempted to promote loyalty to the State and Caliph, and inculcation of religious and authoritarian values.<sup>210</sup> Regarding the consolidation of Hamidian regime, the year 1880 had marked the beginning of the central government's combat against nationalist feelings: Islamic community was presented as *the* nation and the Sultan-Caliph as the centre of political loyalty. This trend was further supplemented with the intensification of Hamidian autocracy in 1891-1892.<sup>211</sup> Thus, text books on all subjects started with an emphasis on loyalty to the Caliph as the representative of Islam, and conformity with *sharia* was underlined.<sup>212</sup> Throughout all these efforts, Ottoman educational policy attempted to make uniform the educational system disregarding local specificities.<sup>213</sup>

While Hamidian (pan-)Islamism necessitated ensuring the solidarity of Muslim subjects of the Empire, it would not go unheeded that the government had to develop special policies for Arabs and Arab lands. First of all, Abdulhamid and his officials were quite occupied with justifying the Ottoman Caliphate against any suspected foreign-led propaganda of Arab Caliphate and possible nationalistic movements.<sup>214</sup> However, as fundamental as that was the obligation of an “internal conquest” of the Empire with its new view after 1882. After the losses of non-Muslim population, Arabs had become the most important element together with Turks,<sup>215</sup> constituting a 30 percent share of the total population, while the Turks were

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<sup>209</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>210</sup> Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 167-168.

<sup>211</sup> Somel, *The Modernization of Public...*, p. 167, 180.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, p. 205.

<sup>214</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>215</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, p. 38.

about 35 percent – the second largest element, with rough estimates.<sup>216</sup> The strategy to focus on Arab lands partly arised from the search for social solidarity for the survival of the Empire, and partly from economic concerns. It was a deliberate strategy, in order to compensate for the lost territories, that the government turned its attention to those provinces that were administered indirectly, and thus aimed at efficient taxation. Arab provinces were in this category.<sup>217</sup> Besides, the ascension of the importance of Arab lands became apparent in the fact that Arab provinces, such as Syria and Hijaz, were promoted to be “first-rank” as high-pay governmental posts requiring higher qualifications.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, the government followed an integrationist attitude, and the number of Arab officials steadily increased during the reign of Abdulhamid.<sup>219</sup> As a matter of fact, the inclusion of Arabs in the bureaucracy was true not only in provinces but also in the centre.<sup>220</sup> In addition to the policies to incorporate Arabs into the Ottoman system, Hamidian regime was distinguished by efforts and large investments to improve local administration, security, judicial system, and also communications and railroad systems that especially linked these territories to the capital.<sup>221</sup>

Together with these practices of integrationism and centralization, Hamidian regime also made use of propaganda of Islamic unity. Most remarkably, Abdulhamid relied on Sufi sheikhs to appeal to grassroots.<sup>222</sup> *Rıfai* and *Kadiri* orders became prominent as part of the attempts to gain the loyalty of Arabs.<sup>223</sup> In this respect, the Ottoman government attached special importance to Hijaz, “the Jewel in the Crown”,<sup>224</sup> and desired too see their works in the region underlined in the

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<sup>216</sup> Akarlı, “Abdulhamid II’s Attempt to Integrate...”, p. 76.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p. 75.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p. 78.

<sup>220</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid...*, pp. 211-213.

<sup>221</sup> Akarlı, “Abdulhamid II’s Attempt to Integrate ...”, pp. 81-85; Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*, (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2001), p. 43.

<sup>222</sup> Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...”, p. 125.

<sup>223</sup> Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit Gerçeği*, p. 357.

<sup>224</sup> Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...”, p. 128.



newspapers.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, the special circumstances in the region required that the government cooperated with local notables in order to rule; and the government aimed at balancing this partial autonomy with pan-Islamic propaganda to prevent foreign influence and separatist tendencies.<sup>226</sup>

The “Arab Question” of the Hamidian (pan-)Islamism went alongside with the question of tribes. Tribes, whether nomadic or not, represented a centuries-old problem for the central government regarding the fact that they were out of the scope of taxation, conscription. Moreover, they were administratively autonomous, and they represented a threat in terms of security and a challenge to governmental authority. Furthermore, they were never an integral part of commercial and agricultural economics. Therefore, they were a question, regarding the policies of centralization and regime consolidation during Hamidian regime.<sup>227</sup>

The tribal policy, directed to parts of Anatolia and Arab lands, especially Iraq, leaned on two main instruments, both of which appeared as solutions during 1890-1891: Tribal school (*aşiret mektebi*) and *Hamidiye* cavalry corps (*Hamidiye alayları*).<sup>228</sup> The tribal school was part of a broader policy to integrate parts of Anatolia and Arab provinces. The main principle was ensuring the allegiance of the tribes to the state and advancing identities of Ottomanism and Islamism in Anatolian and Arab provinces. In line with that, children of prominent tribal families were attracted to the tribal school which provided education within the framework of the central authority.<sup>229</sup> On the other hand, *Hamidiye* cavalry corps was developed both as a way to integrate Kurds of Eastern Anatolia to the state and as a solution to Kurdish and Armenian issues. The corps were formed by mostly by Kurds, and also by Arabs and Turkomans, and were intended to serve as a Sunni army.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...”, p. 132.

<sup>226</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 46.

<sup>227</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 309; Eugene L. Rogan, “Aşiret Mektebi: Abdulhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), p. 84.

<sup>228</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 310.

<sup>229</sup> Rogan, “Aşiret Mektebi...”, p. 83.

<sup>230</sup> Deringil, “Osmanlı’dan Türk’e...”, pp. 101-104.

In sum, the ascension of Islamic elements and the emphasis of the Caliphate were part of a deliberate strategy to maintain the integrity of the Empire. Abdulhamid constructed his own (pan-)Islamism and implemented its practices at the same time that he consolidated his regime. In that, sufi orders, education and propaganda assumed central role, and Hamidian (pan-)Islamism manifested itself with separate policies concerning tribes, Arabs, and other Muslim and heterodox elements in the Empire aiming at religious and cultural homogenization and Caliphal loyalties.

### **2.3.3.2 Pan-Islamism and Foreign Policy**

The international dimension of Caliphal policies primarily related to the attempt to appeal to the Muslims in the territories that were lost between 1878-1882. In that, the Sultan sought to preserve by way of his spiritual authority the political influence that he had lost in practical terms. The motive of Caliphate, thus, served as an ideological response to the land losses, and as a tool to adapt to the new self-view of the Empire.<sup>231</sup>

However, the potential of utilizing the Caliphal authority extended further to the Muslims outside the present and former domains of the Empire. Not only the Muslims in lost territories but Muslims anywhere under the governance of European powers came to be seen as targets for Hamidian pan-Islamism.<sup>232</sup> According to the Sultan, the Caliphate possessed the capacity to appeal to all Muslims, and thus could serve as a political leverage against Russia, Britain, France and Netherlands.<sup>233</sup> In addition, provided that the Ottoman Caliph demonstrates the effectiveness of his appeal to Muslims, European powers would be deterred from attacking the Ottoman Empire.<sup>234</sup> Thus, Ottoman pan-Islam intended to make use of European fears of Muslim rebellion and holy war in their dominions, and also the view of World Muslims regarding Caliphate as a universal institution. Besides, the fact that Ottoman Caliphal claims went rather unrivalled in comparison with the previous centuries,

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<sup>231</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>232</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>233</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 199-201.

<sup>234</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, p. 39.

contributed to the legitimacy of Ottoman appeals.<sup>235</sup> At one point, the concern with establishing the legitimacy of Ottoman Caliphal claim in international arena led Abdulhamid to enter into official relations with and try to obtain official recognition from Vatican.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, Abdulhamid made use of cases that gave him the pretext to act as the defender of Muslim rights, in various disputes in Liverpool, Romania, Cava, and China.<sup>237</sup> Yet, the issue of Hamidian pan-Islam was never political sovereignty outside the Ottoman Empire.<sup>238</sup> Rather, the influence of the Caliphate was intended to be something European powers who possessed Muslim populations had to take into consideration.<sup>239</sup> The resources at hand were not sufficient to execute a full-fledged pan-Islamic policy, thus Hamidian regime utilized appeals of Islamic unity as a potential force to remind Europeans of Ottoman power.<sup>240</sup> In fact, Abdulhamid desired a dialogue as an equal vis-à-vis the Christian world by being the leader of Muslims.<sup>241</sup> In this respect, the value of the Caliphate as a political asset rested in how convincingly the Ottoman Caliph displayed himself as such in the eyes of foreign powers. This required, first of all, maintaining contact with Muslims outside the Empire.

Part of Ottoman linkage with world Muslims was facilitated by religious officials, such as *muftis*, *qadis* and teachers, appointed by the Caliphal authority to former Ottoman territories such as Egypt, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Crimea, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Besides, Abdulhamid also stated that he had the right to demand the services of Muslims anywhere in matters regarding holy places without the consent of foreign powers. In addition, influential figures and ulama from many Muslim lands were entertained as guests of the Sultan in Istanbul, and Islamic text books were disseminated as gifts to many religious institutions worldwide. However, the

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<sup>235</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “19. Yüzyılda Panİslamizm ve Osmanlı Hilafeti”, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda İktisadi ve Sosyal Değişim, Makaleler I*, (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2000) pp. 247-248.

<sup>236</sup> Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Devletin Kamusal...”, p. 124.

<sup>237</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 206-208.

<sup>238</sup> Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 51.

<sup>239</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 49.

<sup>240</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 34-36; Koloğlu, *Dünya Siyaseti ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 270.

<sup>241</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “19. Yüzyılda...”, p. 251.

primary role in the external aspect of Hamidian pan-Islamic policies was assumed by *Sufi* networks. Alongside the leaders of certain religious orders from Arab lands serving in Yıldız Palace as advisers and confidants of the Sultan in regional policies, sufis also played part in the communication with external Muslims and cultivation of pro-Ottoman feelings and loyalty to the Ottoman Caliph.<sup>242</sup> In a clandestine way, preachers, messengers, emissaries were sent to different parts of the world, such as Central Asia, for propaganda of Muslim unity.<sup>243</sup> As such, in educational terms, the Ottoman government saw potential in admitting students from other Muslim lands – an instance of which was a group of students from Batavia, a Dutch dominion.<sup>244</sup>

Alongside the religious cadre and grassroots contacts, Hamidian pan-Islam also made use of *şehbenders*, the official Ottoman consuls, that were present in many Muslim lands, such as Java, India, North Africa and China. These consuls acted as representatives of the Caliph, and were active in pro-Ottoman propaganda; and became, on various occasions, involved in internal affairs in the regions they had responsibility, causing protests of European governors.<sup>245</sup>

The annual *hajj* gathering in Hijaz, that was under the Ottoman administration, also served as an occasion for pro-Ottoman and Caliphal propaganda among Muslims from all parts of the world. Pamphlets and placards were among instruments that Ottoman government used for this purpose, and pilgrims were expected to carry messages of Islamic unity to their native lands.<sup>246</sup> Thus, Hijaz and pilgrimage came to invoke the phobia of European powers, and *hajj* became a battlefield of Ottoman propaganda and European counter propaganda.<sup>247</sup>

Actually, the relations of the Ottoman government with foreign Muslims had began in the times of Sultan Abdulaziz, and Abdulhamid built on the established contacts and furthered the scope of interaction with groups in North Africa, India,

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<sup>242</sup> Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>243</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>244</sup> Deringil “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Geleneğin...”, pp. 31-32.

<sup>245</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p.39; Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>246</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 53; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp.147-148.

<sup>247</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 239; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 209-210.

Central and Southeastern Asia.<sup>248</sup> In this sense, especially the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1878 was a turning point. During the war, Ottoman government contacted with Muslim subjects in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco as well. Declarations, with remarkably similar content of Islamic solidarity, were issued and disseminated. The common British and French threat led to a *rapprochement* with Morocco.<sup>249</sup> In 1877-1878, Abdulhamid considered employing pan-Islamic sentiments in Central Asia so as to be able to stop the Russians, and expected Britain to support. The British had been partly supporting pan-Islamic feelings among Indian Muslims as they saw it as an instrument against the Russians, as long as it did not turn against themselves. However, a proposed Ottoman envoy, led by a cleric, to Afghanistan against the Russians in 1877 served as a test of pan-Islamism, regarding British attitude. This led to a turn in British view of pan-Islam as it aroused fears that the tool that they assumed to be working against Russia might as well turn against themselves.<sup>250</sup>

In this respect, the real source of British fears of pan-Islam were the Muslims of India under their governance. The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Indian Muslims were intensified during the 1877-1878 war. The Ottoman government was aware of the ongoing debate on Caliphal politics in India, and sought to make use of feelings of religious attachment. During the war, Seyyid Süleyman Efendi, the *nakibü'l-eşraf* of Baghdad, a city with strong Indian contacts, called Indian Muslims to support Ottoman Empire, and received favorable response and displays of loyalty from *encümen-i İslam* in India. Also, Muslim Indians protested against British press coverage that criticized the Ottoman government unjustly – a fact Abdulhamid became pleased with. Inevitably, these development caused the British governor Lytton to speak of pan-Islamic threat and protest.<sup>251</sup> Similarly, a letter of Gazi Osman Pasha, who was reputedly on the pro-Russian wing in the Hamidian government, was interpreted by Britain as an attempt to provoke Indian Muslims.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> For the case of Southeastern Asia, see Reid, Anthony. "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia". *The Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol.26, No.2 (Feb., 1967), pp.267-283.

<sup>249</sup> Eraslan, II. *Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp.138-147.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, pp. 118-128.

<sup>251</sup> Eraslan, II. *Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 113-116.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, pp. 159-161.

The relations of the Ottoman government with the Indian Muslims were maintained despite the British discontent. Pan-Islamic activities concerning India included granting of rewards and donations, and letter correspondence with notable figures. Prestigious religious figures were invited and entertained in Istanbul.<sup>253</sup> Also, embassies in India increased in number after 1878. British authorities complained, on particular occasions, about the consuls accusing them of activities out of the scope of their duties. On an instance, Karaçi ambassador Hüseyin Kamil Efendi was declared as *persona non grata*. In the same period, the number Ottoman citizens present in India also soared, and there were claims that some of them were to be sent by *Sayyid Abu'l-Huda*, the leader of Rıfai order and a chief confident of Abdulhamid, with special pan-Islamic missions. Moreover, there were propaganda papers directed to Indian Muslims circulating in the Ottoman Hijaz. Thus, Indian Muslims displayed their support of the construction of Hicaz railway by donations. Nevertheless, in any case, Ottoman government refused any open opposition against the British, and rather preferred to maintain its policies in a clandestine way; and, whenever demanded, assured the British of the loyalty of their subjects in India.<sup>254</sup>

Part of Hamidian pan-Islam directed to Muslims in foreign lands involved propaganda and also combat with European counter-propaganda. Press was an important means of expression and communication among Muslims from different countries, and with regard to such importance it caused frictions between Britain and the Ottoman Empire from time to time. Muslim press outside the Empire, especially in India, were pro-Ottoman as it was the sole Muslim Empire and represented the defense line against European expansionism. Thus, British passed on Vernacular Press Act to restrict journalistic freedom in India during 1877-1878 war. On the other hand, articles in the Ottoman newspapers *Vakit* and *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* became a matter of British complaint as to the content of *ittihad-ı Islam*, critique of colonialism, and apparent anti-westernism.<sup>255</sup>

In this regard, the instances of three newspapers, *Peyk-i Islam*, *al-Khalifa* and *al-Ghayrat* provides a representative picture of the ongoing rivalry. *Peyk-i Islam*

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<sup>253</sup> Özcan, "Sultan Abdulhamid ve Hindistan Müslümanları", pp. 132-133.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, pp. 134-136.

<sup>255</sup> Azmi Özcan, "The Press and Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1876-1909", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 29, Issue. 1, (January 1993), pp. 111-112.

was published in Urdu and Turkish in Istanbul under the supervision of Ottoman government in 1880. Its main objective was to forge close relations between Indian Muslims and Ottomans, and to cultivate Caliphal loyalty among Indian Muslims. However, British reported it as hostile to the British rule. Despite the fact that the only point providing excuse for such an objection was that the Ottoman Sultan was titled as *Khalifa-i Hind* in the newspaper, the British forced the Porte to suspend *Peyk-i Islam*. This was a case that demonstrated how sensitive British had grown to be against pan-Islamic ideas. Another newspaper, *al-Khalifa*, started in London, repeatedly expressed that the Ottoman claim to Caliphate was a fiction, and spoke of oppression of Arabs, with an appeal to uprising. This time it was the Ottoman side that complained and demanded suspension of the newspaper – which British complied with. Such an instance led the Ottoman government to assign Musurus Pasha, Ottoman ambassador in London, to publish the newspaper *al-Ghayrat*, in Arabic and Persian, focused on stressing the importance of Caliphate at the same time being alert to British sensitivities.<sup>256</sup>

While constructing the main political setting of Hamidian rule as pan-Islamism, it is also possible to add to the list other developments as in the same framework. For instance, the voyage of *Ertuğrul* frigate in 1889-1890, which was in fact one intended to foster links with Indian and Southeast Asian Muslims and send out a message to the imperial powers of Europe as to the capacity of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph, and received echoes both in the lands visited and also drew the attention of Europe.<sup>257</sup> Likewise, the establishment of Red Crescent Society and the project of Hijaz Railway also had aspects that relate to the politics of Caliphate and Islamic unity in domestic sphere as well as external to Ottoman domains.<sup>258</sup>

In sum, the foreign policy aspect of Hamidian pan-Islamism involved communicating with and sending appeals to the Muslims outside the Empire. The aim was to cultivate pro-Ottoman feelings and Caliphal attachment, and use these against the powers of Europe who ruled over Muslims in their dominions. To the extent that Abdulhamid could present himself convincingly as the higher authority

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<sup>256</sup> Özcan, “The Press and Anglo-Ottoman...”, pp. 112-114.

<sup>257</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 300-301.

<sup>258</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 55.

for Muslims, the Caliphate would be an asset of value. In that, Hamidian rule focused its activities on propaganda through sufi orders and press, and aimed at promoting the political and diplomatic potentials of possessing the Caliphate rather than using it as a direct weapon.



**CHAPTER 3**  
**AFGHANI'S ARRIVAL IN ISTANBUL**  
**AND ACTIVITIES DURING HIS STAY**

**3.1. The Invitation of Afghani and Motives of Abdulhamid II**

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din had left Istanbul in 1870, and travelled to Egypt. He spent the part of his life up to 1892 with extensive journeys, and journalistic and political activities in Egypt, India, Persia, and Europe. Ottoman government remained watchful of his activities especially those concerning the Ottoman Empire through Arabs, Islamic reform, British policies in the Middle East and the debate on the legitimacy of the Ottoman Caliphate. In this respect, to the extent that Afghani's thoughts and writings displayed coherence and ambivalence toward Ottoman rule and Caliphate in the Islamic world, Ottoman government developed a view of Afghani that was sometimes positive and sometimes suspicious. Section 2.2 of the first chapter had provided a brief analysis of Afghani's travels and endeavors between 1870 and 1892 relevant to the Ottoman Empire.

**3.1.1 The Invitation**

The invitation of Afghani in 1892 was the final round of a series of correspondence between him and the Ottoman government. In fact, through these letters and messages via intermediaries Afghani kept contact with Ottoman authorities. Whereas Afghani, in his 1869-1870 visit to Istanbul, had struggled to make for himself a place in Tanzimat circles, in the 1870s and all throughout the 1880s he preferred to establish relations with the Sultan and win his favors. First of all, the fact that the Ottoman Empire was the most powerful Muslim state of the era made Istanbul a centre of attraction,<sup>259</sup> and Afghani realized the potential the Ottoman Sultan possessed as the Caliph especially with the rise of Ottoman pan-Islamic policies after the accession of Abdulhamid II to throne.<sup>260</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>259</sup> Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice...", p. 207.

<sup>260</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 141; Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 18.

important events between 1878-1882 resulting in Western invasions of Muslim lands such as Egypt and Tunisia led to an intensified interest of Afghani in pan-Islamic ideas.<sup>261</sup> Yet, Afghani's attitude as to the recognition of the Ottoman Caliphate was ambivalent as the course of his ideas and outspoken political appeals demonstrated throughout the 1880s: while on particular occasions he was involved in the debate for Arab Caliphate,<sup>262</sup> he sometimes refrained and discouraged his companions from criticizing the Ottoman Caliph,<sup>263</sup> and, despite Ottoman suspicions of his real motives, he had come to recognize the Sultan as the Caliph when he accepted the invitation and arrived in Istanbul in 1892.<sup>264</sup>

The series of correspondence and interactions of Afghani with the Ottoman government started with a letter by Afghani apparently written in late 1870s, offering his services to the Ottoman Sultan to incite Indian, Afghan and Central Asian Muslims in the name of Islamic unity against Russians. The proposal, that went unappreciated, was a sign that Afghani had interest to work with the Ottoman Sultan and participate in his pan-Islamic policies; and it was as well an evidence that Afghani was the initiator of the relationship with Abdulhamid II.<sup>265</sup>

Next, it was during Afghani's endeavors between 1883-1885 that he engaged into relations with Ottoman officials. In those years, Afghani was occupied with journalistic activities in the newspaper *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* between 1883-1885, and he had contacts with the 'pro-Arab' British agent Wilfrid Blunt, and was involved as a mediator in the issue of Sudanese Mahdi, who emerged as an anti-British rebel in the Middle East winning supporters and having influence on the course of Egyptian politics.<sup>266</sup> The issue of Sudanese Mahdi as well as its repercussions in Egypt brought together the Ottoman government, British officials and Afghani in diplomatic negotiations. Prominent figures in the Arab policies of Abdulhamid such as Ismail Cevdet, Ibrahim Muwailihi, Sheikh Zafir Madani acted

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<sup>261</sup> Özen, "Cemaleddin Afgani...", p. 75.

<sup>262</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 206-212.

<sup>263</sup> Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism", p. 25.

<sup>264</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 371.

<sup>265</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 129-142; Keddie, "The Pan-Islamic Appeal...", pp. 46-64.

<sup>266</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad Abadi*, pp. 77-111.

as contact points between Afghani and the Sultan. Thus, Afghani came up with the idea to make use of intermediaries, and managed to enter into relations with Abdulhamid. Moreover, it was possibly at the same time that the Sultan thought of making use of Afghani for the first time.<sup>267</sup>

Finally, Abdulhamid decided to invite Afghani to Istanbul in 1892. The invitation on behalf of the Sultan reached Afghani through, first, Rüstem Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador in London, and, then, Abu'l-Huda, a prominent figure in pan-Islamic and especially Arab policies of Abdulhamid.<sup>268</sup> The first one was rejected while the second one including praises and promises as well as disguised threats due to some of Afghani's remarks about the Caliphate, was respected by him.<sup>269</sup> The fact that Afghani's days in London had become full of difficulties as a result of Persian pressures compelling Britain to repress his activities and Ottoman complaints on Arab issue contributed to Afghani's welcome of the invitation.<sup>270</sup> Besides, a secret appeal in the same period by Afghani to Abdulhamid with a proposal of unity between the Ottoman Empire, Afghanistan and Persia which Afghani possibly put forward as a *sine qua non* condition to travel to Istanbul was as an element facilitating the acceptance of the invitation.<sup>271</sup>

### 3.1.2. A Comparison of Abdulhamid's and Afghani's Pan-Islamism

The fact that Afghani accepted the invitation in 1892 and travelled to Istanbul meant that he arrived in the context of Hamidian pan-Islam, that was analyzed in the previous chapter in detail, and he was to work within the dynamics of the ideology in the way the rule of Abdulhamid set them to operate. Therefore, it is essential to give a comparison of Afghani's and Abdulhamid's ideas and attitudes to be able to present in which points they coincided and differed.

Abdulhamid followed a two-way pan-Islamist policy, one aspect of which related to holding together the Muslim element in the Empire whereas the other

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<sup>267</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 267.

<sup>268</sup> Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin Hatıraları...*, p. 39.

<sup>269</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 370.

<sup>270</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad Abadi*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, pp.169-170; Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afgani*, pp. 77-87.

aspect related to the use of pan-Islamic propaganda as a leverage against colonial powers who possessed substantial Muslim populations.<sup>272</sup> Therefore, in the Hamidian view of *weltpolitik*, Pan-Islam served as a way of diplomacy on equal footing with European powers. In this regard, the Sultan aimed at presenting himself convincingly as the leader and protector of world Muslims; yet, he used his Caliphal authority not to provoke Muslims, but, on the contrary, to put down any incitement.<sup>273</sup> Hamidian pan-Islamic appeals as part of foreign policy fed on the fears of colonial powers who were excessively occupied with the spectre of *jihad*; though, there was never any intention to engage in direct confrontations with Great Powers as the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Eastern Rumelia, Crete demonstrated. Moreover, the Sultan-Caliph offered his services as a mediator on various cases.<sup>274</sup> Thus, revolutionary pan-Islamism was never seen as practical and never occupied a primary place in external relations during the Hamidian regime.<sup>275</sup>

As for Afghani, the role of Islam as a bond of unity to which Muslim nations should stick was a recurrent theme in his speeches and writings. He saw in Islamic religion a proto-nationalistic cement,<sup>276</sup> in that it could provide a tool for solidarity that was much more effective than any other basis.<sup>277</sup> Thus, the emphasis on solidarity and on the necessity of a united front against the West was what united Afghani and Abdulhamid; and besides, Afghani was impressed by the defensive reflexes of Abdulhamid and his apprehension of Western imperialistic motives.<sup>278</sup> Similarly, while speaking of Islamic unity in modern context Afghani regarded sectarian differences as irrelevant, and wished to reconcile Shiis and Sunnis – an accord of his attitude with Abdulhamid.<sup>279</sup> However, in the final analysis, Afghani's pan-Islamism was a revolutionary one aimed at uniting Muslims against Western

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<sup>272</sup> Hanioglu, *A History of the Late ...*, p. 130.

<sup>273</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>274</sup> Hanioglu, *A History of the Late ...*, p. 130.

<sup>275</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy ...*, p. 29.

<sup>276</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri ...*, p. 68.

<sup>277</sup> Haim, *Arab Nationalism: an Anthology ...*, p. 13; Hourani, *Arabic Thought ...*, p. 119.

<sup>278</sup> Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani ...*, p. 43.

<sup>279</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam ...*, pp.15-16; Abdülhamid, *Siyasi Hatırat ...*, p. 179.

domination, and his motive to work with Abdulhamid or any other autocratic ruler was instrumental.<sup>280</sup> Afghani's pan-Islamism envisioned political unity among Muslim countries whereas Abdulhamid viewed his Islamism as an ideology to consolidate elements of the Empire, and his pan-Islamic appeals as a diplomatic asset.<sup>281</sup> Besides, Afghani's proposals of a call for holy war was somewhat harsher than any scheme Abdulhamid ever contemplated.<sup>282</sup>

Another dimension that presented contrasts of view between Afghani and Abdulhamid II was the issue of reform and constitutionalism. Though Afghani's attitude as to whether reform or the strengthening of Muslim countries should come first changed from time to time, and he concentrated on Islamic solidarity and contemporary issues,<sup>283</sup> his ultimate aim was nevertheless something more radical including a reform of Islam.<sup>284</sup> In fact, Afghani was not a devoted constitutionalist, he was ready to settle for the ideal Islamic ideal of the just ruler recognizing the sovereignty of the *sharia*.<sup>285</sup> But his principle that Islamic societies should achieve an internal regeneration led him frequently to call Muslims to force their governors for good administration and support constitutionalism against despotic rulers.<sup>286</sup> Thus, Afghani would never find in the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph the reformist he expected<sup>287</sup> – a main point that separated the two.<sup>288</sup> Moreover, Afghani failed to see that the social, cultural and psychological background that Hamidian pan-Islamism fed on: the expectations of Muslim middle class in the Ottoman Empire, and the widespread reaction against the reforms of the Tanzimat era alongside with popular

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<sup>280</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought*...., pp. 107-108.

<sup>281</sup> Karpat, *Pan-İslamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid*...., p. 1331.

<sup>282</sup> Keddie, "Pan-Islamic Appeal...", pp. 60-64.

<sup>283</sup> Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism....", p. 25.

<sup>284</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani*...., p. 41.

<sup>285</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought*...., pp. 116-117.

<sup>286</sup> Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*...., p.9; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*...., p. 109.

<sup>287</sup> Nikki Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 4, (1962), p. 279, 288.

<sup>288</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*...., p. 20.

anti-Western sentiments.<sup>289</sup> This meant that Afghani failed to grasp fully the fact that Sultan Abdulhamid developed a pan-Islam of his own in a manner to operate as instruments within the given constraints of Ottoman domestic and foreign policy circumstances: the Sultan-Caliph was concerned with keeping pan-Islam in check and under his control, and he was not ready to give fuel to any movements outside the limits of his determination.<sup>290</sup>

### **3.1.3. Abdulhamid's Motives in Inviting Afghani to Istanbul**

The previous chapter of the thesis had given a detailed analysis of the general background of Hamidian pan-Islamism – the political framework which Afghani arrived to work in. Placed in this general picture, the invitation of Afghani to Istanbul was also due to specific contemporary concerns arising from Ottoman domestic and foreign policies as well as Afghani's personal qualities and reputation as an ardent pan-Islamist.

Afghani with his pan-Islamic call he repeated for various audiences in various countries emphasised the necessity of Islamic solidarity against Western encroachments under the banner of one sole Caliph, leaving aside sectarian differences and reconciling Shii and Sunni beliefs. In that, he regarded Islam as a civilization rather than religion, transforming it in his view to a political factor.<sup>291</sup> Thus, his mind-set showed similarities with Abdulhamid in relevance to the view of Muslim unity, and political role of the Caliphate. Therefore, coming to Istanbul, Afghani with his reputation among Arabs and Persians was to play a role similar to the permanent guests of Yıldız Palace. These were religious dignitaries and notable figures from Arab lands, North Africa, India and Asia some of whom were advisors while some others were present in Istanbul as means of ensuring loyalty of their followers.<sup>292</sup> Afghani's presence with an affiliation to the Palace was one similar to these, and he was to assume his own responsibilities in policies making use of his earlier contacts.

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<sup>289</sup> Karpat, *Pan-İslamizm ve İkinci Abdülhamid....*, pp.1350-1354.

<sup>290</sup> Hanioglu, *A History of the Late....*, p. 140; Koloğlu, "Dünya Siyaseti ve İslam Birliği...", p. 270; Ortaylı, "19. Yüzyılda Panİslamizm ve Osmanlı Hilafeti...", pp. 251-252.

<sup>291</sup> Goldziher, "Cemaleddin Efgani", pp. 81-82; Hourani, *Arabic Thought.....*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>292</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy....*, p. 38.

Yet, there were other aspects that Afghani's presence could be of utility, related to his quality of being a reformer while still being focused on Islamic unity and support to the Caliph. In fact, the years of Afghani's arrival coincided with the emergence of the foremost oppositional group in the Ottoman Empire. In 1880s teachers and students in the newly-founded schools of Hamidian education system were reading the forbidden writings of Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, being imposed to the ideas of progress, love of fatherland. As a result, the first organized oppositional group came to being in 1889, under the name *İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*,<sup>293</sup> and in the following years, Young Turks started to make their presence felt as an internal challenge.<sup>294</sup> The relevance of Afghani in this respect was that during his Indian times, while he cooperated with Hindu nationalists and encouraged Indian Muslims to support Ottoman Caliphate,<sup>295</sup> he combatted with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who represented another école with his pro-British standpoint not recognizing Ottoman Caliphal claims.<sup>296</sup> As part of his struggles, Afghani published a book *er-Redd ale'd-Dehriyyin* (The Refutation of Materialists) in 1881, which was an attack on secularists and their attachment to Western ideas and political principles.<sup>297</sup> It is well-known that Afghani in early 1880s intended to present himself more decisively as the defender of Islam and ingratiate himself with the Ottoman Sultan, and it is quite possible that one of his motives in writing his "Refutation" was to appeal to the Sultan and those around him.<sup>298</sup> In fact, Abdulhamid had found in the "Refutation" a pretext he needed for his persecution of the constitutionalists in the Empire, and this appreciation also played part in the invitation of 1892.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern....*, pp. 195-197.

<sup>294</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 343.

<sup>295</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, p. 157

<sup>296</sup> Deringil, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Geleneğin İcadı...", pp. 40-41; Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion....", p. 279.

<sup>297</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, pp. 171-181.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131.

<sup>299</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism....*, pp. 265-267.

In a similar way, the arrival of anti-British Afghani also matched with the change in the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire regarding the stance vis-à-vis Britain. The main constraint of Abdulhamid was that British support had faded as 1877-1878 war and Berlin Congress had shown. Besides, the opening of Suez Canal in 1869 and the occupation of Egypt in 1882 had led to a modification of British security policy that saw the importance of the integrity of Ottoman Empire diminish. Thus, the loss of Britain as an option led to an inclination towards Russia and Germany.<sup>300</sup> While the appeals to Germany went generally unresponded until the second half of 1890s,<sup>301</sup> Ottoman Empire preferred a more Russian-inclined policy after 1887 compared to the pro-British predisposition of earlier decades.<sup>302</sup> This was enforced by the presence of pro-Russian officials in the government,<sup>303</sup> to whom Afghani would be an addition with his conviction, since his articles in *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* (1883-1885), that imperialist Britain was the real enemy of Muslims.<sup>304</sup>

On another aspect, Afghani's arrival in 1892 also coincided with the change in the switch of Hamidian policies, after his achievement in consolidating his regime, toward an emphasis of Caliphate in a more radical way within the framework of Islamic unity.<sup>305</sup> In this respect, the contacts of Afghani in Shii holy cities of Iraq and neighboring Persia would be of particular value. The pan-Islamic journal *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* which Afghani issued with his associate Muhammad Abduh in mid 1880s was devoted to an analysis of Great Power politics in Muslim lands, and the inner weakness of Muslims and remedies.<sup>306</sup> In his articles, Afghani had commented on schism in religion and expressed his idea that the perception of common danger and common values as well should direct Muslims to leave aside doctrinal differences

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<sup>300</sup> Hanioglu, *A History of the Late.....*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>301</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 392-396.

<sup>302</sup> Kodaman, *Sultan Abdülhamid'in Doğu Anadolu.....*, p. 26.

<sup>303</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği.....*, p. 331.

<sup>304</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought.....*, p. 113.

<sup>305</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 171; Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri.....*, p. 76.

<sup>306</sup> Jamal al-Din Afgani, "Islamic Reformism, Religious Solidarity as a basis for Political Organization, March 1884", *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Robert G. Landen (ed.), (New York, Cinnati, Toronto, London, Melbourne: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), pp.106-107; Hourani, *Arabic Thought.....*, pp. 109-110.



and traditions of hostility, thereby implying a reconciliation of Sunni and Shii sects.<sup>307</sup> Thus, that viewpoint of Afghani together with his Persian past as well as his contacts among Persian oppositionals and Shii ulama presented a valuable asset for Ottoman policies directed to Shiis.<sup>308</sup>

#### **3.1.4. Ottoman Arab Policies and the Debate on Arab Caliphate**

In explaining the motives of the Ottoman Sultan in bringing Afghani to Istanbul, apart from the aspects that Afghani could prove to be useful in an active way, it is common for researchers to attribute a certain share to the suspicions of Abdulhamid about Afghani's ideas and aims as to the growing British influence in the Arab world based on their presence in Egypt and schemes of transferring the Caliphate to Arabs. In this regard, it is commonly believed that a partial rationale for the Sultan-Caliph was to separate Afghani from British policies and keep him under control. This aspect had earlier been mentioned in the section 2.2, while analyzing the relevance of Afghani's travels and endeavors between 1870-1892 for the Ottoman Empire, and the general picture for the Arab issue of the Ottoman Empire and Afghani's earlier involvements will be discussed in this section.

The view of the Middle East had been fundamentally changed between 1878-1882 as a result of the occupation of Tunisia and Egypt by France and Britain. Especially the loss of Egypt had been a major blow for the Ottoman Empire, which the Sublime Porte tried to formulate remedies for. For Egypt, the years between 1879-1882 were marked by a series of remarkable political developments in which the Ottoman Empire played part alongside with Britain, France, Russia and local nationalist forces. First, the reign of Khedive Ismail came to an end in 1879 with financial bankruptcy and the loss of economic independence to France and Britain through the settlement of Public Debt Commission and the forced deposition of the Khedive by the Ottoman government. This event was the test of the authority Abdulhamid II still possessed in Egypt, yet in a way European intervention conditioned it. Ismail was succeeded by Tawfiq, however this coincided with the popular uprising led by Urabi Pasha who emerged as a nationalist hero. The revolt

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<sup>307</sup> Jamal al-Din Afgani, "Islamic Reformism...", pp. 108-109; Hourani, *Arabic Thought....*, p. 115

<sup>308</sup> Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam...*, pp. 201-202; Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice...", p. 205.

which started in 1881 and lasted until 1882 led, on its climax, to a British military expedition and the occupation of the country, restoring Khedive Tawfiq's authority.<sup>309</sup> The following years were those in which British administration established itself. Meanwhile, the Mahdi rebellion in Sudan, a militarily successful anti-imperialist movement between 1883-1885, became a factor for prolonged British occupation in Egypt, with Tawfiq resuming his Khedival role up to 1892 when he was to be replaced by Abbas Hilmi.<sup>310</sup>

Throughout these political turns in Egypt, the Ottoman government remained as a major actor. The Sublime Porte was caught up in the conflict of Great Powers in the Middle East and hoped to realize the evacuation of Egypt while trying to adapt to the new situation brought about by the presence of Britain in the heart of Arab lands. In fact, while Abdulhamid was interested in cultivating feelings of loyalty for himself inside and outside the Ottoman Empire, such as India, Central Asia and Arab lands, the British, through the substantial number of Muslim populations they ruled over, had also realized the potential of the Caliphate,<sup>311</sup> and sought to neutralize pro-Ottoman sentiments in India through propaganda activities via newspapers.<sup>312</sup> As such, the change of British attitude as to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire had become apparent after the Berlin Congress, and the invasion of Egypt reinforced the conviction of Abdulhamid II that Britain had started to make plans for partitioning the Ottoman lands. It was at this point that the questioning of the Caliphal position of the Ottoman Sultan began alongside with speculations on whether the legitimate claim to the Caliphate rested in Quraishi Arabs<sup>313</sup> – a debate receiving currency especially in British newspapers.<sup>314</sup> Thus, Abdulhamid came to believe that it was British who were the cause of his Caliphal legitimacy being questioned, and feared that their intention to transfer the title to the

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<sup>309</sup> William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, (Boulder : Westview Press, 1994), pp. 98-100.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, pp. 103-108.

<sup>311</sup> Yılmaz (ed.), *Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri...*, p. 71; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 49.

<sup>312</sup> Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p. 343.

<sup>313</sup> Gökhan Çetinsaya, "The Ottoman View of British Presence in Iraq and the Gulf: The Era of Abdulhamid II," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 39 No. 2 (April 2003), p. 195.

<sup>314</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 48-49; Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, p. 346.

Arab world to serve for their own policies centered in Egypt<sup>315</sup> – a land so crucial for Hamidian regime regarding the policy of *ittihad-ı Islam* at the core of which was Turkish and Arab populations.<sup>316</sup>

In sum, the Ottoman government followed the developments in Egypt from inside the framework of Hamidian pan-Islamism, and the concerns of a British-backed Arab separatism and the emergence of a rival power in the Middle East determined the maneuvers of the Ottoman government. During the events of 1879-1882, both Ismail and Tawfiq were influenced by the ongoing issue of Arab Caliphate, while there was also signs of separatist movements in Hijaz and Syria, led by Sharif families in the former and by Christians in the latter.<sup>317</sup> As for Khedive Tawfiq, he was tempted by the British support in newspapers for his Caliphacy,<sup>318</sup> whereas the deposed Ismail started anti-Ottoman and Arab propaganda from Italy.<sup>319</sup> In this picture, the Urabi rebellion of 1881-1882 was also perceived as a threat by the Ottoman government, and in this regard, that period provides important insights into the workings of Hamidian pan-Islamism and fear of Arabism.<sup>320</sup> For the Ottoman government, Urabi not only rebelled against his Khedive and Ottoman authority but also his call with constitutionalist and parliamentarianist overtones presented a threat for the regime in the Ottoman Empire. Besides, his movement could provide a model for the Arab world. As such, his disobedience could damage the prestige of the Caliph, and moreover he might go on to claim himself as an alternative Caliph. Therefore, Dervish Pasha mission to Egypt (1882) containing Dervish Pasha, a centralist statesman, and Esad Pasha (Sayyid Ahmad Asad), one of ‘Yıldız Sheikhs’, acted within the framework of Hamidian pan-Islam and, communicated to Urabi with Caliphal appeal. In a later phase, the mission, through a declaration for the Egyptian people, called for loyalty to the Caliph in the name of Islam. The declaration bearing

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<sup>315</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>316</sup> Osmanoglu, *Babam Abdülhamid...*, p. 125.

<sup>317</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 89; Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit Gerçeği*, p. 359.

<sup>318</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 291.

<sup>319</sup> Geogon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 252; Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit Gerçeği*, p. 351.

<sup>320</sup> Selim Deringil, “The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881-82”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), p. 3.

the endorsement of two foremost ‘official Arabs’ Sayyid Abu’l-Huda and Sayyid Ahmad Asad condemned Urabi as a rebel.<sup>321</sup>

The Hijaz issue and the Ottoman suspicions of the collaboration of Mecca Emirs with Britain went parallel to the Egyptian question. For the Ottoman Empire, the possession of Hijaz was the basis of Caliphal claims and therefore served as a guarantee of loyalty of Muslim subjects. Moreover, pilgrimage raised the prestige of the sultan and provided an opportunity for the spread of pan-Islamic feelings.<sup>322</sup> However, the status of Hijaz presented a unique case: it was remote from the capital, central authority was weak, and there was no presence of large troops; moreover, it was a financial burden upon the central government due to subsidies, *surre-i hümayun alayları* (procession of imperial donations), maintenance of holy places, and the need to ensure the loyalty of Arab notables in the region through gift and rewards.<sup>323</sup> Besides, the same Hijaz also brought about risks for the Ottoman government regarding the fact that colonial powers possessing Muslim subjects made use of any pretext related to *hajj* for intervention.<sup>324</sup> In addition to that, the dual authority exercised in the governance of Hijaz with Vali as the Sultan’s representative, and Amir, as the ruling local notable, handicapped the administration in the region, and provided gaps for European powers to exploit.<sup>325</sup> Thus, British attempted to have Arab Emirs on their sides with claims of Arab Caliphate to put pressure on the Ottoman government.<sup>326</sup>

It was on this background that Amir Hussein entered into relations with the British officials in 1879-1880. Hussein had witnessed in Istanbul the days of 1877-1878 war and simultaneous series of upheavals and crises as an official, and had lost his belief in the future of the Empire.<sup>327</sup> Thus, Amir Hussein initiated contact with

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<sup>321</sup> Deringil, “The Ottoman Response...”, pp. 10-20; Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 257-259.

<sup>322</sup> Tufan Buzpınar, “The Hijaz, Abdulhamid II and Amir Hussein's Secret Dealings with the British, 1877-80”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No.1 (January 1995), p. 99.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, pp. 100-101; Eraslan, *II.Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 264.

<sup>324</sup> Buzpınar, “The Hijaz, Abdulhamid II...”, p. 100.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, pp. 101-103.

<sup>326</sup> Eraslan, *II.Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 265.

<sup>327</sup> Buzpınar, “The Hijaz, Abdulhamid II...”, pp. 105-106.

British, offering them mediation in the issue of Britain-Afghanistan war that broke out in 1878, at the same moment that he tried to restrict the power of the Ottoman Vali in Hijaz. British saw the opportunity in establishing relations with him.<sup>328</sup> Especially, the second Anglo-Afghan war in 1879 prompted both sides to come closer. Rising anti-Ottoman mood in Hijaz coincided with rumors of British involvement on behalf of the Arabs. Amir proposed that he sent two emissaries to Afghanistan and made preparations for that.<sup>329</sup> However, at this point, British ambassador Layard still attached more importance to the Sultan rather than the Amir, and the relations did not go further. Moreover, Layard, upon his return from Syria in 1879, told the Sultan that there was an anti-Caliphate secret society in Syria with the aim of establishing an Arab government, rousing Ottoman suspicions of Amir Hussein.<sup>330</sup> In 1880, Amir was assassinated with unknown accomplices. It was Abdulmuttalib, an anti-British *sharif*, who succeeded him.<sup>331</sup> But the unrest continued with Abdulmuttalib as Ottoman government was occupied with alleged contacts between Urabi, Sharif Abdulmuttalib, and plans of anti-Ottoman upheaval in Arabia and Yemen.<sup>332</sup> As a result, in 1882, Ottoman authorities arrested and deposed the distrusted Abdulmuttalib.<sup>333</sup>

In sum, the Ottoman fears of the emergence of an alternative Arab Caliph and an independent Arab state was the outcome of the presence of the British in Egypt and their political schemes to undermine Ottoman authority in the region. The developments of 1878-1882 were succeeded by the remarkable 'Mahdi Rebellion' in Sudan (1883-1885), and the Arab policy of Britain championed by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a poet acting as a British agent in the region. It was also in those years that Afghani entered into the picture.

Blunt saw himself as the saviour of Arabs. He viewed the Caliphate as legitimately belonging to Arabs, and in particular to the Quraishi tribe of Mecca. For

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<sup>328</sup> Buzpinar, "The Hijaz, Abdulhamid II...", pp. 110-111.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, pp. 112-114.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, p. 106.

<sup>331</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 266.

<sup>332</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 97.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, p. 99.

him, the Caliphate represented a spiritual authority that could be extended over all Muslims of the world. In that, Britain could be the protector of the Caliphate. Blunt had influence in Egypt, Syria and Najd through the contacts he had; and he was determined to be the mediator between the British government and Arab nationalists. In fact, his scheme had managed to attract many prominent Arabs. In 1883, the issue of Mahdi rebellion in Sudan, an anti-imperial insurrection with primary significance for Britain, Egypt and the Ottoman Empire facilitated the transaction between Blunt and Afghani as the former had the idea to use the latter as an arbiter.<sup>334</sup>

In his years in Egypt up to 1879 Afghani acted against the incumbent Khedive Ismail, and he was supported by the French against the British.<sup>335</sup> Upon the succession of Ismail by Tawfiq, he was expelled from Egypt, and he spent the years between 1879-1883 in India.<sup>336</sup> His presence in Paris between 1883-1885 was marked by journalistic activities, namely by his articles in *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*.<sup>337</sup> The newspaper which he prepared with another prominent figure of the era, Muhammad Abduh, was an anti-British newspaper conveying pan-Islamic messages.<sup>338</sup> Actually, it was in 1880s that Afghani became a more devoted pan-Islamist and left aside his reform priorities aside giving emphasis to self-strengthening in the Islamic world. Thus, he came to see the Ottoman Empire as the stronghold of the Islamic world against Western expansionism, and chose to support the Caliph and Ottoman integrity to combat colonialism.<sup>339</sup> Yet, the fact that Afghani's appeals contained many elements from nationalist discourse directed to local national identifications,<sup>340</sup> and that he came into contact with British and got involved with their designs at a time when the Ottoman Empire was having a

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<sup>334</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism...*, pp. 268-270.

<sup>335</sup> Haim, "Introduction", p. 8; Mathee, "Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and ...", p. 161.

<sup>336</sup> Mathee, "Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and....", p. 168.

<sup>337</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din.....*, p. 214.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid, p. 220.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, pp. 185-186, 219; Mathee, "Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and ...", pp. 162-163.

<sup>340</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi.....*, p. 47; Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto ...", pp. 22-25.

propaganda combat with them to defend the legitimacy of their Caliphate<sup>341</sup> led to a negative Afghani image of the Ottoman government. During the Mahdi Rebellion, the British agent Blunt tried to get Afghani involved in the issue, and the latter seemed quite interested in being a mediator and corresponded with the former in a series of letters.<sup>342</sup> At that point, it is probable that Afghani, fearful of Russian expansion in Central Asia, perceived them as a more dangerous threat for Muslim world than Britain, and investigated the possibilities of an Anglo-Islamic *rapprochement*.<sup>343</sup> Though the collaboration of Afghani with the British government proved to be a short-lived one,<sup>344</sup> the diplomacy of 1885 facilitated the establishment of relations between him and the Ottoman government through intermediaries.<sup>345</sup> At this time Afghani communicated on various occasions with Ottoman officials, and even sent to the Ottoman government a letter containing his ideas on the concept of “Mahdi”. The document sent in 1885 was an informative one, and it provided comments on the impact of Mahdi’s victory against British troops and historical facts related to “Mahdism”. The Ottoman government was warned that ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha saw an opportunity in the issue of Sudanese Mahdi to win British support and get himself restored back to Khedivate by promising repression of the rebellion. The incumbent Khedive Tawfiq was also argued to be under two sided pressure from Mahdi’s advancements and the threat of permanent British invasion of Egypt. Most of the rest of the letter includes information on the history of “Mahdism” and ideas about the potentials for any successful Mahdi in the Muslim world.<sup>346</sup>

Nevertheless, the Ottoman view of Afghani was a distrustful one, as throughout the whole process he had been playing on multiple sides: the British, the Mahdi, the Egyptian nationalists, and the Caliph.<sup>347</sup> In 1883, in an article he had written in the French newspaper *l’Intransigeant* named “Mahdism”, Afghani saw in

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<sup>341</sup> Özcan, “The Press and the Anglo-Ottoman...”, p. 113.

<sup>342</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, pp. 240-246.

<sup>343</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought....*, p. 111.

<sup>344</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism....*, p. 269.

<sup>345</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, pp. 230, 246-248, 255-257.

<sup>346</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 34 / 76.

<sup>347</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, p. 267; Pakdaman, *Djamil-ed-Din Assad Abadi....*, pp. 77-111.

Mahdi a useful tool to unite Muslims comparing it to the Caliph, and furthermore, claimed that his success would attract Arabs on his side at the expense of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph and even against ‘Ottoman domination’.<sup>348</sup> At this time, Abdulhamid, as the content of a personal memorandum reveals, regarded Sudanese Mahdi as “Urabi-i Sani”, in other words as a rebel and threat against the Ottoman authority.<sup>349</sup> Similarly, the Ottoman government did not have a positive view of Afghani’s newspaper *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* contrary to its pan-Islamic overtones, because for officials the newspaper contained many harmful arguments against the Ottoman rule in its articles. In a document, an informer report dated 20 september 1884, it is claimed that the aim of the newspaper is evident in the notorious hostility of its publishers Afghani and Muhammed Abduh towards Ottoman rule. In the report, it is stated that his activities in Egypt, which included beside propaganda and lectures the founding of a society named *Cemiyet-i Vataniye-i Misriye-i Resmiye* (The Official Society of Egyptian Land), and currently in Paris with his newspaper *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, aimed at separating Arabs from Turks and inculcating anti-Ottoman ideas trying to influence the course of politics in Middle East and challenged the Caliphal legitimacy. It is also underlined that there are malicious articles arguing that Egypt is getting closer to Hijaz and India, and attempting to extend influence to Trablusgarb region through religious appeal with an intention to unite these areas under the name of Islam.<sup>350</sup>

Another document dated 28 may 1885 is related to the anti-British attitude of Afghani that was apparent throughout all of his activities in Egypt and India, and it is claimed that the anti-British tone of his newspaper attracted the attention of ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha who continued his anti-Ottoman and Islamic propaganda to win support of Egyptian people and get himself restored as the Khedive. It is noted that Ismail appreciated the anti-British stance of Afghani and promised to provide funds to support him but could not realize that. It is also noted that the newspaper

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<sup>348</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 206-208

<sup>349</sup> Deringil, “The Ottoman Response....”, p. 20.

<sup>350</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ. 9/106.



contains a series of articles that damages the reputation of Ottoman Empire in Egypt.<sup>351</sup>

Thus was formed the ambivalent Afghani view of the Ottoman government and Abdulhamid II. On the one hand he favored pan-Islamic ideas and supported the Ottoman Empire, and seemed to be useful for Hamidian pan-Islam by his appeals and reputation in the Muslim world. On the other hand, some of his journalistic activities questioned Ottoman rule, and his contacts with British in mid-1880s were sufficient to rouse Ottoman suspicions of his motives. The way the man could be of merit was apparent but the accompanying mistrust was carried to the beginning of 1890s, when Afghani reentered the scene with the new Arab policy of Britain that was perceived as a threat for the Ottoman Empire.

It was a fact that the British position in Egypt throughout 1880s did not reduce the importance of Istanbul for Britain. The Ottoman Empire remained, for British, the key not only to Egypt but also to the whole Mediterranean.<sup>352</sup> While the Ottoman government was present in Egypt after 1887 with a High Commissioner, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha (though without any recognized official status),<sup>353</sup> Salisbury government learned to use Egypt as a hold over Abdulhamid up to 1890s.<sup>354</sup> Nevertheless, Istanbul remained as the primary interest of Britain in the Mediterranean in the beginning of 1890s, as a part of British security policy of the route to India through the Suez Canal against Russia.<sup>355</sup>

The new British policy of 1890s in the Middle East was centered around the Suez Canal with the aim of dominating the territories adjacent to the Canal and the Red Sea. However, this time the plan did not include the ideal of Arab independence and Caliphate. This meant that Blunt's scheme had lost significance in Egypt, and Abdulhamid could try to make use of the new British policy for the favor of his pan-

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<sup>351</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ. 10/44.

<sup>352</sup> Keith M. Wilson, "Constantinople or Cairo: Lord Salisbury and the Partition of the Ottoman Empire 1886-1897." *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Middle East: The Anglo-Egyptian Experience 1882-1982*, Keith M. Wilson, (ed.) (London: Mansell, 1983), ..., p.26.

<sup>353</sup> L. Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive, 1892-1908", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (October 1972), p. 287.

<sup>354</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*..., p. 258.

<sup>355</sup> Wilson, "Constantinople or Cairo...", p. 27.

Islamism.<sup>356</sup> Yet, the fact that Abdulhamid considered Afghani as a dangerous man and suspected of his ongoing contacts with British coincided with the British-backed rebellion in Yemen in 1891, and Afghani was denied a travel permit in Arabia after he left Persia before travelling to London.<sup>357</sup> At that time, there were ongoing rumors that the politics of balance of power had drawn France and Russia closer and that they were putting pressure on Britain for the evacuation of Egypt.<sup>358</sup> Newspapers in Europe were also writing about these diplomatic tactics claiming that Franco-Russian cooperation in this issue was a strategy to gain for themselves the pretext to invade some other province of the Ottoman Empire in return for prolonged British occupation in Egypt. British newspapers wrote that France and Russia also acted together to reinforce the suspicions of the Ottoman Sultan of British designs upon his territories and convince him that the rebellion in Yemen was a work of the British. The articles claimed that such acts and plans of France and Russia represented a grave threat for the well-being of Europe. It was in this situation that Afghani paid a visit to the Ottoman embassy in London suggesting that he was willing to serve the Caliphal seat. He stated that he had some ideas related to the issue of Egypt, and he had plans to make use of the rivalry of European powers for the settlement of the Egyptian issue in the way Ottoman Sultan desired it.<sup>359</sup> In spite of these overtures, the Ottoman government remained distrustful of him as among the police-confiscated documents of Ibrahim Muwailihi, an Egyptian cohort of Afghani who had earlier defended Arab Caliphate and worked as the secretary of Khedive Ismail and later on turned to be a supporter of Abdulhamid in mid-1880s and acted as an intermediary of Afghani with the Ottoman government,<sup>360</sup> there had been found one stating that Afghani in London was involved in the attempt for the formation of an Arab state under the British protectorate at the same time that he was in contact with

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<sup>356</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism...*, p. 270.

<sup>357</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 349; Yılmaz (ed.), *Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>358</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, pp. 294-295; Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive", p. 287.

<sup>359</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA 14 / 92. The document is dated 20 October 1891.

<sup>360</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamel ed-Din Assad...*, p. 96, 102; Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit Gerçeği...*, p. 351; Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto...", pp. 25-26.

Abu'l-Huda, one of the chief Arab advisors of Abdulhamid.<sup>361</sup> This was at a time when Abu'l-Huda conveyed the invitation of Abdulhamid to Afghani to come to Istanbul. Soon, Afghani paid one more visit to the Ottoman Embassy in London to respond to the accusations that his collaboration with Malkoum Khan, an anti-Shah Persian dissident with Armenian origin in London, in the newspaper *Qanun* meant that he was providing his service to the Armenian cause.<sup>362</sup> The accusations had come through a *takfirnameh*, denouncing him as an infidel, published in the Persian newspaper *Akhtar* in Istanbul, which Shah Nasr al-Din had managed to get inserted as an article by providing the subsidies for it.<sup>363</sup> He explained to the Ottoman Ambassador that his journalistic activities were absolutely directed to Persia to rescue those who suffered at the hands of oppressors, in other words under the regime of Nasr al-Din Shah Qajar. He reassured that instead of desiring the separation of Armenia from the Ottoman Empire he would like to see Persia and India joining the Ottoman lands. Moreover, he stated openly that he was opposed to the British presence in Egypt and influence on Hijaz and Yemen. Furthermore, he offered once more his services to force British out of Egypt, and expressed that he expected a *müsaade-i seniyye* (imperial permit) of the Caliph to be able to succeed in his purposes.<sup>364</sup>

### 3.2 Afghani's First Year in Istanbul and an Overview of His Stay

Thus, Afghani arrived in Istanbul amid confused views of him by the Ottoman authorities and the Sultan, and there were reasons to claim that a partial motive of the Abdulhamid in inviting him related to his concerns to keep Afghani away from British policies and an Arab separatist movement. This was the aspect of the invitation of Afghani that related to pacifying him. However, Afghani's

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<sup>361</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 9 / 44. The document is dated 1 December 1891.

<sup>362</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA 15 / 26.

<sup>363</sup> Albert Kudsi-Zadeh, "Iranian Politics in the Late Qajar Period: A Review", *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (October 1969), p. 257; Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1969), p. 202.

<sup>364</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA 15 / 26. The document is dated 16 February 1892, several months before Afghani's arrival in Istanbul.

multifaceted political outlook and personal history also provided other aspects that could be full of utility when intended to be employed by the Sultan-Caliph.

The threats and opportunities originating from Istanbul managed to draw Afghani to Istanbul in 1892. He arrived in Istanbul, not to be a mastermind of pan-Islamic activities, but to operate within the already established framework of the Hamidian regime.<sup>365</sup> Besides, his activities would not be unchecked and he would have to adapt to the restraints of the Hamidian policies. As such, his high expectations from being on the side of the Caliph would prove to be too high compared to his own pan-Islamic schemes, and he would end up being partially kept passive, resembling in a sense the cases of Young Ottomans Namık Kemal and Mizancı Murad who were attracted by the Sultan but then quietened.<sup>366</sup>

However, Afghani was to assume a role similar to those of the ‘Yıldız Sheikhs’. He lived in a house provided to him by the Ottoman government in Nişantaşı,<sup>367</sup> district outside the *mabeyn* where permanent guests of the palace such as religious chiefs and advisors, and representatives of notable families from Arab lands resided.<sup>368</sup> Thus, his name is included to the list of those intermediaries who possessed political influence in their homelands, and Abdulhamid sought to maintain the loyalty of his subjects.<sup>369</sup> His house was close to the grand-vizier, pashas and other men of favor; and he lived in simple conditions. He was dressed like an ulama, and he refused any special charges and decorations.<sup>370</sup>

Afghani was at first on good terms with the Sultan and his advisers. Upon his arrival he was received well, and granted favors of the Sultan but rejected any superfluous charges or rewards.<sup>371</sup> What Afghani wanted was to devote his knowledge and experience for the pan-Islamic endeavor of the Caliph. In the year he arrived he was one of the closest persons to the court of the sultan – a fact that was

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<sup>365</sup> Khalid, “Pan-Islamism in Practice...”, pp. 203-204.

<sup>366</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 159.

<sup>367</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 80 / 120.

<sup>368</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 157; Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 38.

<sup>369</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, p. 64.

<sup>370</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 349.

<sup>371</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 374.

especially apparent in ceremonies.<sup>372</sup> However, the Ottoman government also kept him under surveillance, especially upon Persian diplomatic demands after his arrival in Istanbul due to Afghani's earlier activities concerning Persia and Shah Nasr al-Din.<sup>373</sup>

During Afghani's residence in Istanbul, the outside world heard little about his activities as compared to his earlier years in India, Egypt, Persia or Europe. He was not allowed to publish freely; and publicity about him was also discouraged.<sup>374</sup> However, his days in Istanbul were mainly marked by sessions in which he demonstrated his oratory skills and gave endless speeches to his associates and visitors.<sup>375</sup> Among the frequent visitors of Afghani's residence were his circle of Persian exiles in Istanbul, Babis, members of the Young Turks, oppositional poets and writers.<sup>376</sup> In his discourses to his visitors, Afghani presented his ideas on religion, Islamic civilization, modern polity, weakness of Islamic societies, rights of women, science, and Islamic unity.<sup>377</sup> Through these contacts he had an influence on the ideas of the Young Turks, Turkists and Islamists.<sup>378</sup>

Afghani's links with politics related to Egypt and Arabs continued for the duration of his first year in Istanbul up to 1894 when he got involved in the Shii policies of the Ottoman government. Thus, in 1892 he had visitors from Egypt whom he tried to get promoted in governmental posts and, thus, form a circle of his own.<sup>379</sup> At one point, Afghani planned with one of the most prominent of those, Abdullah Nadim, an anti-British incitement through disseminating Arabic leaflets during

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<sup>372</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad*...., p. 175.

<sup>373</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din*...., p. 375.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid*, p. 379.

<sup>375</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought*...., p. 112.

<sup>376</sup> Yalçinkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani*...., p. 67.

<sup>377</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din*...., p. 388-404. Muhammad Mahzumi Pasha's memoirs of Afghani presents Afghani's discourses and ideas in broader detail. Muhammad Mahzumi Pasha, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin Hatıraları*, pp. 56-348.

<sup>378</sup> Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afgani*...., p. 103-122; Yalçinkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani*...., pp. 82-87; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*...., p. 42; Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*...., p. 29.

<sup>379</sup> Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin Hatıraları*, p. 43; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din*...., p. 379.

pilgrimage time. However, the Sultan hesitated to proceed with this project as for him it was not possible to foresee the consequences of such an act, regarding British and Arab reaction.<sup>380</sup> Abdulhamid wanted to keep anti-British sentiments of Afghani in check.<sup>381</sup>

In Egypt, the Khedive became Abbas Hilmi Pasha in 1892. In the same year, there was a *rapprochement* between Russia and France who were the main rivals of Britain's Middle East policies. Thus, they dictated the Khedive to remain loyal to the Sultan, while on the other hand they tried to bring the Sultan into accordance with the Khedive.<sup>382</sup> In this respect, Abbas Hilmi decided, in 1893, to go to Istanbul together with a group of Egyptian notables as an act of respect and loyalty to the Caliph. However, this alarmed the British and Abdulhamid as well who was worried of the British reaction to such an open act.<sup>383</sup> In spite of the concerns, the Egyptian delegation stayed in Istanbul for a while, and it was during their visit that Afghani met with them and held speeches.

The content of Afghani's speeches were mostly on the issue of the evacuation of Egypt, and they beared pro-Ottoman tones. On one occasion, on 19 July 1893, in an imperial feast in the honour of the Egyptian notables, while the Sultan's greetings were conveyed and the notables expressed their feelings of loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan, Afghani also delivered an oration in Arabic stating his attachment to the cause of the Egyptian people and emphasized his activities in Europe to protect the rights of Egypt. In this feast, the notables were delighted to be entertained in such a pleasing way by the Sultan.<sup>384</sup>

About a week later Afghani was visited by some twenty guests from the Egyptian delegation. In this meeting, upon demand, Afghani gave information and his comments about the true duty of the Ottoman High Commissioner (*fevkalade komiser*) in Egypt. He explained that the duties of the High Commissioner were diverse, but they mainly pertained to three main functions. First, the Commissioner

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<sup>380</sup> Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh...*, p. 61.

<sup>381</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 380.

<sup>382</sup> Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive....", p. 287.

<sup>383</sup> Eraslan, *II.Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliđi...*, pp. 296-298.

<sup>384</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.MYD. 13/24.

tried to attract the public opinion in Egypt to the Caliphal seat in order to free Egyptians from British domination. Second, based on the idea that the presence of a large number of British officials in posts for the administration of Egypt was far worse than the military presence of Britain, the Commissioner was expected to spend efforts, in a concealed way, to prevent or at least diminish the assignment of British nationals to these posts. Third, making use of the presence of thousands of other foreign nationals of France, Italy, Austria, Russia and Greece in Egypt in governmental posts or in other areas, the Commissioner attempted to provoke these foreigners to complain to their embassies about British pressures and wrong-doings against themselves so that their home governments would be in conflict with Britain and in alliance with the Ottoman government at the expense of the British. Those comments of Afghani was met by the respect and pleasure of the guests, and they added that had these duties been carried earlier it would already have been possible to get the British out of Egypt.<sup>385</sup>

Several days later, Afghani had a significant meeting with the daughter of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, Nazlı Hanım.<sup>386</sup> The meeting was based on the fact that Nazlı Hanım was reputed to be pro-British whereas Afghani was a well-known adversary of Britain, and Nazlı Hanım had initiated contact with him upon his arrival in Istanbul so as to be able to exchange ideas with him. The interview, which was informed to the Palace through a police report, provides us insights into the ideas Afghani at the time regarding Egypt and Britain. In this occasion, while Nazlı Hanım defended herself saying that her admiration for the British was only about their level of civilization and that she never supported their presence in Muslim lands and desired an immediate evacuation of Egypt; Afghani gave an account of the British wrong-doings in India and commented that British never had the policy of treating

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<sup>385</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ. 27/8.

<sup>386</sup> Mustafa Fazıl Pasha was the brother of Khedive Ismail and he was in line to be the successor until a change of succession law ousted him. He started criticizing the Ottoman government, and joined with Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, Şinasi and Ali Suavi in Europe, providing them financial support. However, soon the Ottoman government tempted him by offering a high office in Istanbul, and the group split. See, Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, p. 197-216; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey...*, pp. 153-157. Nazlı Hanım was the europeanized daughter of Fazıl Pasha, who was married to Halil Şerif, a reformist minister of foreign affairs. This marriage had served to enforce the bond between three constitutionalists: Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, Halil Şerif and Midhat Pasha. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire...*, p. 289. Interestingly, Afghani's visit to Nazlı Hanım was most probably a hint of his earlier contacts from his first visit to Istanbul in 1869-1870.

with their home civilization to the people of their dominions but their colonial policies involved securing their position and degrading these subjects. He claimed that they would do the same in Egypt once they complete its annexation. Therefore, Afghani urged an immediate British evacuation by any means, whereas Nazlı Hanım claimed that it would not be possible to expel Britain by *gavga ve gürültü*, meaning forceful means or insurrection, rather than diplomacy.<sup>387</sup>

Thus, for the duration of the first year of his stay in Istanbul, Afghani remained interested in Egyptian issue in an anti-British and pro-Ottoman manner. At this point he was on good terms with Abdulhamid and his confidants. The second year of his stay, 1894, would mostly be concentrated on some other issue within the absolute context of Hamidian rule, the Shii policies, that would prove to be the case in which Afghani could assume an active role and make use of his past experience and contacts for the service of the Hamidian pan-Islamism.

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<sup>387</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 12/4.



## CHAPTER 4

### AFGHANI AND OTTOMAN SHII POLICIES

Afghani had accepted the invitation to come to Istanbul having in his mind the potentials of being on the same side with the Caliph. This meant that he had the expectation to execute his pan-Islamic plans, signs of which were apparent in his appeal to the Sultan in 1892. Though the Sultan never had the intention to enter into any radical pan-Islamic project eyeing political union among Muslims, he had invited Afghani not only to keep him under check but also to make use of him – in policies within his own pan-Islamic framework.

Afghani had spent the years between 1886 and 1891 mostly focusing on Persian politics. At a time when foreign dominance was growing to extreme degrees in Persia, Afghani tried to bring about reform and then engaged into anti-Western and anti-Shah propaganda. His two trips to Persia, in 1886-1887 and 1889-1891, and the years in between that he spent in Russia brought about his contacts with Persian intellectuals, ulama, government officials, and notables. Especially his role in the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892 set the ground for his engagement in Persian politics as an intermediary among secular oppositionals, religious figures, tradesmen, reform-minded statesmen and popular masses. He stood as an important link between Persia, Istanbul, Shii Iraq and London, coordinating the opposition. Therefore, he had arrived in Istanbul bearing an important asset of ties with various actors of politics in Persia in the beginning of 1890s.

Abdulhamid was aware of the potentials of using Afghani in the Shii policies of the Ottoman Empire. In 1894, with a *muhtıra-ı humayun* (imperial memorandum), which will be presented in the following sections, the Sultan encouraged Afghani to participate in the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* together with the Persian exiles in Istanbul which Afghani formed as a circle for propaganda on behalf of the Caliph. In this respect, Abdulhamid counted on Afghani's contacts among two relevant political groups: secular radicals in Istanbul and the Shii ulama in Iraq.

## 4.1 Afghani's Persian Antecedents

Afghani's political involvements in Persia coincided with the reign of Nasr al-Din Shah Qajar which actually lasted for nearly 50 years up to 1896 and dominated the second half of the nineteenth century. In this sense, whether he was on good terms with the Shah or opposed him, it was the workings and realities of Nasr al-Din Shah regime that Afghani had his Persian antecedents in.

In general, Nasr al-Din Shah Qajar's reign was marked by autocratic rule, several reform attempts, growing foreign domination in politics and economics as well as British-Russian rivalry, and consequent popular discontent. Especially the series of concessions provided to Britain and Russia, and the emergence of opposition movements on religious, popular, and intellectual fronts became decisive for the path that Nasr al-Din Shah's reign followed.

### 4.1.1 Nasr al-Din Shah's Reign, up to 1892

Great Power politics were always a dominant factor in Persian politics. The traditional rivals Russia and Britain had been exerting their influence in the north and south of the country respectively, dividing Persia into two zones. The two sides tried to check each other, not allowing the other extensive territorial gains; while also restricting the independence of Iranian government; and consultations with Russia and Britain became a custom.<sup>388</sup> Russia's fundamental aims were to make northern Iran an area of Russian influence and gain more territory and an outlet to the Persian Gulf.<sup>389</sup> On the other hand, Britain's aim was to keep an independent and well-administered Persia as a buffer state between India and expansionist Russia.<sup>390</sup> Thus, while Russia marched southwards in 1870s with an interest in northern provinces of Persia, British were concerned with their own zone of influence.<sup>391</sup> It was in this way that the strong mutual desire between the two Great Powers that Persia's

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<sup>388</sup> Nikki Keddie and Mehrdad Amanat, "Iran under the Late Qajars, 1848-1922", *Cambridge History of Iran: from Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, Vol 7, Peter Avery, Gavin Hambley and Charles Melville (eds.), (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 179-180.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid*, p. 180.

<sup>390</sup> Shaul Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars: 1858-1896*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1978), p. 207.

<sup>391</sup> Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1999), pp. 38-39.

independence was maintained.<sup>392</sup> Yet, through the same balance-of-power dynamics the two states sought to influence the course of Persian politics, tried to appoint ministers friendly to themselves and secured privileges for their nationals so that the internal affairs of Persia could not be held separate from relations with Britain and Russia.<sup>393</sup>

In this respect, the protection of the integrity of Persia was a matter of balancing diplomacy. Regarding British-Russian rivalry, it was a fact that the close-by Russian influence was more dominant before 1888. Therefore, already back in 1860s, Iranian ministers were trying to play British against Russians, through opening up the country to British economic penetration via concessions.<sup>394</sup> The idea was to foster commercial links with Britain and give them large stakes in the preservation of the country; and this was directly related to the development and better administration of Persia: through time, it gradually became apparent that British support and reforms were inter-dependent.<sup>395</sup>

The initial reform movement in Persia came in 1860s with a group of statesmen the most prominent of whom were Malkoum Khan and Mushir al-Dewleh, both ministers of Nasr al-Din Shah. Malkoum Khan came up in the beginning of 1860s with reform proposals contained in his essays, demanding major modifications in the existing system of government, and calling for the beginning of a new phase for Persia.<sup>396</sup> His reform agenda corresponded, in a sense, to the reforms in the Ottoman Empire as he had been in Istanbul during the days of the Imperial Rescript of 1856.<sup>397</sup> Besides, parallel to his reform essays he realized the establishment of *faramushkhaneh*, a form of political organization taking masonic lodges as the model that was intended to serve as a quasi-parliamentarian organ. The *faramushkhaneh* as a support for Malkoum's legal, political and administrative reform projects would

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<sup>392</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 181.

<sup>393</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 205.

<sup>394</sup> Nikki Keddie, *Qajar Iran and the Rise of Reza Khan, 1796-1925*, (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999), pp. 37-41.

<sup>395</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 210.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>397</sup> Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions...*, p. 75.

facilitate the coming together of reform-minded individuals and exchange of ideas. Though commenced under the auspices of the Shah it was to be prohibited and dissolved soon in 1861 amid suspicions of the Shah and Russians.<sup>398</sup> Next, Malkoum Khan moved on to Istanbul receiving an official post and found the opportunity to experience the reform atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire for a duration of nearly ten years. During this stay he established contacts with a number of Ottoman reformers such as Ali Pasha and Münif Pasha, and also attended sessions of Ottoman Scientific Society and made contributions to the journal of New Ottoman Society.<sup>399</sup> Malkoum Khan's associate in the reform movement of 1860s and 1870s, Mushir al-Dewleh, with whom he united in 1872 upon return to Persia also had the experience of witnessing Ottoman reforms of the Tanzimat Era in Istanbul. These men believed in the possibility of developing similar reform plans for Persia, introducing institutions similar to Ottoman ones; and their main idea was that drawing foreign powers into greater involvement in the country would be more beneficial – a fact supporting the view that British support and reforms were inter-dependent.<sup>400</sup> Thus, Malkoum Khan and Mushir al-Dewleh gathered around them a group of people who shared common modernization tendencies.<sup>401</sup>

The reform movement of Malkoum and Mushir al-Dewleh received Nasr al-Din Shah's support after the Shah visited Midhat Pasha governed Baghdad in 1871 to witness his implementations there and his first trip to Europe in 1872 during which he was impressed by material advancements of the West.<sup>402</sup> Reuter Concession (1872) had come, at such a point, out of the necessity to ensure the commitment of Britain in the protection and development of Persia and to get British guarantee of Iran's territorial integrity and independence. The Concession, granted to a British subject Baron Julius de Reuter, was one of complete control over the exploitation of resources of Persia including the rights for all factories, minerals, irrigation works,

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<sup>398</sup> Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*....., pp. 85-188.

<sup>399</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy*....., p. 27.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 45-47, 88, 93.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81; Nasr al-Din Shah, "The West through the Eyes of a Ruler", *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Robert G. Landen (ed.), (New York, Cinnati, Toronto, London, Melbourne: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), pp. 78-81.

agricultural improvements, transportation, and any form of infrastructural modernization and economic undertaking.<sup>403</sup> In this respect, Reuter Concession was an extensive counter-move to balance rising Russian influence with British. At the same time, it matched with the intention of the Shah to realize piecemeal measures to avoid fundamental administrative and financial reform.<sup>404</sup> However, the Concession was met with widespread opposition in Persia, involving government officials, army commanders and members of ulama based on anti-foreign attitude and worries about loss of independence. Besides, Russian involvement was considerable. The cancellation of Reuter Concession in 1873 and the resulting overthrow of Mushir al-Dewleh pointed to the effectiveness of a coalition of ulama and government officials as well as it demonstrated Russian opposition to any reform movement under British patronage.<sup>405</sup> During the decade after 1873, Nasr al-Din attempted to go on with the reforms initiated by Mushir al-Dewleh. The focus was on state organs, and there were experiments of reorganizations. But reforms generally failed due to the autocratic tendencies of the Shah and resistance of ministers.<sup>406</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian-British rivalry over the control of Persia continued with the series of mining, navigation and financial concessions both sides managed to extract from the Persian government,<sup>407</sup> with Russian influence being more dominant, coming up to 1888.<sup>408</sup> This matched with the accomplishment of Russian expansionism in Central Asian mid 1880s and the beginning of Russian military pressure to Persia from the north, which became a significant component of Persian political thinking.<sup>409</sup> During this period, Persian government could not count on Britain because the memory of the opposition to Reuter Concession was alive, and the Shah did not want to annoy conservative elements in the country. In addition, he

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<sup>403</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 187.

<sup>404</sup> A. K. S. Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie: Prelude to Revolution", *Studia Islamica*, No. 22, (1965), p. 119.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid, p. 120; Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 115-119.

<sup>406</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>407</sup> Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions...*, pp. 77-79.

<sup>408</sup> Keddie, *Qajar Iran...*, p. 41.

<sup>409</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 207.

was also afraid that once launched fully reforms might get out of control and undermine his authority.<sup>410</sup>

This general picture was to change with the appointment of Drummond Wolff in 1888 as the head of British Legation in Persia in order to strengthen British position, and the beginning of the real concessions zeal. On the Shah side, the appointment of the ambitious Wolff represented an opportunity to balance the Russian position with the British.<sup>411</sup> As such, it also corresponded to the policy of increasing Western commitment in Persia followed by Amin al-Sultan, the chief minister of the Shah, that rose to power in 1880s and followed a two-sided policy towards Britain and Russia and exploited their support and protection against one another to increase his power.<sup>412</sup>

Wolff arrived in Tehran with elaborate plans to achieve the economic development of Persia. He believed in the significance of British investment and committent to Persia; however, he was aware of the possibility of the Russian opposition. His unique style was that he proposed an entente with Russia so that Iran could be mutually exploited. Commissions and conventions with Russian officials were formed to regulate the triangular relationship, while the Shah was expected to issue laws and bring about necessary reforms to pave the way for the concessions. In this regard, British idea was that Persian people and bourgeoisie were not powerful enough to bring about change, therefore it was Britain's mission to press for reforms. As a consequence, the reform plan was rather to benefit British investors who were to be attracted to Persia. Wolff tried to convince Amin-al Sultan and the Shah that what was needed to counterbalance Russia was to respond to their northern zone of influence by opening up southern Persia to Britain. Therefore, Wolff pressed that reform laws are crucial to open up Persia and make its integrity the interest of all commercial and maritime nations. One such reform maneuver was the Proclamation for the Security of Life and Property promulgated in the year of Wolff's arrival. This was an attempt to introduce a sound economic environment via state guarantee of private property and investments, and to provide checks for Shah's administration as

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<sup>410</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 208.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid*, p. 237.

<sup>412</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", pp. 190-191; A. Reza Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of Central Authority in Qajar Iran: 1871-1896*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp.125-126.

well. Yet, Russians were not happy to see the English influence rise. The two powers represented two different political and social systems. Britain was capitalist, industrialized and progressive, while Russians were pre-capitalistic, less than industrialized. British were more receptive to change and whatever reform they aimed to bring about in Persia was more compatible with their mode. Thus the Russians were resisting reforms.<sup>413</sup>

Despite the fact that supplementary administrative mechanisms were lacking in Persia, and in spite of apparent Russian opposition, reforms and concessions continued with the opening up of Karun River to navigation, and the establishment of the Imperial Bank of Persia. Meanwhile, Russians did not miss the chances of obtaining their own share from the concessions and received bank and road concessions. In addition, there was the Cossack Brigade, the only regular army in Persia, that was founded earlier by Russian officers upon Shah's request in 1879. All of these combined, the period of concessions from 1888 to 1890, brought about increasing manipulation of Persia by Russian and British economic and political pressures. Moreover, the foundations for the opening up of Persia to British influence being laid in a way not experienced earlier, Wolff mission went on to secure pledges for further commitments, the most significant of which was the Tobacco Concession.<sup>414</sup>

The Concession granted in 1890 covered the production, sale and export of all tobacco in Iran for a period of fifty years.<sup>415</sup> Due to the nature of tobacco as an already established product with extensive production and consumption,<sup>416</sup> the effects of the concession was immediately felt by large masses; and the popular discontent with Shah's autocratic rule and the perceived threat of Persia losing independence under Western dominance combined with Russian opposition to growing British commitment in the country to turn the widespread reaction to a mass

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<sup>413</sup> Shahbaz Shahnava, *Britain and the Opening up of South-West Persia, 1880-1914: A Study in Imperialism and Economic Dependence*, (London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), pp. 13-22.

<sup>414</sup> Shahnava, *Britain and the Opening up of...*, pp. 23-28; Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late..." pp. 190-192

<sup>415</sup> Chris Paine and Erica Schoenberger, "Iranian Nationalism and the Great Powers: 1872-1954", *MERIP Reports*, No. 37, (May 1975), p. 4.

<sup>416</sup> Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions...*, p. 77.

movement of protest. The Tobacco Protest, 1890-1892, involving ulama, modernists, merchants and townspeople resulted in the abolishment of the concession, and demonstrated the effectiveness of ulama-led coalitions and the importance of Russian influence over the politics of Persia. Thus, the most important consequence of the Wolff mission turned out to be the rise of anti-foreign sentiments and coordinated movements among various interest groups in the society alongside with Russian dominance of Persia.<sup>417</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Afghani's Involvement in Persian Politics

Afghani's Persian antecedents included his two stays in the country, 1886-1887 and 1889-1891, and the time he spent in Russia between 1887-1889 with activities related to Persia, and in Ottoman Iraq and London during the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892. Throughout this period he engaged in anti-Western and anti-Shah propaganda, and established relations among secular modernizers and ulama. His role was significant in the prominent events of the era, and he helped in shaping the mass movements and building radical-religious relations.

Afghani's arrival in Persia in 1886 was through an invitation of the Shah upon the encouragement of Itimad al-Saltaneh, the Shah's minister of press and publications.<sup>418</sup> Itimad al-Saltaneh had presented a copy of *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, the newspaper Afghani issued with Muhammad Abduh in Paris between 1883-1885, to Nasr al-Din, and Afghani was invited to Persia to issue a newspaper. On this first visit Afghani entered into relations with reform-minded figures.<sup>419</sup> First, he stayed in Isfahan and met Zill al-Sultan, the eldest son of the Shah, and his host was Hajji Sayyah, a modernizer whom Afghani had met in 1870 in Istanbul and won the loyalty of.<sup>420</sup> Zill al-Sultan was interested in reform and his court included supporters of reform, among whom there were Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi, two of Afghani's most important associates later in Istanbul. Therefore, Zill al-Sultan was a point of contact for modernizers and Amin al-Dewleh, a chief minister

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<sup>417</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies*, (London: Tauris, 1987), p. 240; Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 196.

<sup>418</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 271-274.

<sup>419</sup> Hamid Algar, *Religion and State...*, p. 198.

<sup>420</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 274; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 123.



of the Shah with liberal ideas, and Malkoum Khan tried to enlist his support. Britain also demonstrated its interest in cultivating him as a friendly prospective ruler in their southern zone of influence.<sup>421</sup> Second, Afghani passed to Tehran and his host became Hajji Muhammad Hasan Amin al-Zarb, a wealthy merchant.<sup>422</sup> In Tehran, Afghani had his initial engagement with the Shah, but British interventions against him and his preaching of reform made the Shah turn against him. Thus, Afghani soon left Persia for Russia.<sup>423</sup>

The trip to Russia was partly to obtain Russian favor for Zill al-Sultan.<sup>424</sup> Besides, Afghani also had a correspondence with Amin al-Zarb about a proposed railroad construction and economic reforms, an issue in which Afghani probably acted as an intermediary with the Russian government.<sup>425</sup> Afghani also saw in his presence in Russia a mission of establishing good relations on behalf of Persia. Meanwhile, he also criticized Shah and his policies especially those during the concessions craze of Wolff mission. Therefore, he was not received well by the Shah's party during their visit to Russia as part of the Shah's European trip in 1889. In sum, the outcome of Afghani's two-year stay in Russia was nothing substantial.<sup>426</sup>

However, within the same year Afghani met with Shah's party in Munich, and upon an appointment by Amin al-Sultan visited Russia once more before returning to Persia. Afghani presence in these years in Russia was significant regarding the fact that it was a time when British dominance in Persia disturbed Russia. In this respect, it is possible that he was sent to soothe the Russians. He believed that Amin al-Sultan assigned him duties to make it up with Russia on behalf of him.<sup>427</sup> Yet, when Afghani tried to report to Amin al-Sultan upon his return from Russia, he received unexpected negative attitude from the Shah and Amin al-Sultan. Afghani still managed to demonstrate his good intentions and tried to obtain

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<sup>421</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 223-224; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 275.

<sup>422</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 275-276.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 277-282.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid*, p. 284.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 287-288.

<sup>426</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 290-305.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 306-309; Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 194.

governmental post and responsibilities in Persia. He intended to edit a newspaper but his anti-British tone frightened Amin al-Sultan and the Shah. This coincided with British claims that Afghani acted on behalf of Russians and engaged in pro-Russian propaganda. At this time Afghani probably hoped that Persia should balance rising British domination with Russian support. Meanwhile, he organized secret meetings in Tehran for reform, in which many prominent reformist statesmen were present. He gave out pan-Islamist and constitutionalist messages. He also managed to establish contacts with prominent members of the ulama. But, Afghani was not successful in influencing the government. Nevertheless, when ordered to leave Iran, he tried to accomplish his ends by other means. In his view, the situation in Iran was ripe for his appeals, considering foreign dominance, lack of reforms, autocratic practices of the Shah, and economic deterioration. Afghani was aware of the prevailing mood among the ulama, the trader community, and secular radicals.<sup>428</sup> Thus, Afghani took refuge at the shrine of Shahzadeh Abd al-Azim following the practice of *bast*, an asylum taken by opposition factors.<sup>429</sup> There he participated in more direct attacks on the Persian government, until the Shah ordered that he was seized by force and ridden to the Ottoman border in January 1891.<sup>430</sup> His expulsion was met by Russian complaints who claimed British instigation, and made the Shah an object of hostility.<sup>431</sup> Afghani reached Baghdad, but the Ottoman government enforced his move out of there and he passed on to Basra. At this point, the Shah requested that Afghani be kept out of Basra to prevent him getting into contact with Shii leaders in shrine cities.<sup>432</sup>

Meanwhile, the Tobacco Protest had assumed the form of mass movement. The widespread popular discontent with growing foreign economic and political dominance had assumed different dimensions with the Wolff mission and Shah's successive concessions; and against the Tobacco Regie, the reaction of ulama and secular reformers combined with Russian opposition to rising British influence to

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<sup>428</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 310-320; Algar, *Religion And State .....*, p. 199.

<sup>429</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, p. 214.

<sup>430</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 321-322.

<sup>431</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamaled-Din Assad...*, p. 143; Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh...*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>432</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 330-332.

bring about the protests. In this regard, the chief leaders of the movement were the Shii ulama of Iran and Iraq, who were displeased with growing foreign dominance in Persia and felt their position under threat. The fact that they could assume a leading role in the protests rested in their relative independence from Persian government both financially and ideologically.<sup>433</sup> At the same time they had ties with the merchant community in the country who were the primary losers of the Tobacco concession.<sup>434</sup> Besides, the merchant class also had traditional links with bureaucrats and ensured their commitment in the issue.<sup>435</sup> The fact that Persian regie was unfavorable compared to the Ottoman one founded in 1884 added up to general discontent.<sup>436</sup>

Moreover, Russian opposition to the Tobacco Regie was manifest from the beginning.<sup>437</sup> In 1887, Nasr al-Din Shah had signed an agreement with the Russians under which he assured them that he would not sign any agreements, concessions, permits for the infrastructural development of Persia with any foreign firms without Russia's consent.<sup>438</sup> Thus, Russian minister protested *in toto* against the Tobacco concession, and did not recognize its legal status.<sup>439</sup> Besides, during the protests, Russian government displayed its opposition openly; and put pressure on the Persian government, trying to stir up the merchant community.<sup>440</sup> Meanwhile, British officials tried to assure Russian merchants that their interests would not be hurt.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din*..., p. 336; Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy*..., p. 289.

<sup>434</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy*..., p.241; Keddie, *Qajar Iran*..., p. 44.

<sup>435</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy*..., pp. 32-33.

<sup>436</sup> Kuds-Zadeh, "Iranian Politics in the Late....", p. 256; Nikki Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892*, (London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 75; Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie....", pp. 128-130.

<sup>437</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia*..., p. 225.

<sup>438</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy*..., p. 234.

<sup>439</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie....", p. 122.

<sup>440</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia*..., pp. 226-227.

<sup>441</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie....", p. 126.

They avoided coming into collision with any Russian subjects as it would give Russians a reason to make official complaints about the concession.<sup>442</sup>

Protests against the Tobacco Regie had emerged in major cities in Iran in the beginning in the spring of 1891. Ulama was active preaching against the concession. An alliance of merchants, peasants and ulama was apparent. At that point, a prominent ulama of Shiraz, Sayyid Ali Akbar, was ordered, by the Shah, to leave Iran. This caused excitement in bazaars and mosques. While the expelled Sayyid Ali Akbar went to Karbala in Ottoman Iraq, the first mass protests broke out in Tabriz.<sup>443</sup> The fact that the first all-out opposition to the Concession came from Tabriz and it became a center of protest was significant because this city was under strong Russian influence, especially regarding the governor and the *mujtahids* therein. It had contacts with Russian Azerbaijan.<sup>444</sup> Anonymous notices appeared in Tebriz, urging people to stand against the Tobacco Concession, with rumours of Russian hand in affairs. It was alleged that the Russian consul had assured the *mujtahids* of protection against the Shah in any case.<sup>445</sup> Thus, through a petition to the Shah from Tabriz, ulama called for the cancellation of the concession, and declared that should the Shah not act accordingly they would apply to Russians.<sup>446</sup> In this respect, whereas Russians tried to provoke ulama against the Persian government and Britain, ulama with their own motives made use of Russian backing.

In sum, the parties of the conflict had become clear. British and Russian rivalry was parallel to mass opposition directed by ulama. Besides, radical reformers were also active. Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Malkoum Khan were involved in fostering the popular movement.<sup>447</sup> On the one hand, Akhtar, a Persian newspaper issued by anti-Shah exiles in Istanbul, wrote against the Regie, and on the other hand Malkoum continued his propaganda from London with his newspaper *Qanun*, both shaping public opinion in Persia. In addition, Afghani, who had been expelled from

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<sup>442</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, p. 230.

<sup>443</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 341-342; Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie...", pp. 127-128.

<sup>444</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion...*, p. 74.

<sup>445</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, pp. 235-237.

<sup>446</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie...", pp. 133-134.

<sup>447</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Regie...", pp. 138-139.

Persia, had left behind a secret society in operation who allegedly participated in propaganda activities via distribution of placards in Tehran and Tabriz.<sup>448</sup> Meanwhile, Afghani was also quite committed in the Ottoman Iraq. Despite a promise extracted from the governor of Ottoman Baghdad to prevent Afghani contact the ulama at Atabat, he managed to see Sayyid Ali Akbar who was similarly expelled from Persia in Basra. There, he gave a letter to the Sayyid to be conveyed to Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the chief Shii *mujtahid* (jurisprudent) in Samarra,<sup>449</sup> which became crucial in Sayyid's encouragement of Shirazi and coming out of his fatwa that was the peak of the Tobacco Protest, leading to the cancellation of the concession.<sup>450</sup> Afghani's letter focused on growing British and Russian domination over Persia, incorporated religious and anti-foreign tones, and criticized the concessions policy of the Shah. It was a call to the ulama to take action as the leaders of the people of Iran against the Shah. Interestingly, the letter also hinted to cooperation from the Ottoman Sultan, foreshadowing the later pan-Islamic campaign of 1894 to be undertaken by Afghani and his associates.<sup>451</sup>

Thus, Afghani was not the sole leader of the opposition, but he was one of the leading figures regarding the fact that his letter had been influential over the chief *mujtahid* of Samarra. In addition, he had written many letters to other ulama of Iran and Iraq, that put him into relations with prominent Shii clergy.<sup>452</sup> It is striking that Afghani also had extensive contacts among modernizers in Persia and abroad. It was in this respect that Afghani's real significance can be understood: the formation of religious-radical alliances which became a recurring feature in Iranian politics in 1890s, and Afghani being one of the main forgers of this alliance. Secular modernizers who had been negative towards ulama had changed their view in 1880s with their loss of hope of persuading governmental men for reforms, and had come to

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<sup>448</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 336-337, 341. For the ban on Akhtar in entering Persia see also Kudsi-Zadeh, "Iranian Politics....", p. 252..

<sup>449</sup> Algar, *Religion and State...*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid, p. 210; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 342.

<sup>451</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution.....*, pp. 15-22.

<sup>452</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din.....*, pp. 346-347.

see the potentials of winning over ulama for their purposes.<sup>453</sup> Moreover, new methods of propaganda such as clandestine organizations, dissemination of placards and smuggling of oppositional newspapers were introduced by Afghani and his associates during the protest, and were to form a model for later movements.<sup>454</sup>

The Tobacco concession was abolished in January, 1892.<sup>455</sup> The strength of the opposition formed by the alliance of ulama, merchants, modernizers and the townspeople had challenged the Shah's authority and forced the government to change its policies<sup>456</sup>. Similarly, it had also demonstrated the determination of Russia in defending their position in Persia against Britain.<sup>457</sup> The result was that the Shah and his chief minister Amin al-Sultan had to switch to a pro-Russian policy to be able to preserve their authority.<sup>458</sup> Therefore, despite the fact that the Tobacco Protest did not bring about an attempt by the ulama to overthrow the Qajars, Russian domination in the aftermath of 1892 resulted in the reemergence of ulama politics and religious-radical alliances that led to the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>459</sup>

Towards the end of the Tobacco Protest, Afghani had travelled to London, where he united with Malkoum Khan. Together, they engaged in propaganda against the Shah, and Afghani contributed with his articles to the newspaper *Qanun*. He also managed to get his letter to the chief mujtahid published. He also provided statements against Iran in British newspapers, about which Persian ambassador in London reported back.<sup>460</sup> At that point, Afghani and Malkoum were seeking British public support on behalf of Persian reformers and the protest movement.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Nikki Keddie, "The Origins of Religious Radical Alliance in Iran", *Past and Present*, No. 34, (Jul 1966), pp. 70-73; Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 193.

<sup>454</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 353; Algar, *Religion and State...*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>455</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 153.

<sup>456</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 354.

<sup>457</sup> Kudsi-Zadeh, "Iranian Politics in the Late...", p. 253. In fact, Persian government believed that the chief mujtahid had issued his fatwa on the advice of the Russians, and they protected him.

<sup>458</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, p. 359.

<sup>459</sup> Algar, *Religion and State...*, p. 221.

<sup>460</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 355-356.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid*, p. 359, 362.

Moreover, Afghani went on to send appeals to the leading ulama of Iran demonstrating that he had concentrated on the ways to depose the Shah, where as Shah's chief minister Amin al-Sultan communicated with the chief mujtahid Shirazi to disrepute Afghani and Malkoum. As such, Persian government had also concentrated efforts to get British expel Afghani.<sup>462</sup> In fact, it was ambiguous whether the fact that Afghani and Malkoum acted freely in Britian was a tactic to put pressure on Persian government to keep them in line with British policies.<sup>463</sup>

Activities from abroad to oppose Shah Nasr al-Din continued even after the repeal of the Tobacco Concession. From London, Malkoum and his newspaper *Qanun* were influential over Persian people, while Afghani soon went to Istanbul and formed a circle with anti-Shah reformers who were on exile in Istanbul.<sup>464</sup>

Regarding Malkoum and his newspaper, it is possible to argue that his stance resembled that of Afghani and radicals in Istanbul on many aspects. *Qanun* had started to come out in 1889 after Malkoum settled in London. The newspaper lasted for about 7 years and became a main voice of opposition to Nasr al-Din Shah regime.<sup>465</sup> The secretary and distributor of the newspaper was Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, the editor of *Akhtar* in Istanbul and a close associate of Afghani.<sup>466</sup> Malkoum Khan's main critics focused on Iran's losing of territorial and economic sovereignty on different fronts in 1890s.<sup>467</sup> Besides, the newspaper was also a medium by which Malkoum expressed his broader views about reforms. Initially, Malkoum had not searched for ways to accomodate his proposed institutions and reforms with Islam, and he had a pragmatic view of religion.<sup>468</sup> However, through the developments of 1880s and the beginning of 1890s he realized the potential of religion. Whereas his earlier appeals had been to governmental men, he later began to appeal non-official and religious persons. Thus, he sought to provide Islamic guise

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<sup>462</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 364-368.

<sup>463</sup> Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh...*, p. 60.

<sup>464</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 196.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid*, p. 193; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 148.

<sup>466</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 156.

<sup>467</sup> Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions...*, p. 40-41

<sup>468</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 15-16.

for his proposed reforms, and prove the compatibility of modern laws with Islam.<sup>469</sup> He had appreciated the power of Shii ulama and observed their conflicting position with the Qajar dynasty, and intended to harness them for his reform movement.<sup>470</sup> In line with that, he presented Shii ulama as the legal owner of the government while the incumbent ruler and his government were usurpers.<sup>471</sup>

The years of 1890s were also a period when many opposition newspapers, books and translations were published by secular reformers. In this era, ideas about religion, the state, the role of government and individual-society relationship were reformulated. These reformulations were stated with stronger emphasis, more frequency, with greater relevance to the existing situation in Persia and with an eye to appeal to a larger audience.<sup>472</sup> Malkoum had his share in this process with his *Qanun* that had an important impact on the educated and intellectual elite of Iran regarding the promotion of constitutional ideas.<sup>473</sup> Moreover, passages in the newspaper contained nationalist overtones, employing new vocabulary of nationalist wording and calling for a national plan in line with the idea prevalent among reformers that the main drive for change had to come from inside the country and this had to go through the emergence of national consciousness.<sup>474</sup> Furthermore, Malkoum's wish to create a quasi-parliamentarian political organization to bring reform-minded people together became once more apparent, after his *faramushkhaneh* in 1860s, with his *Ademiyyet* society (The League of Humanity) providing a guideline for secret societies that would be active throughout the series of opposition movements.<sup>475</sup>

Afghani's collaboration with Malkoum did not go unheeded by the Ottoman government. The archive documents of 1891, as mentioned in earlier sections, provide notes on Afghani's activities in Istanbul as well as his interaction with

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<sup>469</sup> Keddie, "The Origins of Religious-Radical...", p. 73.

<sup>470</sup> Algar, *Religion and State...*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>471</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 339-340.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 305-306.

<sup>473</sup> Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the...*, p. 28.

<sup>474</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 321; Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions...*, p. 41-45.

<sup>475</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 322-325.



Ottoman officials throughout the phase of his invitation to Istanbul. In general, the Ottoman government did not appreciate Afghani's cooperation with Malkoum.<sup>476</sup> This most probably rested in his constitutionalist ideas and unyielding reformist stance. In fact, Malkoum recognized Abdulhamid as the Caliph – a political and religious leader.<sup>477</sup> Nonetheless he was less in accord with the pan-Islamic ideas that Afghani and Persian oppositionals in Istanbul held against the Shah and on behalf of the Sultan. This fact was due to Malkoum's conviction that the combination of political and spiritual leadership in the person of Abdulhamid was a hindrance to political reform in the Ottoman Empire, and also his beliefs about Sunni-Islam's congruence with reform.<sup>478</sup>

On one particular occasion, the text of a speech of Malkoum and Afghani was printed in *Illustrated London News* under the title "The Persian Crisis", giving an indication of Malkoum's and Afghani's reform program for the regeneration of Persia. The main idea of the text was that religion occupied a central place in Eastern societies and therefore a revival of those societies could be achieved through a reform of religion.<sup>479</sup> This was on the same day reported by an Ottoman consular document which informed the government that Afghani was in an attempt to bring about religious reform and prepare and release "a new Koran" incorporating new principles so as to abolish polygamy and disclaim compulsory usage of headcover.<sup>480</sup> These were in line with Afghani's intention to reform Islam and find "the true Islam", a new interpretation of the faith,<sup>481</sup> and he was presented as the Luther of Islam; though Malkoum later denied the term "new Koran".<sup>482</sup> The same document also noted that Afghani had recently given a speech about Persia and Nasr al-Din Shah's reign, describing the Shah as the oppressor of many innocent people and calling for British intervention. He also stated that in case of British reluctance Persians would

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<sup>476</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, p. 375.

<sup>477</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy....*, p. 213, 232.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 321-322.

<sup>479</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, pp. 357.

<sup>480</sup> BOA, Y.PRK. EŞA. 14/110. The document is dated 19 December 1891.

<sup>481</sup> Algar, *Religion and State....*, p. 197.

<sup>482</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din....*, p. 358-359.

be compelled to apply to Russia for help. Moreover, Afghani also commented on the way he was expelled from Persia.<sup>483</sup>

During his stay in London before coming to Istanbul, Afghani also had associations with an interesting figure named Habib Anthony Salmoné, a Syrian jew. Beside the fact that his name had been noted as Afghani's translator in the speech mentioned above, he was the editor of the newspaper, *Ziya ul-Hafiqin* (The Light of the Two Hemispheres), in which two of Afghani's appeals sent to the Shii ulama for deposing the Shah were printed.<sup>484</sup> It is interesting that an Ottoman archival document from several weeks earlier mentions of Salmoné as being in communication with Sheikh Abu'l-Huda, an important religious confidant of the Sultan, and Münif Pasha, a reformer from Young Ottoman circles and the incumbent minister of education, and that he had conveyed newspaper fragments in English for the attention of the latter. An attached report, dated several months earlier, gives information that Salmoné was among "reputable" persons (*mer'iyü-l-hatır zevattan*) in London, and that he had arrived in Istanbul and informed in advance about his coming newspaper *Ziya ul-Hafiqin*. He had been presented as in the good graces of Münif Pasha, and that he was to be granted favors of the Ottoman government.<sup>485</sup>

Ottoman archives also include the appeal by Afghani to the ulama of Persia for the deposition of the Shah that was printed in *Ziya ul-Hafiqin* on 1 March 1892, shortly before Afghani arrived in Istanbul. The letter, which was addressed to the prominent ulama of Shiraz, Karbala, Tabriz, Isfahan etc, gave an account of European encroachments of Persia and the corrupt and despotic rule of Nasr al-Din Shah. The Shah and his chief minister Amin al-Sultan was accused of selling the country to foreigners. In this situation, the ulama as the true leaders of the society

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<sup>483</sup> BOA, Y.PRK. EŞA. 14/110.

<sup>484</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 369; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 162.

<sup>485</sup> The document is dated 1 December 1891, and its attachment is dated 10 August 1891. BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 9/44. Salmoné later became a Young Turk and participated in the Turco-Syrian Committee after it was established in 1895. In 1896, he published the first ever work about the Young Turk movement in Europe, *The Fall and Resurrection of Turkey*, which also gave information about the role of sufi orders and the prominent chiefs of popular Islam in Abdulhamid's pan-Islamism. For details, see Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, pp. 202-203; Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981), p. 144.

and guides of the Persian people had to take control and depose the Shah making use of the popular discontent in Persia.<sup>486</sup>

Thus, Afghani arrived in Istanbul with remarkable Persian precedents and the asset of his valuable contacts with prominent figures from various parts of Persia and Ottoman Iraq. In Istanbul, he was to unite with Persian anti-Shah pan-Islamists, and participate in the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* with appeals of Islamic unity. This program actually involved propaganda on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph, and it was the outcome of a lengthy process of policy formulations of Ottoman officials throughout 1880s related to the Shii aspect of Hamidian Islamism.

#### **4.2 Ottoman Shii Policies**

The policy of the Ottoman government directed to the Shiis of Iraq was in line with the general framework of Hamidian pan-Islamism. On the one hand, it involved communicating with Iraqi Shiis as part of a domestic policy of maintaining the integrity of the subjects of the Empire and cultivating Caliphal loyalty – a defensive aspect of Hamidian pan-Islam. On the other hand, it provided an indirect leverage for the Ottoman Empire in the relations with Persia, as Hamidian Caliphal propaganda meant building pro-Ottoman attachments at the expense of the Persian Shah – an aspect of Hamidian pan-Islamism that assumed a quality that was not so defensive.

Shii subjects of the Empire that were especially concentrated in Iraq were always on the agenda of the Ottoman government since the Tanzimat Era and the first years of Hamidian rule that involved regime consolidation and the question of the survival of the Empire. Hamidian pan-Islam, as analyzed in broader detail in Chapter 1, was a response to the legitimacy crisis and foreign policy circumstances of the era; and it was as well the culmination of the popular reaction to the Tanzimat reforms and the ideological reflection of the new demographic view of the Empire. The main question was to keep the elements of the Empire together under the constant threat of internal and external pressures, and pan-Islamism provided the main ‘mind-set’ and ‘tool-kit’ for that.

Thus, the Shiis of Iraq came under the focus of the government. The Shiis of the region were of Arab, Persian and Turkish origin, with Shii Arabs being the

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<sup>486</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 81/43.

predominant one. Those resided in Basra, Baghdad and the Atabat, the shrine cities of Iraq, namely Karbala, Najaf and Samarra.<sup>487</sup> The fact that the holy places constantly brought Shii visitors from Persia and India was a factor contributing to the prevalent Shii identity of the region. These visitors were made up of immigrants, merchants, religious students and ulama. In fact, it was in the 18th century that Persian ulama and students arrived in Iraq on a massive scale, and the centre of Shii scholarship shifted to Iraq.<sup>488</sup> The ascension of the Shii element added up to the significance of the region as a zone of political and religious influence between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, and Sunni Islam and Shii Islam.<sup>489</sup>

The shrine cities of Atabat, the religious Shii centers, were commonly semi-autonomous due to their special status and distance to the centre. Of these cities, Najaf had a strongly Arab character whereas Karbala and Samarra were rather Persian. Despite their self-governing qualities, Ottoman centralist tendencies exerted influence on these cities after 1831 when the government assumed more direct rule over Iraq. The effects of restructuring of tribal society and settlement became more apparent in Karbala after Najib Pasha occupied and controlled the city between 1842-1849. In Najaf, on the other hand, the Shii core of the city benefited from Ottoman-Persian rivalry in terms of water politics and construction of various canals, dams and barrages facilitating the link of peripheral tribes to the center thereby accelerating their conversion to Shiism. As for Samarra, the Shii predominance rose after the chief Shii mujtahid Muhammad Hasan Shirazi moved into the city in 1875, bringing a sudden spread of Shiism.<sup>490</sup>

Arab tribes formed the majority in southern and central Iraq as late as 1867.<sup>491</sup> With respect to the tribal policies of the Ottoman government, the Baghdad

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<sup>487</sup> Gökhan Çetinsaya, "II.Abdülhamid Döneminde Irak", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 114, (Jun 2003), p. 86; Sinan Marufoğlu, "Osmanlı Döneminde Irak Şiileri", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 114, (Jun 2003), pp. 98-99.

<sup>488</sup> Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp.14-15.

<sup>489</sup> Selim Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı Mücadele: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Bir Osmanlı Karşı Propaganda Örneği", *Simgeden Millete, II. Abdülhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e Devlet ve Millet*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), pp. 143-144.

<sup>490</sup> Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, pp. 18-24, 31-32.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

governorship of Midhat Pasha between 1869-1872 brought about dramatic change for the region. His administration achieved material improvements such as building of schools, increasing social welfare, and introducing regular ships on Euphrates. Land development, irrigation, tribal settlement, and taxation were among issues Midhat Pasha made progress in varying degrees. Above all, he focused on nomadic tribes, and developed policies for their settlement. The Ottoman Land Code (1869) was a significant novelty for the region regarding the fact that it did not produce the intended outcomes of increased tax income and control over large tracts of valuable land.<sup>492</sup> Moreover, the Code caused mass conversions to Shiism. Alongside with the effects of Wahhabism from nearby Arabia, the emergence of the shrine cities as major commercial towns, the change in the water flow, Ottoman policy of tribal settlement resulted in an unintended rise of Shii population in the region. This was because the Code was suited to Anatolia and Rumeli but not to tribal Iraq where communal ownership existed, and the State ended up losing income. Moreover, the disruption of tribal order led to an identity crisis of the tribes which, in the end, had to adapt to the character of the nearby cities and convert to Shiism – a motive that coincided with the struggle of the Persian ulama to protect and expand their socioeconomical base. In that, Sayyids assumed the facilitating role and adjusted their tone to Arabic rituals and ideals, while Ottoman counter-propaganda and the effect of insufficient Sunni social base in the region lagged behind.<sup>493</sup> At the same time, conversion to Shiism had also been the expression of protest against the Ottoman government.<sup>494</sup>

The rise of Shii percentage in the region was a problem for Istanbul because of the fact that Shiis did not acknowledge the Ottoman Sultan as a legitimate Caliph due to historical and religious reasons.<sup>495</sup> This was also a fact that brought them

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<sup>492</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, pp. 160-162; Marion Farouk-Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, 1870-1958", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, (1983), pp. 493-495.

<sup>493</sup> Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, pp. 27-45.

<sup>494</sup> Yitzhak Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shiism", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 26, (1994), pp. 456-457.

<sup>495</sup> Somel, *The Modernization of Public...*, p. 226; Gökhan Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and *Mujtahids*: Ottoman Policy towards the Shi'i Community of Iraq in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 41, (July 2005), p. 561.

closer to Persia. Moreover, the Ottoman-Persian treaty of 1875 altered the triangular Ottoman-Qajar-Ulama relationship in the sense that it granted Iranian consuls exclusive authority, i.e. judiciary powers, over Iranian subjects and tax-exemption for them. The provisions were extended to Ottoman subjects, but Iranians became the main beneficiaries in the case of Iraq.<sup>496</sup>

Thus, 1880s witnessed a rise in the Shii influence in the region. The relatively indirect rule and prevalent anti-Ottoman and anti-Sunni feelings in the region, alongside with an influx of Shii population from Persia led to a rise of Persian influence. Atabat became potential Persian cities, a fact which called for an ‘internal conquest’ for Hamidian regime.<sup>497</sup>

In fact, it was as early as 1870, during the reign of Abdulaziz, that the Ottoman government had attempted to enter into favorable relations with Nasr al-Din Shah. In that year, the Shah had asked for a permission to visit Atabat, and he had been accorded the permit.<sup>498</sup> After the holy cities, he visited Baghdad and met the city governor Midhat Pasha with whom he signed an agreement of three clauses about burials of Shii Persians in holy places, currency practices in Iraq, and, most importantly, the extradition of tribal malefactors passing the border for protection.<sup>499</sup> The positive attitudes were reinforced in 1873 when Nasr al-Din visited Istanbul on his return from European tour. In those days, the newspaper *Basiret* reported the expression of positive intentions and commented that the relations between the two empires should be improved, mentioning the potentials of “ittifak” and “ittihad” (alliance and unity).<sup>500</sup> However, relations with Persia deteriorated because of Russian propoganda in Eastern Anatolia during the 1877-1878 war, and the issue of Sheikh Ubeydullah, which caused diplomatic tension between the Ottoman Empire and Persia. The Sheikh was the chief of the *Nakşibendi* order in the region, and his insurrection and separatist intentions, first, against Persian government, and then, the

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<sup>496</sup> Meir Litvak, *Shii Scholars of Nineteenth-Century Iraq: The ‘Ulama’ of Najaf and Karbala*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 165-166.

<sup>497</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 313.

<sup>498</sup> Mehmet Saray, *Türk-İran İlişkileri*, (Ankara : AKDITYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999), p. 86.

<sup>499</sup> Mehmet Saray, *Türk-İran Münasebetlerinde Şiiliğin Rolü*, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1990), pp. 71-72.

<sup>500</sup> Saray, *Türk-İran İlişkileri*, p. 89; Saray, *Türk-İran Münasebetlerinde...*, p. 72.

Ottoman Empire had been an issue of frictions while British and Russian role were also considerable in the incident.<sup>501</sup>

In the beginning of 1880s, Persia took the initiative to improve the relations with the Ottoman Empire. Tehran ambassador Fahri Bey and Persian minister Mirza Husayin Khan Mushir al-Dewleh held talks. It seemed at that point that the idea of Islamic unity was shared by the Qajar dynasty. The Ottoman government responded positively and granted some practical favors for unrestricted mobility of Shii pilgrims pleasing Iranians. The pleasure of Iranians became manifest in the praises for the Ottoman Sultan in official ceremonies. In these days, Fahri Bey commented that Russian threat must bring together the two Empires. In 1881, a letter by Abdulhamid was submitted by Mirliva Suleyman Pasha to Shah, expressing desire for further alliance toward Islamic unity. Despite the fact that Ottomans kept in their hands Ubeydullah and it continued to be a matter of diplomacy, gifts on holy days were exchanged as a sign of benevolence.<sup>502</sup>

Thus, Ottomans had assumed a conciliatory stand in their Shii policies and aimed at cooperation with Persia, at the same time that there was struggle to win over the Shii community under Caliphal propaganda. Ottoman stance became once more apparent with a series of concrete measures taken: text books were cleared of controversial remarks, Shii shrines were repaired, and education promoted. Meanwhile, as to the relations with Iran, the newspapers *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* and *Akhtar* had assumed a positive role right from the beginning of Abdülhamid regime, working for the favour of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. In early 1880s, *ittihad-ı İslam*, and solidarity with Iran were common recurring themes in articles, whereas sectarian differences were not viewed as an obstacle.<sup>503</sup> The positive mood for Islamic unity continued up to 1883 with mutual expressions of good intentions in diplomacy and rituals. In 1886, an Ottoman official in Baghdad was sent to Tehran in an inofficial mission to hold talks of a defensive alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Interestingly, the plan included Russia because of its Muslim population – a fact reflective of Ottoman change of attitude in foreign policy after 1882. As part of the

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<sup>501</sup> Saray, *Türk-İran İlişkileri*, pp. 90-93; Saray, *Türk-İran Münasebetlerinde...*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>502</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam...*, pp. 133-138.

<sup>503</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 55.

plan, Britain was claimed to be the mutual enemy of Islam. However, at that point the Eastern Rumelia Crisis served as a test of the proposed cooperation as Ottomans tried to draw Russians to their side in diplomacy against Britain achieving no results. Moreover, there was also a failure of schemes with Persia, because Hamidian pan-Islam focused efforts on Iraq to call for 'religious uniformity' for the sake solidarity of the Empire, rather than 'Islamic unity'. In fact, Ottomans were competing with Qajar Persia in Iraq, and Persians were fundamentally opposed to an idea of Islamic union because they as Shiis were afraid to be assimilated in the union. Thus, their religious identity acted as a defense. Besides, Persia was also aggressive in Iraq taking advantage of Ottoman disinterest and tolerance, engaging in propaganda, and protection of Shii shrines. As a result, a massive spread of Shiism took place in the region alarming the Ottoman government.<sup>504</sup>

In this respect, the Ottoman government searched for alternative solutions to the Shii issue in the beginning of 1890s. Civil and military commissions were deployed to the region, and proposals were demanded from administrative, military and religious figures who had experience of the region.<sup>505</sup> For Hamidian pan-Islamism, Sunni Hanefi mezheb was the basis of religiosity, the 'official belief', and other beliefs and sects were regarded as deviations. Therefore, correction of marginal beliefs and conversion to Sunni Islam through propaganda, preaching and education were seen as practical tools to combat the expansion of Shiism.<sup>506</sup>

According to the common points in the reports prepared in the beginning of the 1890s, Sunni establishment was weak in the region, while Atabat was financially powerful and well-established. Besides, Shiis were more actively devoted to the spread of their beliefs through their medreses, schools and *ahunds* (Shii preachers), while local population were vulnerable due to their ignorance and tribal way of living as well as prevalent backwardness in the region.<sup>507</sup> Moreover, it was not so possible,

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<sup>504</sup> Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam...*, pp. 303-307.

<sup>505</sup> Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Osmanlı Irak'ında Sünni-Şii İlişkileri: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi, 1890-1908", *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Din ve Vicdan Hürriyeti*, Engin Deniz Akarlı, Azmi Özcan (et.al), (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2000), p. 140.

<sup>506</sup> Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition...", pp. 14-15; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains...*, p. 75, 93.

<sup>507</sup> Çetinsaya, "Osmanlı Irakı'nda Sünni-Şii ...", p. 141.



as in Syria and Arabia, to extend to the region Hamidian pan-Islam's use of sufi sheikhs to ensure the loyalty of their followers because of the non-existence of friendly Sunni orders matching with the socio-political map in Iraq.<sup>508</sup> Even at momentous times of pan-Islamic propaganda, Shii *ahunds* (preachers) were active in the area, and displayed resistance by preventing Shiis send their children to Ottoman schools. In addition, Shiis even managed to penetrate the Ottoman 6th army in Baghdad, which became an issue of consultations.<sup>509</sup> In sum, Ottoman counter-propaganda and the influence of Sunni Islam was lagging behind.

The proposals of reports and memorandums in the beginning of 1890s mainly focused on improvement of centralized education, provision of funds and appointment of competent ulama to promote the Sunni establishment in the area, and dissemination of counter-propaganda books.<sup>510</sup> Among plenty of documents related to Shiism during 1890s, some are worthy of presenting in broader detail. One was a *layiha* (report) of Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, a military of official and an earlier governor of Baghdad, dated 1892. His most interesting proposal was the *Kitab'ül-Akaid*, 'the Book of Beliefs', which presented a survey of beliefs in the Ottoman lands and, assuming a Sunni-Hanefi approach, suggested ways to combat marginal beliefs. His way to deal with the threat of Shiism in Baghdad, Musul and Basra was conversion, and he argued that it was essential for Sunni ulama to undertake missionary roles for effective counter-propaganda. He called for standardized education in order to become *dai ül-Hak-misyoner* to be assigned to posts in Iraq, and a missionary society (*dailer cemiyeti*) formed that way.<sup>511</sup> Another document, a *layiha* of Ali Rıza Bey, a military official and an ex-consul, pointed to the fact that tribes were more vulnerable to Shii conversion. He also claimed that the cities of Atabat were under influx of Shii population. To combat the spread of Shiism he proposed not only an active role for ulama and teachers in religious education and propaganda, but he also believed that the government had to look for ways to

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<sup>508</sup> Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures...", p. 347.

<sup>509</sup> Saray, *Türk-İran Münasebetlerinde ...*, p. 79; Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and *Mujtahids*...", pp. 564-565; Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp.153-154.

<sup>510</sup> Çetinsaya, *Osmanlı Irakı'nda Sünni-Şii İlişkileri...*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>511</sup> Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 122-123.

eliminate of sectarian differences.<sup>512</sup> Similarly, Hüseyin Hüsni Efendi, a previous *şeyhülislam*, believed in the role of Sunni ulama and medreses, and emphasized the importance of a conciliatory approach towards the Shiis of Iraq.<sup>513</sup>

Thus, Sunni religious men were put in responsibility to counteract Shiism in Iraq. Sunni religious schools intended to recruit young Shii students were founded. Besides, Şeyh Said Efendi, a prominent Sunni ulama, was appointed to Samarra to counterbalance the influence of the chief mujtahid Shirazi in the city.<sup>514</sup> Moreover, a policy of recruiting Shii children from Baghdad and Kerbela to be sent to schools in Istanbul was implemented. The aim of the exercise was to train future propagandists – an educational defense against Shiism.<sup>515</sup> In brief, the main viewpoint of Hamidian pan-Islamism, Islamic unity, implied dictation of normative beliefs to the local Shia.<sup>516</sup>

### **4.3. Afghani's Associates in Istanbul**

It was in the beginning of 1890s and especially in 1892-1893 that, other solutions being proposed on the Shii issue failed to bring out anything satisfactory, Abdulhamid and his advisers, especially Ahmet Cevdet and Yusuf Riza Pashas, came up with the idea of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. The Ottoman government had observed the rise of Atabat in Persian politics and realized that the Shii issue could not be addressed without direct communication with the Shii *mujtahids*, in a sense, by-passing the Shah. Appeals of Islamic unity were to serve to achieve the loyalty of Shiis to the Ottoman Caliph. In this policy, Afghani and the Persian exiles in Istanbul were to be the intermediary.<sup>517</sup>

The presence of Afghani in Istanbul would facilitate the employment of the Persian community in Istanbul in the same cause with the Shii ulama. Afghani's

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<sup>512</sup> Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 146-148.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>514</sup> Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam.....*, p. 201.

<sup>515</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains....*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>516</sup> Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı ...", p. 151.

<sup>517</sup> Çetinsaya, "Osmanlı Irakı'nda Sünni-Şii...", pp. 142-143; Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 110-111.

Persian antecedents had demonstrated the way he could prove to be a uniting factor between diverse groups for the same political aims. Being the most striking instance, Afghani had a central role in quickening the alliance of the forces of discontent during the Tobacco Protest.<sup>518</sup> He was one of the architects of religious-radical alliance that occurred as a new factor in Persian politics, thanks to his ties with modernizers and ulama. He was aware of the potential power of religion to mobilize masses as well the pan-Islamic sentiment that appeared among intellectuals as a result of concessions and Western dominance in Persia in 1880s and 1890s.<sup>519</sup> Thus, thanks to Afghani's uniting force, pan-Islam became the framework in which reactionary and progressive intellectuals could come together – in a way that they would not normally be supposed to in a Sunni state, under a Caliph and absolute monarch.<sup>520</sup>

The Persian community that associated with Afghani in Istanbul was composed of modernist dissidents that were opposing of Nasr al-Din Shah regime. The presence of such a group in Istanbul was not a coincidence: in fact, Istanbul was an important city for Persian intellectuals, government officials, and merchants in that era. Moreover, it represented an exterior center for Persian modernization.

In the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a rough number of 16000 Persians in Istanbul who were merchants, students, and exiles;<sup>521</sup> and this number rose with Persian visitors and immigrants pouring in throughout 1880s and the beginning of 1890s. Istanbul became a safe haven for merchants, reformist intellectuals, constitutionalist exiles, and religious dissidents such as Babis.<sup>522</sup> Shii cultural centers such as mosques and bazaars emerged in the

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<sup>518</sup> Algar, *Religion and State...*, p. 203.

<sup>519</sup> Keddie, "The Origins of Religious...", p. 74.

<sup>520</sup> Juan Cole, "Sheikh al-Ra'is and Sultan Abdulhamid II: The Iranian Dimension of Pan-Islam", *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions*, Israel Gershoni, Hakan Erdem, and Ursula Wokoeck (eds), (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 168.

<sup>521</sup> Orhan Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan d'Istanbul", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinabaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 133.

<sup>522</sup> Homa Nategh Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal al-Din et Malkom Khan à Istanbul", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinabaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 45; Djamchid Behnam, "Le Rôle de la Communauté Iranienne d'Istanbul dans le Processus de Modernisation de

city, alongside with school, hospital and cemetery which constituted a special waqf under the status that Sultan Abdulhamid granted.<sup>523</sup> With Persians pouring in, Persian intellectuals were compelled to speculate on the political, religious and social reasons of this exodus and formulate social reforms that became ever more radical and populist.<sup>524</sup>

In this respect, the community in Istanbul assumed the role of ‘relais extérieurs’ (exterior intermediaries) for Persia regarding the transfer of European modernity, corresponding to the role of Ottoman intellectuals in Europe.<sup>525</sup> In that period, Ottoman Empire and Persia shared the same cultural atmosphere: the shock of territorial losses and perception of western superiority. Moreover, the Tanzimat era with its reforms represented a model to be imitated for Persia. Thus, between 1880s and 1900, the works of a generation of statesmen, intellectuals and enlightened tradesmen came out, criticizing despotism, economic backwardness, European encroachments, and also proposing ways for progress.<sup>526</sup> The reason why Istanbul could become an important center for the proliferation of liberal ideas rested in the specific qualities of the city. First of all, it was an Islamic *non-alien* territory. Besides, it had closer contacts with Europe as well as relations with major Mediterranean ports, the Caucasus, Lebanon, Egypte, and Azerbaijan. In addition, there existed in Istanbul an established and prospered Persian commercial community. Moreover, at that time Persian and Ottoman intellectuals shared the same struggle for constitution and modernization.<sup>527</sup> Furthermore, Persian reformists in Istanbul benefited from the fact that they had witnessed, through the works of Young Ottomans, how reform and modernization could be reconciled with Islamic

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l’Iran”, *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 9.

<sup>523</sup> Thierry Zarccone, “La Situation du Chiïsme à İstanbul à la Fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> et au début du XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle”, *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, 1993)., p. 101.

<sup>524</sup> Pakdaman, “Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...”, p. 46.

<sup>525</sup> Behnam, “Le Rôle de la Communauté ...”, p. 4.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-7.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-9.

tradition. As such, they derived inspiration from the presence of a well-established journalism in the city.<sup>528</sup>

The Turco-Iranian interaction regarding modernization followed two phases, one involving statesmen of both countries in 1860s and 1870s, and the other involving men of pen, religious reformers, and diplomats in 1880s and 1890s.<sup>529</sup> Thus, the initial reform attempt of Nasr al-Din Shah period came through Mirza Husain Khan Mushir al-Dewleh who had experience of being ambassador in Istanbul 1858-1870.<sup>530</sup> During his post in Istanbul, Mushir al-Dewleh had made use of the masonic lodge to enter into contact with prominent bureaucrats, so the lodge played a part as a point of contact in the political activities of Persians in Istanbul.<sup>531</sup> Malkoum Khan, one of the most prominent reform advocates of the nineteenth century Iran, had also spent a long period of time in Istanbul during the Tanzimat Era, witnessing Reşid Pasha's reforms. Therefore, for the Persians in Istanbul, the Tanzimat constituted a model to be followed, and some Ottoman reforms were introduced in Persia and some institutions were copied.<sup>532</sup> Mushir al-Dewleh's contacts during his *ambassade* were exploited consequently by Muhsin Khan Muin al-Mulk who served as the ambassador between 1872-1890. His term represented a favorable term for the Ottoman-Persian dialogue as he established excellent rapport with Abdulhamid. Interestingly, Muin al-Mulk would later collaborate with the opposition forces of Persia during the days of Tobacco Protest, and became associated with Malkoum Khan and his newspaper *Qanun*.<sup>533</sup>

Another significant aspect of Istanbul for Persia was the presence of a well-established trader community there. In Persia, merchants constituted the most organized group, and at the same time the most conscious, regarding their political

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<sup>528</sup> Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", pp. 134-135.

<sup>529</sup> Behnam, "Le Rôle de la Communauté ...", p. 8.

<sup>530</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 184.

<sup>531</sup> Zarcone, "La Situation du Chiisme ...", p. 105; Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", p. 134.

<sup>532</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...", p. 49.

<sup>533</sup> Johann Strauss, "La Pésence Diplomatique Iranienne à Istanbul et dans les Provinces de l'Empire Ottoman (1848-1908)", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 20; Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 383.

and economic interests. It was as early as 1886 that they had established *Meclis-i Vükela-yı Tüccar*, the Assembly of Merchants, to protect their interests independent of the government.<sup>534</sup> The merchant class of Persia had established its extensions to Istanbul after 1830 when the opening of the road Tabriz-Trabzon-Istanbul led to an intensification of commerce between Persia and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>535</sup> Thus, the importance of Istanbul as an intermediary market for Persian exports and imports grew, with cotton, silk, carpets, and tobacco becoming the main trade items.<sup>536</sup> On the same trade route, Trabzon began to be considered as the ‘port of Tabriz’, and Persian merchants established monopoly over the tobacco consumed in Istanbul. Remarkably, when the Tobacco Regie started to operate in Persia, those merchants thought of forming a union to protect Persian interests against the Regie.<sup>537</sup> In the beginning of 1890s, their discontent fed on the decline in the volume of Persian trade with trade routes changing for the advantage of Britain and Russia. As a result, the tradesmen started opposing foreign capital and supporting constitutionalist Persian exiles in Istanbul.<sup>538</sup> Similarly, there developed among merchants a number of people who wanted to obtain Ottoman citizenship to protest against the maladministration of the Shah. It was again these merchants who served as the channel through which opposition newspapers and tracts were distributed to Persia – such as the newspaper *Akhtar* to Tabriz.<sup>539</sup>

At a time when press was non-existent in Persia, *Akhtar* was established under the auspices of Muhsin Khan Muin al-Mulk and Persian embassy in 1876. *Akhtar* was financed by the Persian and Ottoman governments. The Shah and his ministers had thought that it would be wise to have a Persian newspaper in Istanbul

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<sup>534</sup> Pakdaman, “Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...”, p. 47.

<sup>535</sup> Zarccone, “La Situation du Chiisme ...”, pp. 102-103.

<sup>536</sup> Tsotomu Sakamoto, “Istanbul and the Carpet Trade of Iran since the 1870’s”, *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 214.

<sup>537</sup> Pakdaman, “Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...”, pp. 47-48.

<sup>538</sup> Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, “The Iranian Merchant Community in the Ottoman Empire and the Constitutional Revolution”, *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, 1993), pp. 208-210.

<sup>539</sup> Pakdaman, “Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...”, p. 47.

to influence the Persians there. But once it was established Akhtar came under the influence of refugees.<sup>540</sup> In fact, the newspaper was neither critical nor aggressive, rather instructed to inform as suited to the press of the Hamidian period. Yet, even that way it was already revolutionary for Persia.<sup>541</sup> Through time the newspaper departed from its conformist tone, and turned out to be liberal and started opposing the Qajar regime.<sup>542</sup> Thus, it came to be a work of radical politics as it followed the example of the Young Ottoman press for the cause of the opposition movement in Persia.<sup>543</sup> Akhtar was the only Persian journal that was extensively read and discussed in 1880s and 1890s, and it started to be the symbol of a specific political stance. When it sided with the initiators of the Tobacco Protest, despite the fact that it was only informative and never inviting to rebellion, it was suspended in Persia in 1891. Its circulation continued in a clandestine manner.<sup>544</sup>

Malkoum Khan's *Qanun* was also an opposition newspaper of the time. It started to be published in 1889 in London, and from its inception it served to put pressure on Shah Nasr al-Din and the Persian government.<sup>545</sup> The newspaper was distributed to Persia, Ottoman Empire, India and Egypt. Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, a prominent figure among Persian dissidents in Istanbul, was in a key position in the chain of hand-to-hand distribution.<sup>546</sup> Majority of *Qanun*'s subscribers were merchants. In Persia the newspaper was also addressed to *mujtahids*, princes, government officials, and some notables. Kirmani hoped that the newspaper would help in arousing middle-class which comprised land-owners, notables and well-born. It was never directed to the urban masses, the peasants, or small tradesmen; but

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<sup>540</sup> Anja Pistor-Hatam, "The Persian Newspaper *Akhtar* as a Transmitter of Ottoman Political Ideas", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), pp. 141-142.

<sup>541</sup> Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", p. 135.

<sup>542</sup> Christophe Balay, "Littérature Persane en Diaspora: Istanbul, 1865-1895", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarccone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 178.

<sup>543</sup> Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", p. 133.

<sup>544</sup> Kudsi-Zadeh, "Iranian Politics in...", p. 257; Anja Pistor-Hatam "The Persian Newspaper *Akhtar* ...", p. 142; Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", p. 136.

<sup>545</sup> Mehrdad Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", pp. 35-36.

<sup>546</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 312.

rather to the ulama, merchants, military officials, learned people and provincial notables.<sup>547</sup> In fact, *Qanun* was not a reporter of day-to-day news, it came out monthly. On the other hand, Akhtar was a weekly newspaper with larger readership and regularly reported international and local developments. Moreover, *Qanun* was more of a political pamphlet that was focused on misgovernment and backwardness, expressing demand for reforms, and attempting to channelize this demand into an organized movement.<sup>548</sup> Starting from 1890, Malkoum started to advocate Islamic unity and demonstrated support in the newspaper for Abdulhamid and his rule, crowning the city of Istanbul. This coincided with Afghani's arrival in London, and the two collaborated in an anti-Shah, pan-Islamic propaganda, with *Qanun* being the instrument.<sup>549</sup> Meanwhile, thanks to the permit by the Sultan, *Qanun* could be distributed via Istanbul by the help of the contacts of merchants, and it was affirmed in the newspaper that the city was regarded as the centre of the Caliphate and 'Islamic union'.<sup>550</sup>

It is a remarkable fact that the Persian dissidents, who were the associates of Afghani in the pan-Islamic propaganda on behalf of the Caliph, were mostly heterodox in terms of their creeds. Among these reformist seculars were prominent ones of Babi origin, a marginal religious group in Persia. The group of Babis was one of a radical Shia heresies that had emerged as a response to social and religious tensions. They had their roots in the late eighteenth century Sheikhi movement, an unorthodox rationalist interpretation of religion, and developed to be a considerable dissident force in Persia in 1840s. Babis believed in the prophecy of *Sayyed Mohammad Ali* who claimed himself to be the *bab* (the gate), the intermediary between God's omnipresent knowledge and authority of the God the way the prophet Mohammad and the twelve *Imams* were. Bab claimed to supersede the teaching of Koran, and he introduced a new law replacing the Islamic one. Nonetheless, his preaching contained harsh attacks on the established clergy, and his movement

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<sup>547</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 313-314.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid, p. 318.

<sup>549</sup> Mehrdad Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", pp. 36-37.

<sup>550</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...", p. 52.



brought about revolts that were suppressed in 1850s.<sup>551</sup> Among the social features of the Babi movement was a critic of the traditional society, aim of eradication of class distinctions, abolition of polygamy, and institution of justice, and women rights. Their failed attempt to kill the Shah in 1852 led to their pacification and clandestinity.<sup>552</sup> After the execution of the Bab, the majority of Babis became the followers of Bahai religion, a universalist, quietist and liberal version of the original Babi ideas. Bahais were westernist revolutionaries, while another branch, Azalis, were oppositional and remained faithful to the teachings of the Bab, but went underground or claimed to be Muslims. Among Persian modernist radicals in Istanbul there were many who were either themselves Babis or showed sympathy for the movement.<sup>553</sup> Alongside Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Ahmad Ruhi, who were themselves Azalis, Malkoum Khan, and Afghani also published texts related to Babism. In fact, Afghani was interested in the progressive side of Babism; and, interestingly, his controversial speech at the opening of Darü'l-Fünun which had led to his dismissal from Istanbul in 1871 was inspired from a Sheykhi discourse. Besides Afghani, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani thought that Babis, especially Azalis, had the strongest zeal to combat Persian government and achieve reforms. As a matter of fact, there were many sympathizers of Babism among the collaborators of the newspaper Akhtar.<sup>554</sup> In addition, these figures were also active during the Tobacco Protest and participated in the pan-Islamic program of Afghani in 1894.<sup>555</sup>

One of the most important associates of Afghani in Istanbul was Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani. He represented the new type of Persian intellectual, regarding the fact that he was a nationalist, with anti-Arab, and even anti-Islamic stance; and he displayed disdain against the established secular and religious authorities.<sup>556</sup> He

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<sup>551</sup> Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", pp. 267-268.

<sup>552</sup> Paine and Schoenberger, "Iranian Nationalism....", p. 5; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>553</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion...*, pp. 273-274.

<sup>554</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan, Sayyid Jamal ...", p. 48, 57.

<sup>555</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion...*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>556</sup> Mangol Bayat Philipp, "The Concepts of Religion and Government in the Thought of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, a Nineteenth-Century Persian Revolutionary", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (Sep. 1974), p. 382.

reached Istanbul in 1886, and participated with inflammatory articles as the editor of *Akhtar* and also assumed central responsibility in the distribution of *Qanun*. Besides, he also wrote political pamphlets, poems, philosophical and theological treatises, history books.<sup>557</sup> He also made living by teaching, translating and copying books. Among his contacts were Münif Pasha; Hüseyin Riza Pasha, the minister of justice; and Yusuf Riza Pasha, head of the immigration department, and an important advisor of the Sultan in his Shii policies. To these persons he organized that *Qanun* would be sent directly. He was closely associated with the Persian merchant community in the Ottoman Empire, India and Egypt.

Earlier, Kirmani was negative against the ulama: he thought that they, the Persian reformist seculars, should better rely on the middle class, peasantry, nobility and landed gentry to transform the existing social order. However, later, his attitude towards ulama became more positive after their role in the Tobacco Protest, and became convinced of the potential to appeal to them.<sup>558</sup> Nevertheless, Kirmani was an Azali-Babi and he viewed religion as pragmatic and instrumental in the progress of a nation, and his concern with religion was a political one.<sup>559</sup> In fact, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani was an earlier Persian nationalist. He introduced into Persian the vocabulary for nationalism, and found equivalents for concepts such as patrie, patriotism, nationalism, and national unity.<sup>560</sup> Thus, the pan-Islamism of Persian exiles in Istanbul was a form of proto-nationalism combining traditional Islamic elements and pre-Islamic elements.<sup>561</sup>

In this respect, when Kirmani, together with Afghani, supported a united Islamic front under the leadership of Abdulhamid, he actually intended to make use of religion as a common political bond for his anti-Shah, and anti-imperialist purposes.<sup>562</sup> He was more nationalist than religious, like many other Persian pan-Islamists at the time – an especially striking fact, considering that they attached to the

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<sup>557</sup> Philipp, “The Concepts of Religion ...”, pp. 383-384.

<sup>558</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 328-329; Kia, “Pan-Islamism in Late...”, pp. 37-38.

<sup>559</sup> Philipp, “The Concepts of Religion ...”, pp. 388-389; Keddie, “Religion and Irreligion...”, p. 274.

<sup>560</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 344-346.

<sup>561</sup> Keddie, “Religion and Irreligion...”, p. 271.

<sup>562</sup> Kia, “Pan-Islamism in Late...”, p. 35.

Caliph while the Shii tradition did not recognize the legitimacy of a Sunni Caliph. Consequently, some elements of pan-Islam were later transferred to local nationalisms.<sup>563</sup>

Another associate of Afghani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi, shared similarities with his companion Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani.<sup>564</sup> First of all, he was an Azali-Babi, but also a member of the Islamic ulama. He went to Istanbul some time around 1886. There he spent his time teaching eastern languages, translating into Persian books from English and French, and writing several works. In addition, he was also a collaborator of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani in journalistic and oppositional political activities. Like Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, his anti-clerical tendencies later reversed to a motivation to appeal to the ulama in Iraq and Iran for struggle against Nasr al-Din Shah and his concessions to foreigners.<sup>565</sup> Yet, both Ruhi and Kirmani were reformist pan-Islamists: for them, constitutional governments represented the ideal type of government; they intended to make use of the Ottoman ruler and Shii clergy for the immediate purposes of getting rid of Qajars and blocking Western domination in Persia.<sup>566</sup>

In Afghani's circle in Istanbul there was also another figure, Sheikh al-Rais, who had earlier contemplated Ottoman-Persian *rapprochement* as a way to form a pan-Islamic front against Western expansionism, and had contacts with Ottoman officials and the Sultan. Sheikh al-Rais, was a dissident of the Qajar family. He was a prince, poet, Shiite clergyman, political activist and a secret member of the Bahai religion.<sup>567</sup> He had become engaged in explorations related to pan-Islam while preaching in mosques.<sup>568</sup> In 1886, Sheikh al-Rais met with Ahmed Cevdet and Yusuf Riza Pashas to discuss on the issue of Islamic unity. Al-Rais claimed that Sultan-Caliph must assume a central role and call for the convention of a council to

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<sup>563</sup> Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto...", p. 26.

<sup>564</sup> Nikki Keddie regards Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi as the most important pan-Islamists in the Iranian nationalist movement, next to Afghani. See Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", p. 284.

<sup>565</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 94; Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", pp. 284-285.

<sup>566</sup> Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", p. 289; Philipp, "The Concepts of Religion ...", p. 399.

<sup>567</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdulhamid II...", p. 167.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid*, p. 169.

concentrate efforts on *rapprochement* among the Ottoman Empire and Persia *as equals*. As to practical measures to be taken initially, al-Rais recommended that Ottoman newspapers must be favorable toward Persia, and pan-Islamic newspapers should come out. In addition, he urged that any negative discrimination in legal issues or educational text books be abolished. Besides, attention must be paid to the Shii shrines in Iraq and favors granted to Shii *mujtahids* in Iraq who lived under Ottoman administration. Al-Rais also presented a resume of that meeting to the Persian embassy.<sup>569</sup>

In 1887, Abdulhamid summoned Sheikh al-Rais for audience together with Iranian ambassador Muhsin Khan Muin al-Mulk and his attaché Mirza Asadullah Khan Nazim al-Dewleh, and Sheikh al-Rais stated that Nasr al-Din Shah had called him back to Persia. Thus, he left for Persia, and yet, he conveyed a message of Abdulhamid to the Shah, containing good-intentions for Islamic unity. In Persia, al-Rais was assigned to various posts.<sup>570</sup>

Up to 1892, Al-Rais travelled back and forth between Ottoman Empire and Iran. His arrival in 1892 coincided with that of Afghani. Between 1892-1893 al-Rais held discussions with Ottoman officials on the issue of Pan-Islam.<sup>571</sup> Thereafter, he joined Afghani's Persian circle in Istanbul. He gave lectures for Islamic unity. However, al-Rais did not give his full support for the pan-Islamic activities. For him, Afghani intended to use pan-Islamism to undermine Shah's power; but Rais wished to create unity between Ottoman Empire and Persia on equal terms. Nevertheless, he was quite involved in the Persian group, thanks to his connections with Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani. In 1894, Rais left Istanbul, but continued to maintain ties with and receive the support of the Ottoman government.<sup>572</sup> His most important work was *Ittihad-i Islam*, written in 1894 in India, which was a pan-Islamic manifesto. It

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<sup>569</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdulhamid II...", pp. 170-171.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid, pp. 171-172; Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", p. 42. In Istanbul, al-Rais was initiated by Muhsin Khan Muin al-Mulk into the masonic lodge, which was a common contact point for the Persian exiles and reformers in Istanbul. Hamid Algar, "Participation by Iranian Diplomats in the Masonic Lodges of Istanbul", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcane and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p.43.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid, pp. 173-174.

<sup>572</sup> Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", pp. 42-44.

focused on Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* and unity on equal terms. In that, he regarded the Sultan as the religious and also secular leader of his country, whereas the Shah would be the secular leader in Persia, the Shii ulama being the religious one. Thus, the recognition of the Sultan as the Caliph for all Muslims was essential. In this respect, as before he did with Ottoman officials, al-Rais made concrete suggestions about what practical measures to be implemented to overcome Shii objection to Sunni-Caliphate.<sup>573</sup>

#### **4.4. The Sunni-Shii Rapprochement**

Throughout 1880s and the beginning of 1890s, the Ottoman government had been concerned about ensuring the loyalty of the Shii subjects in Iraq, and had become alarmed at the spread of Shiism in the region. They had sought ways to deal with the issue, attempting to come closer with Qajar Persia, and formulating and implementing practical measures to promote Sunni influence in the region. Besides, it was also a matter of rivalry with Qajars to have control over a common area of influence.

The importance of Ottoman Iraq rested in the fact that it was historically a contact zone and a battle zone between Iran and Ottoman Empire. First of all, Shii Islam was associated with Iraq from its beginning because of the formative events of Shiism that took place there. The region contained the Atabat, the four most sacred shrine cities, namely Najaf, Karbala, Samarra and Kazımayn. Therefore, it was the center of Twelver Shiism. The region assumed further significance during the conflicts of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. When these cities came under the Ottoman administration, Ottoman-Persian political rivalry assumed a religious aspect, as both the Sultan and the Shah had used religion for the legitimacy of their policies. The two-sided tension was carried to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries keeping anti-Shii and anti-Ottoman sentiments alive. Meanwhile, Qajars emerged claiming that the Shah was the sole protector of Shii interests in Iraq.<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdulhamid II...", pp. 177-179; Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", pp. 45-48.

<sup>574</sup> Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, pp. 13-14; Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 143-144.

In the eighteenth century Atabat experienced dramatic change as Akhbari and Usuli struggle over Shii jurisprudence resulted in the success of the latter. Usulis were mainly Persian ulama who reached the region in the eighteenth century. They were rationalist and reserved a political role for the ulama, as opposed to traditionalist Akhbaris. By the mid-19th century, Persian ulama had gained control of Shii charitable funds and madrasas, and asserted their power vis-a-vis Ottoman and Qajar governments and over the local population. The rise of Atabat as a religious center became manifest by the presence of a large community of Shiis, including *mujtahids*, mollas, ahunds, students, and also visiting merchants and pilgrims, through which constant communication with Persia was maintained.<sup>575</sup> Although the ulama in Persia were also relatively independent and had the power to carry out educational, judicial and legal functions, the fact that the centre of Shii leadership shifted to Atabat meant that it could be even freer of the Shahs' influence there. In Iraq, the Shii ulama had unrestricted control over considerable wealth.<sup>576</sup> Meanwhile, they had well-established links with their families and coreligionists in Iran.<sup>577</sup>

Ottoman Iraq enjoyed an exclusive status because of indirect rule until 1830s.<sup>578</sup> The Shiis of the region complied with adherence to Ottoman rule though not wholeheartedly. *Mujtahids* controlled religious taxes and charitable money as well as educational enterprise, without governmental supervision.<sup>579</sup> Besides, *mujtahids* also acted as mediators between the population and the Ottoman government, resembling in a way, the politics of notables.<sup>580</sup> The Shii ulama in Iraq never recognized the legitimacy of the Sunni Ottoman state, but never came up directly against it. Nevertheless, they had the concern of preserving their autonomous status. Thus, they made use of the reality that as Shii ulama they belonged to two sociopolitical arenas, the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Persia, setting up a triangular

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<sup>575</sup> Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, p. 16; Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and the *Mujtahids*...", pp. 561-562.

<sup>576</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 178.

<sup>577</sup> Nakash, *The Shiis of Iraq*, p. 18.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>579</sup> Joyce Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), pp. 13-15.

<sup>580</sup> Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 166.

relationship: they played one side against the other to overcome the continuous pressure from both to subordinate them to central authority.<sup>581</sup> For instance, during Nasr al-Din Shah's visit to the shrine cities in 1870, ulama tried to acquire the assistance of the Shah to abolish conscription in the Ottoman army, whereas the Shah tried to promote friendly relations with the ulama.<sup>582</sup>

Concerning relations with Persian politics, the attitude of Iraqi Shia had been a traditionally quietist one. Earlier, in 1874, when Tehran ulama participated in the protests against the Reuter Concession the shrine cities had remained silent.<sup>583</sup> However, the developments of 1880s drove the ulama in Iraq out of their political quietism. First, there was progress in Ottoman-Persian relations as the external pressures compelled, leading to an overlooking of sectarian differences. Parallel to that, Abdulhamid's Shii policies involved a more favorable contact with the ulama of Atabat. Secondly, there was the economic and political deterioration of Persia which brought with it a widespread popular reaction.<sup>584</sup>

In fact, the ulama-Qajar relationship had been based on a tradition of ulama opposition consistent with the belief that in the absence of the Hidden Imam any exercise of authority was illegitimate. Although, there was a degree of compromise as long as the Shah treated the ulama well, the *mujtahids* being the most qualified interpreters of the will of the Imam represented the one to be obeyed rather than the ruler.<sup>585</sup> In comparison with the Ottoman Empire, where religious elite was incorporated to the state that held the secular and spiritual authority, and the religious control over popular masses was maintained by the presence of Sufi orders; in Persia, Shii ulama had a weak relation with central authority and their unmatched religious authority resulted in their influence over masses.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 177.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid, pp. 171-172.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid, p. 178.

<sup>585</sup> Keddie and Amanat, "Iran under the Late...", p. 151, 177.

<sup>586</sup> Deringil, "'Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 145-146; Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, p. 218.

Hence, the conflict of the ulama and Qajars turned to be a recurring theme in Persian politics, exerting itself further during and after the Tobacco Protest.<sup>587</sup> On the one hand, the rise of foreign dominance as a result of Nasr al-Din Shah's concessions policy hinted at a decline in clerical power.<sup>588</sup> On the other hand, the effects of misgovernment and foreign-favoring policies were directly felt by merchants who had traditional links with ulama, constituting the economic aspect of the opposition.<sup>589</sup> As a result, ulama identified itself with anti-foreign and anti-Shah sentiment in political, economical and religious terms,<sup>590</sup> and Atabat emerged as the major oppositional center in Persian politics. The fact that the main opposition center Atabat was in Ottoman Iraq allowed the Shii ulama to be free of pressures from Persian government. Likewise, the ulama within Persia were also relatively free to voice out criticism. They were also tied to merchants and bazaar, so they were close to the masses.<sup>591</sup> Thus, amid the mujtahid involvement in politics during the Tobacco Protest, Afghani and Persian radicals attempted to promote their commitment further and associate them with the reformist anti-Shah movement;<sup>592</sup> whereas the Persian government tried to calm down the opposition by entering into direct dialogue with *mujtahids* and seeking a pledge from the Ottoman government to prevent their political activeness.<sup>593</sup>

As noted earlier, Ottoman government officials, who were observant of the political developments in Persia in the beginning of 1890s and the rise of Atabat's influence, came up with the idea that an effective Shii policy had to involve communication with the *mujtahids*. This was a common feature of the reports submitted in the early 1890s. First of all, Süleyman Pasha, in his 1892 report discussed in earlier sections, pointed to the position of Mirza Hasan Shirazi in Samarra as the most influential mujtahid possessing more power than Nasr al-Din

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<sup>587</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*..., p. 205.

<sup>588</sup> Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", p. 290.

<sup>589</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy*..., pp. 290-292.

<sup>590</sup> Paine and Schoenberger, "Iranian Nationalism...", p. 3.

<sup>591</sup> Keddie, "The Origins of Religious and Radical...", p. 72.

<sup>592</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration*..., p. 110; Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy*..., pp. 326-330.

<sup>593</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy*..., p. 290.



Shah in Persia.<sup>594</sup> Another similar report on the independent character of the Shii *mujtahids*, which was undated and unsigned but probably prepared by Yusuf Rıza Pasha, pointed to the fact that they, the *mujtahids*, were much stronger than the Shah and had the potential to force the Persian government to do whatever they wanted. Russians, being aware of their influence, had attempted to enter into relations with them and sent gifts. Thus, the Ottoman government had to look for ways to make use of their power. The issue was to gain legitimacy in their eyes, and a policy of grants to shrines in Atabat was suggested.<sup>595</sup>

Similar were the ideas of Ahmed Cevdet, the famous compiler of *Mecelle* and an important advisor of the Sultan, who presented a memorandum on the Shii issue in 1892. According to the memorandum, a Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* and expressions of benevolence was essential to tackle the Shii problem. He suggested the necessity of attention and donations to holy places and Shii tombs, and concentration of public works in places that were premoninantly Shii, so as to win over Shii *mujtahids*. Some of these suggestions were compiled with, and the government took on repair activities and irrigation works in the Atabat. However, the more important aspect of Ahmed Cevdet's memorandum was his program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* centered on the Caliph and the *mujtahids*. He argued that *mujtahids* could be invited to the Palace just the way Arab sheikhs had been done. Upon his report, Abdulhamid also asked Ahmed Cevdet's opinion about Afghani, and the former gave information about the latter's personal history adding his positive remarks and pointed to the potentials of bringing him to Istanbul.<sup>596</sup>

Shii expansion in Iraq continued despite the efforts of the Ottoman government. In 1893, Ottoman *şehbender* reports from Persia noted that Tehran still claimed for itself the Caliphal seat, and through Shii ahunds in Iraq they were

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<sup>594</sup> Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", p. 152.

<sup>595</sup> Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and the *Mujtahids*...", p. 563; Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 148-149. Yusuf Rıza was a Russian-inclined government official who acted as an intermediary with Russian embassy. He was known to the circle of Arab sheikhs in Yıldız and he was a well-known supporter of pan-Islamism. Besides, he had Shii connections. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 39. As noted in above sections, him together with Ahmed Cevdet had a meeting with the Persian pan-Islamist Sheikh al-Rais to discuss on the issue of Sunni-Shii unity and the spread of Shiism in Iraq. Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and the *Mujtahids*...", pp. 562-563.

<sup>596</sup> Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam...*, pp. 199-200; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği...*, p. 309. For an instance of the Ottoman public irrigation works and the response received thereupon from the Shii community, see: Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 166.

preaching their own claims.<sup>597</sup> In 1894, Ali Galip, the Ottoman ambassador to Tehran, submitted a memorandum to combat the spread of Shiism. In this document, he proposed practical measures such as restrictions on the mobility of Shii pilgrims, expulsion of ahunds and propagandist *mujtahids*, and elimination of Persian intermediaries acting on behalf of merchants in the region. He suggested that emphasis of the role of the Ottoman Caliph as the protector of religion on the Shiis of the region must be achieved through visible works. Meanwhile, he also tried, on his part, to enlist the *mujtahids* in the Caliphal drive for Muslim unity. However, when the proposed measures failed to bring out expected outcomes and the appointment of Sunni ulama did not suffice to solve the problem; the government opted for a more radical policy of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* involving Afghani and his Persian circle in Istanbul.<sup>598</sup> The favorable ulama view of Persian seculars that had developed as a result of the Tobacco Protest, and Afghani's special position in the process of the Protest in building the alliance between religious and secular elements made it ripe for the undertaking of such a project.<sup>599</sup>

In fact, when Afghani arrived in Istanbul the Persian government had protested and exerted diplomatic pressure inquiring the reason of Ottoman invitation of him and demanding his expulsion or extradition. Upon these continuous pressures, the Ottoman government had to state that they had brought Afghani to keep him away from the British policies concerning Arabs, thus for their own sake. They also added that the Ottoman government had done a service for the Persian government by separating Afghani from Malkoum Khan in London, and assured that he would not be allowed to act against the interests of Persia. The Sultan requested from Afghani to stop attacking the Shah, and Afghani agreed.<sup>600</sup>

Yet, with his arrival, Afghani had united with the most prominent of Persian exiles in Istanbul, such as Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi. Meanwhile, he also corresponded with Malkoum Khan requesting from him a special issue of *Qanun* directed to the ulama of Najaf and Karbala advocating the unity of

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<sup>597</sup> Marufoğlu, "Osmanlı Döneminde...", p. 100.

<sup>598</sup> Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam...*, pp. 200-201; Deringil, "Irak'ta Şiiliğe Karşı...", pp. 149-150.

<sup>599</sup> Keddie, *Qajar Iran...*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>600</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 374-377.

Islam. In addition, a genuine meeting was held in the first months of 1893 led by Afghani in which Islamic religion was discussed. Present in the session were the three chief religious confidants of the Sultan, Sheikh Abu'l-Huda, Sheikh Zafir Madani and Ahmad Asad; Iranian modernizers such as Kirmani and Ruhi; and Yusuf Rıza Pasha and Sheikh al-Rais.<sup>601</sup> The meeting was mostly a theological discussion, but it was significant in the sense that, by bringing relevant figures together, it laid basis for the forthcoming forming up of the circle for the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*.<sup>602</sup>

Another remarkable project in that phase of Afghani's stay was the convening of an Islamic congress as a pan-Islamic undertaking. The project was initiated by the Sultan upon the suggestion of Afghani, and the idea of Abdulhamid was to assert himself as the leader of world Muslims that way. Invitation letters sent to diverse persons, the majority of which hinted favorable responses. However, the fact that Nasr al-Din was reserved on the issue presented an obstacle to any such project. The Shah perceived any intention of *rapprochement* and pan-Islamic alliance schemes as a medium to facilitate Ottoman domination over Persia.<sup>603</sup>

At this point, Abdulhamid decided to assign the responsibility of a radical program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* involving Shii ulama to Afghani. Earlier, the Sultan had consulted Ahmed Cevdet on the issue of inviting Afghani to Istanbul to employ him in Shii policies, and Cevdet Pasha had expressed his positive attitude. This, together with the Sultan's *muhtıra-ı hümayun* (imperial memorandum) to Afghani on the possibilities of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*, constitutes the evidence that, apart from separating Afghani from British schemes of Arab Caliphate, Abdulhamid had invited Afghani to make use of him in his Shii policies.<sup>604</sup>

The Sultan was complaining that, while there was necessity for the Muslims of the world to approach each other, there was no agreement with Persia to improve the relationship between the two countries. Yet, he was encouraged by Afghani who

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<sup>601</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din*..., p. 377.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid, p. 378.

<sup>603</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad*..., pp. 172-173.

<sup>604</sup> Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*..., pp. 201-202.

spoke to him of the possibility of an alliance between Shiis and Sunnis.<sup>605</sup> For Afghani, the schism between Sunnis and Shiis was pointless; and the perception of common danger and common values should direct Muslims to leave aside doctrinal differences and traditions of hostility.<sup>606</sup>

Abdulhamid became convinced that the solution to the Shii issue would most accurately be addressed by appeals of Islamic unity. In this respect, the tension between the Shii *mujtahids* and the Shah also presented an opportunity for the Sultan to extend his own political influence through Caliphal propaganda. Abdulhamid opted for a more radical program to achieve *rapprochement* between Sunni and Shii sects; and asked Afghani, by an imperial letter, probably in late 1893, his opinion on the issue of Shii-Sunni unity.<sup>607</sup> In the first part of his letter, the Sultan spoke of an attempt of Christians to unite churches, and then mentioned some harmful activities of Christian missionaries in the Empire regarding the way they worked against each other and against Muslims, and thus, the unity of the Empire. Then he went on to emphasize the necessity, for Muslims, of uniting against the harmful intentions and attempts of Christians, and claimed that it is much easier for Muslims to unite than it is for Christians. However, at this point, he criticised Iranians for their insistence to hold onto their heretical beliefs, and accused them of trying to convert the Sunnis of Iraq to their own sect, and explained what measures had up to then been taken against that development. Furthermore the Sultan complained that Iranian protection of Armenian revolutionaries, together with other wrong-doings of Iranians, led to a division among Muslims. Building on all of these, the Sultan asked for a proposal from Afghani on the issue of *ittihad-ı Islam*, analysing how it could be possible to abolish sectarian differences among Muslims, and realize Islamic unity. In the end of the letter, the Sultan even envisioned a union with Iran, such that the rulers of Iran would continue to rule within Iran, but transfer the military command to the Ottoman-Caliph. Finishing the letter, the Sultan requested Afghani that he

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<sup>605</sup> Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratım*..., pp. 178-179.

<sup>606</sup> Mahzumi, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin*..., p. 142.

<sup>607</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration*..., pp. 111-112.

prepared the report in strictest secrecy – its confidentiality being restricted only to himself, the Sultan, and the *katip* who would write down the report.<sup>608</sup>

Upon receiving the orders of the Sultan, it seems that Afghani responded most enthusiastically. Although the proposal he prepared in response is not available, the fact that the program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* was launched early in 1894 suggests that his proposal was appreciated by Abdulhamid.<sup>609</sup> Afghani's associates in the program were the circle of Persian exiles in Istanbul, including Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi; and Yusuf Rıza Pasha and Sheikh al-Rais. A Persian embassy employee, the ex-consul of Basra, Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk also worked on behalf of the group. When the group made up of twelve men in total was formed Afghani declared to his associates that the duty of the group was to serve the Islamic religion; and asked them to write to every friend and acquaintance in Iran, India, Arab lands and Turkistan, and in particular to the Shii ulama in Iraq and Iran, conveying them the benevolence of the Sultan, calling them to unity in favor of the Caliph. Promises were made to the Shii ulama that should they manage to unite in that the Sultan would grant them salaries and favors according to their rank, and they would be given free conduct in the shrine cities of Iraq. With regard to the anti-Shah Persian revolutionaries in the circle, the aim of the circle was to incite the Shii ulama against the Shah who was the enemy of Islam and refused *rapprochement* with other Muslim countries. The letters contained pan-Islamic and anti-Shah tones. In six months' time, about 400 hundred letters were reportedly written, in response to which 200 petitions from Arab and Iranian Shii ulama with gifts to the honour of the Sultan were received.<sup>610</sup> Thus, Afghani's program, under the auspices of the Ottoman Sultan, had set off with encouraging results.

In this respect, the involvement of secular radicals like Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi in the pan-Islamic group implies the secular aspect of the movement.<sup>611</sup> During the Tobacco Protest the basis had been laid for

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<sup>608</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 3/58.

<sup>609</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 57.

<sup>610</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 380-381; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 173-174; Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, pp. 56-57; Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration...*, pp. 114-115. The account of the activities of the group are those of Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi and Afzal al-Mulk, a Persian dissident from the same group.

<sup>611</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 381-382.

cooperation between radical nationalists and clergy,<sup>612</sup> and the Protest had been a lesson for reformers who understood that they had to link themselves with ulama and merchants, and who learned of the new ways of propaganda such as leaflets and placards, clandestine newspapers,<sup>613</sup> Besides, figures like Afghani, Malkoum Khan and Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani preferred to support the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph for their immediate goals for several reasons. First, they did not consider the Ottoman Empire similar to the expansionist Great Powers of Europe; and perceived potential in his Caliphal prestige to serve in the defense against imperialism. In addition to that, he could appeal to the Shiis of Atabat, being their ruler at least. Moreover, the Sultan not being on good terms with the Shah had given his consent for provoking the Shii ulama of Iraq.<sup>614</sup>

The correspondence traffic of Afghani's circle in Istanbul was supported by the Ottoman ambassador in Iran, Ali Galip Bey, who became active in winning over ulama. For instance, a Tehran mujtahid Aqa Sayyid Abdullah was granted monthly salary by Abdulhamid for his the support and zeal he displayed for Islamic unity.<sup>615</sup> Meanwhile, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani also encouraged Malkoum, who was in London, not to stop attacking the Shah as the government of Persia was stuck in a corner and had a short time.<sup>616</sup> In addition, he, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, had already won the support of Kurds against the Persian government in 1893. Besides, he even thought of travelling among tribes and nomads of Persia to incite them for upheaval. Moreover, being a prominent Azali-Babi, he also counted on the influence of Babis and Shaykhis, while some Babi chiefs were proposing incitement of tribes in these years.<sup>617</sup> Meanwhile, according to Abdülhamid, the *rapprochement* program had achieved to win over some of ulama and high-rank officials in Iran.<sup>618</sup> *Qanun* wrote that an emissary from ulama announced that they were ready to depose the Shah in

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<sup>612</sup> Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion....", pp. 291-292.

<sup>613</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 243.

<sup>614</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan...", p. 58.

<sup>615</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism....*, p. 58.

<sup>616</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan...", pp. 54-55.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid, pp. 55-56.

<sup>618</sup> Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratı...*, p. 179

the condition that a prince replaces him for the well-being of the people of Persia.<sup>619</sup> In this respect, the crucial point was to secure the support of Shii ulama, and the program had achieved, in the broader context of ulama-Ottoman relationships, in cultivating the *mujtahids*' favorable attitude toward Abdulhamid's pan-Islamism, Islamic unity and Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* policies.<sup>620</sup>

However, the policy soon suffered setbacks both as local developments served as a test on the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*, and also as a result of the complaints and counter maneuvers of the Persian government. The Samarra incident, an inter-sectarian conflict, in april 1894, soon after Afghani formed his circle, complicated the Shii issue for the Ottoman government.<sup>621</sup> The incident of Samarra demonstrated how sectarian animosities were prevalent at the local. At that period, the significance of the city as a holy shrine city was multiplied by the presence of the chief mujtahid Mirza Hasan Shirazi and his position there. The Ottoman government as an official policy tried to balance him there by the Sunni establishment, and there was an ongoing tension between the Shia and the Ottoman governor. The tension turned to an anti-Shii riot in 1894, triggered by a minor quarrel; and a Sunni mob gathered attacking Shiis on the streets while the Ottoman governor did not display due diligence. The presence of Shirazi in the city was problematic, but despite his intention to leave Samarra, he was encouraged by other *mujtahids* to stay. Meanwhile, members of ulama travelled to Iran to appeal to the Shah, and British consul also became involved. At this point, Abdülhamid tried to handle the issue in the best way possible, taking a conciliatory stand, and took firm measures to determine and punish those who were culpable and neglectful. However, Shii ulama's propensity to appeal to Qajars was already manifest. In the end, Shirazi refused British and Iranian intervention in the issue; he localized the affair and took himself responsibility to improve the situation. In sum, the incident demonstrated the complexities of the issue of Iraqi Shiis for the Ottoman Empire, and halted the pace of the *rapprochement* policy.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan...", p. 58.

<sup>620</sup> Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 169.

<sup>621</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 83.

<sup>622</sup> Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, pp. 166-169; Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration...*, p. 113.

Furthermore, the crucial blow came when various pieces of correspondence between Afghani's circle and the Shii ulama were obtained by Iranian authorities. On the one hand, the Iranian ambassador Nazim al-Dewleh demanded deportation of Afghani, Mirza Aga Han, Sheikh Ahmed and Mirza Hasan Han Kabir al-Mulk on the ground that they were revolutionaries organizing an anti-Shah plot. On the other, Iranian authorities began to utilize the "Armenian question", as a means of pressure on the Ottoman government, fomenting disturbances on the border. It was a fact that the period 1894-1896 was when the Armenian issue reached a crisis in Anatolia and Istanbul. The Shah had perceived the earlier pan-Islamic attempts centered around Caliphal propaganda of 1880s as aggressive against Persia, and responded once more in alarm. The magnitude of pressure was too much for Ottomans to handle, and the campaign lost momentum and the activities of Afghani's circle had to cease. Moreover, the demanded ones mentioned above, except Afghani, were detained and kept under arrest, their future being undecided till 1896.<sup>623</sup>

Perhaps, the reason of the failure of the campaign to bring about major outcomes compared to the expectations in its outset lied in a miscalculation of the ulama-Qajar relationship and the real motives of the Shii *mujtahids* as to involvement in politics. In fact, there is always a mistake in analyzing the relationship in Persia between the State authority and the ulama dichotomously. On the contrary, the relationship did not necessarily mean a contradiction. There were but dialectical dynamics in the sense that the ulama depended on the State with respect to economics and the need for a peaceful urban community.<sup>624</sup> As for the legitimacy of the Shah in the eyes of ulama, it must be kept in mind that divine kingship differed from divinely legitimated kingship. The position of the Shah was recognized by the ulama, meaning religious legitimacy, and the Shah further justified his rule regarding his role as the defender of Shii religion, through educational enterprise, and support for religious endowments and shrines.<sup>625</sup> Thus, the ulama was not subordinate but they were ready to acknowledge the Shah's legitimacy. This was an understanding of politics to accommodate the state within the belief system. In this

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<sup>623</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 58; Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration...*, p. 115-116.

<sup>624</sup> Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of Central...*, p. 76.

<sup>625</sup> Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of Central...*, p. 76-77.



respect, the Shah and the ulama competed but in the same framework: while the Shah tried to extend his authority, the ulama tried to restrict him, and vice versa. The two never tried to annihilate the other. The ulama generally hesitated to come up openly against the government. Therefore, when the ulama displayed anti-Shah attitude it was self-serving rather than challenging; and similarly, when ulama came up with marginal demands such as tax-exemption, the Shah objected emphasizing his role as the protector of faith.<sup>626</sup>

Another aspect of the cessation of the activities of the Persian circle in Istanbul was that it was partially the result of not having on hand the most appropriate people to execute the campaign of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. This is to mean the anti-Shah revolutionaries of Babi origin, who were at the heart of the program in Istanbul. Most prominent of these being Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi and Sheikh al-Rais, these revolutionaries were pan-Islamists however they viewed pan-Islam in nationalist terms and considered its pragmatic political potentials. For instance, Kirmani participated in the Caliphal propaganda, and later presented himself, by a poem to Abdülhamid, as a devout adherent to Islam. He praised the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* policy; and spoke of the warm response he received from those in Persia whom he communicated his pan-Islamic views, while blaming Shah for opposing it.<sup>627</sup> Likewise, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi wrote in one of his letters in 1896 that they had managed to win the support of certain ulama from Baghdad in the campaign of 1894.<sup>628</sup> In the circle, Sheikh al-Rais who was also a pan-Islamist acted in accordance with the message of his spiritual guide, the leader of Bahatism, that the threat of European imperialism was more urgent than the problem of absolutism and that the monarch should be supported against external enemies.<sup>629</sup> However, the problem in this respect was that Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi and Sheikh al-Rais were, being well-known Babis and Bahais were on bad terms with the Shah. This raised questions about whether it was possible at all that the Shah would not be concerned over their cooperation and mediation in the

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<sup>626</sup> Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of Central...*, pp. 77-81.

<sup>627</sup> Philipp, "The Concepts of Religion...", pp. 396-397.

<sup>628</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan...", pp. 58-59.

<sup>629</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdülhamid II...", p. 179.

Ottoman Shii policies.<sup>630</sup> Besides, Shii ulama also detested Babis, and seeing them as a threat to their own authority, desired that the Persian government repressed them as a dissident religious group.<sup>631</sup>

In addition, the effectiveness of the pan-Islamic group in Istanbul also suffered blow as a breach of ideas regarding priorities opened up the way for a division among them. The discrepancy arose from the fact that Afghani turned out to be focused solely on the deposition of the Shah leaving aside any other long-term consideration, whereas al-Rais saw the pan-Islamic activity as a way of strengthening Muslim 'national' identity without rendering the Persian state weak and vulnerable.<sup>632</sup> Thus, al-Rais had to leave Istanbul, only few months after his arrival,<sup>633</sup> as the Ottoman government refused to protect him upon Persian complaints about his activities.<sup>634</sup>

Nevertheless, the fact that the Iranian dimension of pan-Islam remained underdeveloped rested in the inherent contradictions of the Ottoman policy of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. The policy of trying to improve relations with the Shah while undermining his authority by trying to win the loyalty of *mujtahids* was unrealistic, the two conflicted and inhibited one another. Besides, the loyalty of the ulama to the Shah and the influence of the latter among Shiis outweighed the effect of the appeal to adhere to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. Moreover, Ottoman appeals of Islamic unity contained a strong Sunni triumphalism and missionizing attitude so it raised the suspicion of the Shii ulama.<sup>635</sup> Thus, in Persia, the call for Islamic unity did not gain the support of either the state or the majority of the ulama who saw Shii Islam as the principal form of legitimation as opposed to abolishing sectarian differences.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> John Gurney, "E. G. Browne and the Iranian Community in Istanbul", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 175.

<sup>631</sup> Sheikholeslami, *The Structure of Central...*, p. 82.

<sup>632</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdülhamid II...", pp. 179-180.

<sup>633</sup> Kia, "Pan-Islamism in the Late...", p. 43.

<sup>634</sup> Algar, "Participation by Iranian ...", p. 43; Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdülhamid II...", p. 176.

<sup>635</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais and Abdulhamid II...", p. 182.

<sup>636</sup> Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", p. 32.

After the Tobacco Protest, Shii ulama had considered whether they should be involved in any further movement against the Shah and his government. Meanwhile, the Persian government had tried to get the Ottoman government to secure pledges from the ulama of Iraq not to get involved in politics. At that point, ulama were reluctant to get deeply involved in a movement against the government. They feared that a change in the political condition of the country by the initiative of the ulama might lead to internal weakness and thereby foreign domination. Moreover, they were not interested in running the government.<sup>637</sup>

However, from the Tobacco Protest up to 1905, there was growing Russian political domination as a reason of widespread discontent in Persia. Economic decline of merchants was accompanied by effects of maladministration, and anti-foreign sentiments compounded the popular reaction. Even by 1895, Russian influence in Persia had reached to such an extent that the British government feared a Russian takeover of northern provinces and relegation of the Shah to the position of a vassal.<sup>638</sup> It was thereafter that the earlier effects of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* emerged, displaying that the Ottoman pan-Islamic program was not totally null, but rather successful to a degree in cultivating seeds of Caliphal loyalty. For instance, in 1895, some chiefs of Atabat were envisioning to send emissaries to Abdulhamid to solicit help against the Persian government as Islam was in peril in Iran, to which the Sultan responded tacitly.<sup>639</sup> Thus, the ulama of Iraq remained in close ties with the Ottoman government at the end of the nineteenth century. As such, Tehran ulama received protection from Ottoman Ambassador. Both the Ottomans wanted to win the support of the ulama and vice versa for political reasons. This was true despite the fact that recognition of the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph required a revision of the main theme of Imamate in Shiism.<sup>640</sup>

The Ottoman government was also perceived as the authority to apply for Shiis in Caucasia against Russian tyranny. Besides, during the reign of the timid Muzaffar al-Din Shah that succeeded Nasr al-Din after 1896, Persian ulama thought

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<sup>637</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, pp. 331-332; Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>638</sup> Rose L. Greaves, "British Policy in Persia, 1892-1903", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (1965), pp. 35-36; Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 174.

<sup>639</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan...", p. 56.

<sup>640</sup> Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late...", pp. 48-49.

of appealing to the Ottoman Sultan, whom they regarded as the strongest Muslim ruler, against the growing subservience of the Shah to Russians, which stood for support for Islamic ecumenism in a sense.<sup>641</sup> In this respect, while *mujtahids* sought to exert pressure on the Persian government by applying to the Ottomans, Persian government applied to the Ottomans against the *mujtahids*. Russians were also putting on similar demands against the *mujtahids*.<sup>642</sup> Ulama's application to the Ottoman ambassador, in 1894, for submitting their demands to Muzaffar al-Din Shah could also be considered as a case that pan-Islamism found an echo.<sup>643</sup> Moreover, the clandestine activities of Afghani's pan-Islamic circle had contributed to the formation of semi-secret oppositional groups named *anjumans* toward the end of Nasr al-Din Shah's regime. Anjumans brought together reformist and nationalist people from diverse classes; and their activities involved disseminating information, oppositional placards, printed materials, books, and newspapers.<sup>644</sup> Furthermore, there were reports, during the days leading up to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, of secret 'pan-Islamic societies' founded and left in operation by Afghani. Those societies were attended by Afghani's partizans with anti-Qajar feelings and pan-Islamic sentiments in Persia, among whom there were *mujtahids*, students, and state officials.<sup>645</sup> At that stage, the pan-Islamic idea of having all the principal ulama address a petition to the Ottoman Sultan resurrected.<sup>646</sup>

In sum, the programme of Sunni-Shii rapprochement had managed to achieve results to a certain extent despite the fact that it had to be abandoned. Although the project contained inherent contradictions it helped in evoking a degree of Caliphal attachment among Shii ulama compared to earlier periods. Yet, it was not enough to meet the expectations of the Ottoman government, and moreover, the counter maneuvers and pressures from Persian side, and the overturning of the

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<sup>641</sup> Litvak, *Shii Scholars...*, p. 174.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>643</sup> Algar, *Religion and State...*, p. 202.

<sup>644</sup> Lambton, *Qajar Persia...*, pp. 307-308.

<sup>645</sup> Nikki Keddie, "Iranian Politics, 1900-1905: Background to Revolution", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (1969), pp. 17-19.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

priorities in the Ottoman political agenda between 1894-1896 had forced the cessation of the campaign and the switch to new Shii and Persian policies.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**THE ASSASSINATION OF NASR AL-DIN SHAH**  
**AND THE FINAL YEAR OF AFGHANI'S STAY IN ISTANBUL**

In the year of 1896 an incident of primary importance took place, in which the Persian Shah Nasr al-Din was assassinated only a few days before the celebrations of his fiftieth anniversary of accession to the throne.<sup>647</sup> The assassination which took place on May 1 of that year assumed international dimensions and brought about an issue of discord, and thus, an Ottoman-Iranian diplomatic tension, owing to the conspiratorial web of relationships between the murderer and the alleged-to-be instigators, Sayyid Jamal ad-din al-Afghani and his anti-Shah associates Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi and Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk. The Shah was shot dead by a certain Mirza Muhammed Riza Kirmani, while visiting the Shii sanctuary of Shahzade Abd al-Azim.<sup>648</sup> The fact that Mirza Riza had connections with Afghani added up to the complexities of the issue thereby making it a multi-faceted one.

Conventional analyses of the assassination and its aftermath are to be found mainly in the standard biographical studies of Jamal ad-Din Afghani. While these studies commonly made extensive use of European and Persian resources, they neglect Ottoman archives and thus the viewpoint from the Ottoman side. This chapter intends to reflect the Ottoman side of the diplomacy following the incident referring to Ottoman resources; and provide a discussion of the assassination and its aftermath attempting to present an analysis as to the concerns behind the position of the Ottoman government in response to Iranian diplomatic demands.

**5.1. The Assassination and Its Repercussions**

Following the assassination of Shah Nasr al-Din, there were plenty of newspaper articles covering the incident in British, French, German and Austrian

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<sup>647</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 408.

<sup>648</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 59; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 180-181.

press throughout May 1896. As of the first instance, the assassin Mirza Riza was asserted to be a member of the *Babi* sect, and relevant theories about the motives of *Babis* were produced. However, then, the focus of the attention of European press and Persian government moved elsewhere as the theory of *Babi* involvement in the affair was abandoned, and the assassin's background and connections with Afghani, who was publicly the most notorious of Shah's antagonists, were revealed. Thus, the suspicion of complicity in the incident soon fell upon Afghani.<sup>649</sup>

In fact, it was during Afghani's 1886-1887 stay in Persia with Amin al-Zarb, his host in Tehran, that he met Mirza Muhammed Riza Kirmani, shortly Mirza Riza, who became his personal servant, and later on, his disciple and a devoted follower. He was a cloak maker and seller of second-hand articles.<sup>650</sup> He also served Afghani during his second Persian stay between 1889-1891. Actually, in these years, Mirza Riza was among those who attended secret meetings held by Afghani in Tehran for reform, and later he was with Afghani when the latter was seized by force from his sanctuary in the shrine of Abd al-Azim and expelled from Persia upon the orders of the Shah.<sup>651</sup> In addition, Mirza Riza was also among the persons arrested in 1891 during the Tobacco Protest blamed of involvement in anti-Shah propaganda through leaflets, though he denied his participation.<sup>652</sup> After his arrest in 1891 he was deceived by one of the Shah's sons and the minister of war at that time, Kamran Mirza Naib al-Sultan, to write an imitated letter with anti-Shah remarks, which was then used as an excuse to arrest him. Subsequent to that, Mirza Riza was imprisoned for about four years during which he suffered physically and mentally. He confessed that when he was released he went to Istanbul in 1895, by the funds provided to him by Amin al-Zarb who was the host of Afghani in Persia, and met Afghani there, who helped him to be placed in a hospital for recovery, and told him about his misfortunes and intentions to take his revenge. Thereupon, he received Afghani's recommendation that he should kill the 'tyrant'; and, through Afghani's directions, decided that the root of the malice he endured was not Naib al-Sultan but Nasr al-Din

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<sup>649</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, pp. 59-62. Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, p. 184.

<sup>650</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 279; Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 86.

<sup>651</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 320-322.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid*, p. 337.

Shah. Next, he left Istanbul with the brother of Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi, Ebu'l-Kasim; and, by the route of Caucasus and Azerbaijan, and procuring a Russian revolver from a fruit seller in Baku, returned to Persia on January 1896 and went to the sanctuary of Abd al-Azim near Tehran in March 1896, where he would commit the act of assassination in two months' time. He declared that by killing the Shah he had done a great public service as his deed contributed to the fight for liberty in Persia.<sup>653</sup>

In sum, the interrogation of the murderer of the Shah, included implications that set forth Afghani as the instigator. Beside many relevant references, there were particularly two explicit statements of Mirza Riza relating his deed to Afghani. In one point he expresses that "if there be a discerning eye it will not fail to observe that it was in that very same place whence they dragged the Sayyid that the Shah was shot".<sup>654</sup> In another one he states that "no one, save myself and the Sayyid, was aware of this idea of mine or of my intention to kill the Shah".<sup>655</sup>

In this respect, it is necessary to remember how Shah and Afghani came to be in conflict with each other. The previous chapter had presented a detailed analysis of Afghani's Persian antecedents as well as his activities on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan and at the expense of the Shah. He had been in intense anti-Shah propaganda since the time of the Tobacco Protest, and emerged as a leading figure in the religious and radical alliance forged in those days; and he had resumed his all-out opposition activism from Basra and London with appeals to the Shii ulama to depose Shah Nasr al-Din. In Istanbul, together with the Persian circle he gathered around himself, he engaged in the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* policy of the Ottoman Empire, and during the program he tried to bring about Caliphal loyalty among Shiis of Iraq and Persia under the framework of Islamic unity. Meanwhile, he had also concentrated efforts to the overthrow of the Shah. Nasr al-Din perceived his undertakings as a threat against his regime, and his presence in Istanbul had been a matter of complaints for the Persian government.

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<sup>653</sup> This account of personal history of Mirza Riza is embodied in the *procès-verbal* of his cross-examination after the assassination. Mirza Riza affirmed that he was a faithful disciple and servant of Afghani. Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, pp. 63-85. See also Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 410, 417-418; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 148-149, 178-179. His declarations in a second interrogation on the eve of his execution affirm his confessions in the primary cross-examination. See, Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, pp. 85-92.

<sup>654</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 71.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73.



Thus, he became the most explicit and fervent opponent of the Nasr al-Din. Not only his appeals to the Shii ulama,<sup>656</sup> but also other reports of his remarks and personal sayings demonstrated the way he was focused on the deposition of the Shah. Even after his promises to the Sultan to stop his violent attacks on the Shah after his arrival in Istanbul, he continued to nurture his violent hatred of Nasr al-Din and his hopes of revenge upon him.<sup>657</sup> His obsession, demonstrating his strong desire and firm intention to have the Shah's "head roll" and "put the Shah in his grave", never ceased.<sup>658</sup> In fact, Afghani had, earlier during his endeavors in Egypt, put forward assassination as a possible and legitimate way to reach the desired ends.<sup>659</sup> All these combined together with the content of Mirza Riza's interrogation give strong implications as to Afghani's conspiracy in the incident of assassination which materialized in 1896. The view of the interrogators were also in the direction that Afghani was the instigator.<sup>660</sup> Moreover, it was rumoured that while committing his act of assassination Mirza Riza had cried out "this is Jamal ad-Din's revenge".<sup>661</sup>

As noted earlier the incident of assassination received wide press coverage in Europe, with general content implying Afghani's complicity. Exceptionally, there were several newspaper reports which put forward the opposite. These were in *Le Temps* on 14 June 1896; in a Munich newspaper *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* on 24 June 1896; and in *l'Intransigeant*, the newspaper of Henri Rochefort with whom

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<sup>656</sup> See especially the archival document BOA. Y.PRK.BŞK. 81/43. This is an open letter, published in the newspaper *Ziya ul-Hafiqin*, describing the Shah as the corrupt and evil *Pharaoh*, claiming that during his lengthy reign he gradually seized the whole control in Persia and imposed his despotic measures in every way, diminishing the role of the ulama and humiliating them, and that he went on to sell the country to the *Franks*, in other words Europeans, who made use of the opportunity. Thereon, Afghani called the ulama, whom he addressed as the guides of the people and the sole pillar and protector of the community and religion, to action, and declared that the abolishment of all the concessions as well as the Tobacco Concession and deposition of the Shah was only in their power.

<sup>657</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 376-377; Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin...*, p. 40.

<sup>658</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 366, 404-405.

<sup>659</sup> Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad Abduh*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 14.

<sup>660</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 85.

<sup>661</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, p. 181. Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin...*, p. 39. This note in both books is *not* supported by Mirza Riza himself in the record of his examination. Therein he made no overt expression of Jamal ad-Din Afghani as the instigator. Moreover, Mahzumi claims falsely that the deed was committed by the use of a dagger, which diminishes the reliability of his report.

Afghani had met in Paris, on 8 July 1896. These were interviews with Afghani giving a portrayal of his living in Istanbul and presenting Afghani's comments on Shah Nasr al-Din's wrong-doings during his rule. Besides, all these three interviews copying more or less each other, included Afghani's denials of complicity in the assassination and even refutations of Mirza Riza culpability, and thus endeavoured to exculpate him.<sup>662</sup>

As for the Ottoman Empire in the same period of time, although the incident was of top importance for the Ottoman Palace, publicity of Shah's murder by Ottoman press was prohibited.<sup>663</sup> Regarding the censorship of Hamidian era, the assassination of rulers, i.e. regicide, was a sensitive subject, and any sudden death of rulers would normally be attributed to 'health problems'.<sup>664</sup> For the duration of one month, in other words, throughout the whole month of May 1896 following the incident, two of the major newspapers of the period, for instance, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* and *İkdam* presented news of Shah's 'malady' and 'decease', but there was not a word of 'assassination' or 'murder', neither anything mentioning the repercussions of the incident in Europe and Persia, such as those related to the alleged involvement of Afghani. At the most extreme extent, there were notes about Nasr al-Din Shah's life history, the condolences of certain prominent figures expressed, reciprocal diplomatic visits of certain officials, and the accession to the throne of the new Shah Muzaffer'ud-Din; but no references were made to an Ottoman-Persian diplomatic crisis.<sup>665</sup> Besides, the Persian newspaper Akhtar also complied with the ongoing censor as it was also a demand of the Persian embassy. Two Turkish newspapers *Malumat* and *Hazine-i Fünun* were punished because they

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<sup>662</sup> For the three interviews, see respectively, Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 349-353; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 410-413, and Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 354-356. For Afghani's contacts with Henri Rochefort, see Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 211, 213. See also Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, p. 185; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 412-413 for the comment that the interviews might have been sent to the newspapers directly by Afghani.

<sup>663</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, p. 184.

<sup>664</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, p. 188.

<sup>665</sup> *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*: 3 May 1896 (5298-185), 4 May 1896 (5299-186), 5 May 1896 (5300-187), 6 May 1896 (5301-188), 7 May 1896 (5302-189), 8 May 1896 (5303-190), 10 May 1896 (5305-192), 11 May 1896 (5306-193), 14 May 1896 (5309-196), 15 May (5310-197), 17 May 1896 (5311-199), 19 May 1896 (5313-201), 20 May 1896 (5314-202), 22 May 1896 (5316-204). *İkdam*: 3 May 1896 (641), 4 May 1896 (642), 5 May 1896 (643), 6 May 1896 (644), 8 May 1896 (646), 9 Mayıs 1896 (648), 10 May 1896 (649).

had covered the subject.<sup>666</sup> In a different way, the check over publicity of the assassination in the press was ensured furthermore by the control of import of foreign newspapers.<sup>667</sup>

Nevertheless, Ottoman official resources contain reports related to the incident of assassination. One of these is the copy of a telegram from Tehran to the Persian ambassador in Istanbul, dated 1 May 1896, the day of the assassination, reporting that the Shah, while visiting the shrine of Shahzadeh Abd'al-Azim, was shot dead by a revolver that was fired by a "Babi", and that the assassin was captured. This copy of the telegram was submitted to the notice of *Mabeyn-i Humayun* by Ottoman officials.<sup>668</sup> In the same file there is another significant document, dated 3 May 1896, which is a telegram from the Ottoman Ambassador in Tehran, containing information, as it is presented to him by the Iranian Prime Minister in an interview, about the assassin and his remarkable connections. According to that, Nasr al-Din Shah's assassin Riza of Kirman had relations with Afghani, Mirza Aqa Han, Sheikh Ahmed Ruhi, Mirza Hasan Han, and Ebu'l-Kasim, the brother of Sheikh Ahmad, and had strong admiration and loyalty to Sheikh Jamal (Afghani); and moreover, upon Afghani's expulsion from Persia he had supplied weapons to Afghani's supporters. Afterwards he had been imprisoned for four years because of his anti-Shah publications and had spent that time in the prison of Qazvin. Upon his release – with an obligation to leave Persia – he had gone to Istanbul, and met Afghani. When the aforesaid persons except Afghani, were detained by Ottoman authorities upon repeated requests of Iranian embassy, Mirza Riza had run away with Ebu'l-Kasim. Finally it is noted that the date and the reason of his arrival in Tehran was unclear and there were no verifications as to his probable instigators and that he had a firm conviction about his deed that he performed a great 'public service'.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> Koloğlu, "Akhtar, Journal Persan...", p. 136.

<sup>667</sup> On a particular occasion, Ottoman authorities totally prohibited the import of an Italian newspaper, *Tribuna*, because of its inappropriate content. The relevant document, dated 7 May 1896, indicates that, as part of rumours about the Shah's death, the newspaper *Tribuna* alluded to a tension between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, and makes references to religious fanaticism. BOA. Y.A.HUS. 351/69.

<sup>668</sup> BOA. Y.PRK.HR. 21/76.

<sup>669</sup> BOA. Y.PRK.HR. 21/76.

After the assassin Mirza Riza was publicly hanged on 13 August 1896, the Ottoman Embassy in Tehran telegraphed the news of that to Istanbul on 15 August 1896. In that telegram it is briefly reported that Mirza Riza was publicly hanged; and the day before his execution he was questioned for one last time in the presence of top government officials, and that he explained his motives for killing the Shah and claimed that there was nobody who incited him for his act.<sup>670</sup> The details of this report were to follow in a related set of official dispatch by the Tehran ambassador. The first part of the dispatch is the record of Mirza Riza's final interrogation, in which there were several questions and answers. First, Mirza Riza was asked: "Are you Babi?" He replied: "Nonsense! I never accepted Babism." Second, he was asked: "Why did you kill the Shah?" He answered: "Because of the sufferings I endured at the hands of his son Naib al-Sultan and his man Sardar-i Afkham." Next, he was asked: "Then, why is it the Shah that you take your revenge upon?" He answered: "I wanted to cut the tree bearing these evil fruits from its roots". Then, he was asked: "Did you have any instigator in this deed?" He replied: "No instigator I had." Finally, he was asked: "Did Sheikh Jamal ad-Din (Afghani) not provoke you?" He answered: "No he did not. Yet, I had loyalty to him. Once I told the story of my sufferings to him, he said to me that I should take the revenge of my ruined life".<sup>671</sup>

The second part of the dispatch contains detailed information the Ottoman ambassador managed to obtain about Mirza Riza's life story. According to his account, it was widely known in Tehran that in the past Mirza Riza had somewhat suffered trickery and mistreatment of Naib al-Sultan. Following this, while imprisoned in the latter's palace, he had attempted to commit suicide; but he was saved by medical care. Upon his release with condition of exile from Tehran he was granted 25 copper *tumans*. The report also adds some descriptions about the way he was publicly hanged.<sup>672</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 357/55.

<sup>671</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 359/73.

<sup>672</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 359/73. The story, here, about what happened with Naib al-Sultan and the way Riza committed suicide shows slight difference from Mirza Riza's own narration in his interrogation presented in Browne's *Persian Revolution*.

## 5.2. Diplomacy upon Assassination

As a result of certain implications and statements in the interrogation of the Mirza Riza, and due to his connections with Afghani and his associates in Istanbul, and taking into consideration the fact that Afghani was the most overt and ardent adversary of Shah Nasr al-Din, Iranian authorities were in belief that Afghani had complicity in the assassination. Therefore, they demanded the detainment and extradition of Afghani and also three other Iranians, Mirza Aqa Han Kirmani, Mirza Hasan Han Kabir al-Mulk and Sheikh Ahmed Ruhi.

In fact, it was as early as 1892, when Afghani arrived in Istanbul, that Persian officials had begun demanding his extradition. The Shah had already been protesting to the British government against Afghani, during his 1891-1892 stay in London, being allowed to carry an anti-Shah campaign together with Malkoum Khan from the British capital.<sup>673</sup> Thus, the protestations were directed to Istanbul upon his arrival there by the invitation of the Ottoman Sultan; and it was categorically expressed to the Ottomans that granting Afghani any honours or duties, and welcoming him in Istanbul would be considered as an overtly unfriendly act against Persia. Persian ambassador Mirza Asadullah Khan Nazim al-Dewleh was authorized to take whatever steps necessary to have Afghani imprisoned, in response to which Ottoman authorities promised to keep Afghani's activities under surveillance and not to allow anymore his violent attacks on the Shah.<sup>674</sup> This, as analyzed in detail in the previous chapter, came to be true as Afghani's all-out propaganda against the Shah seemed to cease in Istanbul. Yet, his pan-Islamic ideas and his antagonism to Shah Nasr al-Din were allowed freedom in 1894 when, as part of the Ottoman Sultan's policy of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*, Afghani together with the circle of Persians launched the campaign that involved writing to the Shii ulama and notables in the name of Islamic unity and for the favor of Abdülhamid's Caliphal claims. When various pieces of correspondence between Afghani's Iranian circle and the Shii ulama fell into the hands of Iranian officials, the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul began to demand imprisonment or extradition of Afghani, and three other persons from his circle, Mirza Aqa Han Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmed Ruhi, and Mirza Hasan Han

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<sup>673</sup> Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh...*, p. 60.

<sup>674</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 374-376.

Kabir al-Mulk, on the grounds that they were plotting against the Shah. The three except Afghani were arrested and kept in prison in Trabzon, while the Sultan issued an order that Persians were under the control of their own ambassador. However, Afghani, who had broken relations with Ahmad Ruhi and Aqa Khan Kirmani several months earlier, intervened for their release.<sup>675</sup> At that point, a police report, dated 17 November 1895, describes the status of these four persons. According to the report, Afghani's status was under question, and there was a noted indication of Mirza Hasan Han Kabir al-Mulk that he had been in the service of Persian embassy for more than twenty years and that he had many times received favors of the Caliph. The document ends with a note that the Persian embassy insists on their extradition with the ferry the following day. In the end, the three except Jamal ad-Din were kept under arrest and their return to Iranian officials was under decision; and they were not returned to Iranian officials for that time.<sup>676</sup> Yet, their situation was made an issue of negotiation as the Persian side made the maneuver of bringing forward the case of Armenians that took refuge in Persia and promised their extradition in exchange. It was when the diplomatic mission of Münif Pasha headed for Tehran to solicit their release from Nasr al-Din that the news of the assassination of the Shah arrived.<sup>677</sup>

The assassination of Nasr al-Din Shah in 1896 inevitably intensified diplomatic traffic between the Persian government and the Ottoman side further. As a result of the signs of Afghani's complicity Persian government made repeated demands of his extradition. Elsewhere, the diplomatic process from the Persian perspective is reflected, referring to the series of letters between Amin al-Sultan, the

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<sup>675</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 380-382.

<sup>676</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 16/85. In fact, in the memoirs of Sultan Abdulhamid, Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk who was the Persian consul general at the time is said to have done great service for the policy of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*. Thus, it is interesting that his extradition was made an issue of consideration. This is most probably a sign of how the Shii policy had lost both its momentum and its priority for the Ottoman government at that point of time. See Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratım...*, p. 179.

<sup>677</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 179-180; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 416. Münif Pasha was a liberal reformer, and a previous minister of education. His contacts with Afghani and Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani had been mentioned earlier in this thesis on p.8, p.114, p.134. Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani had dedicated his translation of Télémaque's Fenelon to Münif Pasha. Christophe Balay, "Littérature Persanne en Diaspora...", p. 182. After 1896, Münif Pasha would serve as the ambassador to Tehran. For information about Münif Pasha, see Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman...*, pp. 179-180. For the importance of his mission to Persia, see, Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam....*, pp. 44-45.

Persian Prime Minister, and Ala'l-Mulk, the Persian ambassador in Istanbul, that outlines the course of diplomatic transactions between the Persian and Ottoman sides.<sup>678</sup> The process which began as early as 4 May 1896, involved strenuous efforts of Iranians for the extradition of Afghani, while Ottomans at times gave them reason to hope that they would achieve the result of their demands. Meanwhile, the debate centered around the question of Afghani's national status; his unproven complicity in the assassination; and an Ottoman-Persian agreement, that was in effect, about extradition of nationals upon demand from both sides. Yet, it was rather the story of the interplay of the insistence on the Iranian side to obtain Afghani at any cost, and tactics, on the Ottoman side, for the procrastination of Afghani's delivery to Iranians.

The series of Ottoman documents related to the process starts, on 4 May 1896, with a police report of the Persian demand of an imperial order for the detainment and delivery of Afghani and his three associates, who are noted as 'four Persians who had arrived in Istanbul from Persia, with their presence *here* being inconvenient'.<sup>679</sup> Afghani was arrested on the following day, and his papers were searched but nothing incriminating was discovered in his papers.<sup>680</sup>

The documents continue with a letter, dated 18 May 1896, submitted by the *Sadrizam* to the Sultan, indicating that the Persian ambassador visited the Sublime Porte on that day repeating the demand of Sheikh Jamal ad-Din Afghani's delivery to the embassy. In his request the ambassador was reported to state that the British had, in written form, declared that they would not grant protection to the Afghani. Furthermore he denoted that the consent for extradition would be appropriate for the well-being of Ottoman-Persian relations; and even implied, under other circumstances, the possibility of the assassination of the Sheikh 'as a result of the fury and enmity the Sheikh caused among Persians'.<sup>681</sup> The following document,

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<sup>678</sup> Pakdaman presents french translations of the whole archive of the letters and telegrams. See the appendix in *Djamal-ed-Din Assad...*, pp. 330-338. Keddie, referring to the same resources, provides a summary of the course of events in *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 414-418.

<sup>679</sup> BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 32/50.

<sup>680</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, p. 96.

<sup>681</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 352/23. Afghani had earlier applied to the British embassy for protection. Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 177. As for the threats of assassination of Afghani by Persians, Afghani's security was well-assured and his house was strongly guarded and watched. In fact, at that, Ottoman police was in the idea that Afghani was the instigator of the assassination of Nasr al-Din. Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 187, 338.

dated 4 June 1896, is a file containing three documents, from the Sadrazam, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Iranian ambassador, attached to each other. The file indicates repeated extradition demand, from Persians, of Sheikh Jamal ad-Din, whose “evil deeds and various instances of malice are needless to describe” according to the Iranian Embassy, and states that his delivery, which had been approved by the Sultan’s order but postponed later on the grounds that he was a British subject, should be put into effect as the British Ambassador Sir Philip Currie stated in written form that Afghani was not an English national.<sup>682</sup> Another similar document, dated 17 June 1896, reports Iranian Embassy’s inquiry about Afghani’s status and request that Ottoman authorities expedite the process of his extradition, as it had been understood via the interrogation of the assassin Mirza Riza, that the deed was committed at the instigation of Sheikh Jamal; and his confrontation with Mirza Riza was expected in Tehran.<sup>683</sup> The following document, on 28 June 1896, reiterates more or less the same points, and asks about the reasons for Ottoman reluctance to cooperate, and presents implications that Ottoman-Persian relations might suffer in case that attitude of the Ottoman side continues.<sup>684</sup>

About a month later, on 23 August 1896, the Iranian Ambassador, together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited the Sadrazam, and made firm statements that in case of refusal of the extradition of Sheikh Jamal (Afghani) he was authorized to break off diplomatic relations and return to Persia. In exchange for that, the Sadrazam indicated that the Ottoman side had not yet recognized Afghani’s Persian nationality, and that his delivery, being a guest of the State, would not be appropriate. Thereupon, the Iranian ambassador presented documentation, written earlier by Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Iranian Embassy in Petersburg, that Afghani had been in Russia with a Persian passport.<sup>685</sup> A telegram, a few days later, on 27 August 1896, from the Ottoman ambassador in Tehran, informed that during *mevlid-i nebevi*, the celebrations of the holy birthday of the Prophet, he had an important conversation with Shah Muzaffar al-Din in which the issue of Afghani was

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<sup>682</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 352/111.

<sup>683</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 353/28.

<sup>684</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 354/13.

<sup>685</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 357/124.



discussed.<sup>686</sup> The details of the meeting were presented in a following despatch, on 27 September 1896. According to the report of Tehran ambassador, the Shah demanded the conclusion of the extradition process, and made reference to an effective Ottoman-Persian agreement, about extradition of nationals upon demand from any of the two sides. In response to that, the ambassador claimed that Persian authorities had never acted in accordance with the conditions of the agreement, and that the Armenian malefactors had never been returned to Ottoman officials albeit diplomatic attempts. Yet, the Shah insisted that, if that had been the case, the reason should probably have been that those who were not returned were not Ottoman subjects. Thereupon, the ambassador was requested to hold further talks with the Persian Prime Minister, who, as a proof, presented a document indicating that five persons (or group of persons) had been delivered to Ottoman authorities. However, when the Ottoman ambassador inquired about this claim, it became understood that they had not been handed over to the Ottoman embassy but rather allowed to return to their homelands. Subsequent to that, as a sign of the well-intentions of the Ottoman sultanate, the ambassador came up with two proposals about the issue of Afghani; the first one being the trial of the case of Afghani in an Ottoman or a neutral European court, and respecting the decision that would bear; and the other one being the exile and surveillance, by the police, of the Sheikh in a location other than Istanbul. Nevertheless, after a consideration of about ten days both proposals were rejected by the Iranians. Under those circumstances, the ambassador suggested back to the Ottoman capital, that Afghani should not be extradited to Persia.<sup>687</sup>

In sum, the series of documents in the Ottoman archive indicate a reluctance of the Ottoman side to extradite Afghani. While Afghani was after all retained by the Ottomans, this was not true for his three associates from his Pan-Islamic circle in Istanbul, Mirza Aqa Han, Mirza Hasan Han and Sheikh Ahmed who, at the time of the assassination, were imprisoned at Trabzon with their status under consideration upon extradition demands from the Persian government. While in Trabzon their issue had been one of bureaucratic conflict as interventions and counter-interventions from

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<sup>686</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 358/26.

<sup>687</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 363/108. Reciprocity was always one principle sought in relations with Persia, regarding commercial or diplomatic issues. See Zarinebaf-Shahr, "The Iranian Merchant...", p. 207. Similar to Armenians, the issue of tribal malefactors fleeing to Persia from Eastern Anatolia was also a problem. Çetinsaya, *Abdülhamid Döneminde Irak...*, p. 89.

Sheikh Abu'l-Huda, one of the chief religious Arab advisors of the Yıldız Palace; the Ottoman chief of police; Münif Pasha; and Afghani, postponed their extradition but also their release.<sup>688</sup>

In fact, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani had applied for Ottoman nationality in 1893, and Persians had objected it claiming that he was among *erbab-ı fesad* (malefactors) and his relationship with Ottoman officials was considered as being a tool of Kirmani's wrong-doings, despite the fact that he had earlier served in *Dabistan-ı İraniyan*, the Persian school, in Istanbul, and had earned appreciations of the Persian embassy. The reaction of the Persian side had been interpreted as being offended by Kirmani's intention to leave his Persian nationality; because, for the Ottoman side, Kirmani had never given any hints of 'hypocrisy', 'malice' or 'bad intentions'. Nevertheless, the Ottoman government had declined his application for citizenship.<sup>689</sup> These notwithstanding, in 1895, the Ottoman government had grown to be suspicious of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk, due to their 'malicious publications' in Paris; and as of 2 June 1895, they had been suggested to be kept under control and surveillance.<sup>690</sup>

When the news of the Shah's assassination came, though there was no evidential sign of their complicity in the incident, Mirza Aqa Han Kirmani, Mirza Hasan Han and Sheikh Ahmed Ruhi were delivered to Persian authorities in the immediate aftermath of the incident.<sup>691</sup> However, when Iranian authorities expressed their gratitude for the extradition permit granted, and demanded that of Afghani in the same manner, it went unappreciated.<sup>692</sup> Moreover, the preference of the Ottoman

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<sup>688</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 382-383.

<sup>689</sup> BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 27/110. The document is dated 7 December 1893. *Dabistan-ı İraniyan* was the Persian school in Istanbul established by Persians in Istanbul. John Gurney, "E. G. Browne and the Iranian...", pp. 154-155.

<sup>690</sup> BOA.A.MKT.MHM. 534/37. 'Malicious publications' may refer to parliamentarianist content.

<sup>691</sup> They were put to death secretly in Tebriz, on 15 July 1896, nearly a month before the execution of the Shah's assassin. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 417-418; Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, pp. 93-95. In the beginning of 1897, the Ottoman embassy in Tehran, would intervene for the provision of funds for the wife of Mirza Hasan Khan to return to her native land Basra, and the grant of *harcırah* would be obtained with 'unexpected difficulty'. BOA. Y.A.HUS. 365/8. At about the same time of the extradition of the three Persians, Akthar, the oppositional Persian newspaper in Istanbul, was closed down by the Ottoman government as a sign of benevolence towards the Persian government. Çetinsaya, *The Ottoman Administration...*, p. 116.

<sup>692</sup> BOA. Y.A.HUS. 351/112. The document includes a telegram, from Mirza Asadullah Khan Nazim al-Dewleh, the previous Persian ambassador Istanbul in Iran, that is dated 7 May 1896 – six days after

side to retain Afghani continued till the Persian government dropped their interest in the issue. For the Ottoman government the reason for that choice was to make further investigations as to Afghani's connections in Istanbul; and it was also part of tactics to keep him on hand as an asset in relations with Persia.<sup>693</sup> Afghani's health deteriorated in 1897 and the Persian ambassador reported back to Tehran that there was no longer need for demands for his extradition.<sup>694</sup>

### **5.3. Reasons for the Ottoman Side to Retain Afghani**

At the time of the assassination in 1896, the program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement*, in which Afghani and his Persian associates participated, had already lost momentum, as noted in the final section of the previous chapter. Persian diplomatic protests and counter maneuvers in 1895, and the inter-sectarian Samarra incident that served as a test of the program, as well as internal problems in the Persian circle had led to a cessation of the campaign. In addition, the Ottoman Empire's political agenda had been influenced by the impact of the Armenian problem and the emergence of the Young Turk opposition movement. Moreover, upon pressures from the Persian government, three important members of the group had been detained. Furthermore, Afghani had already fallen out of the favors of the Sultan in 1895, and had made attempts to leave Istanbul and applied to the British embassy to be able go to London.<sup>695</sup>

Despite all these, even when after the assassination the Ottoman government handed over Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi, Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk to Persian authorities, Afghani's extradition was never granted. The Ottoman government kept it as an issue of negotiation and never declined Persian demands in total, but they followed a procrastination policy and used the issue of

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the assassination. Nazim al-Dewleh had left Istanbul in 1895 and Ala'l-Mulk had been appointed to his post. The latter was previously the ambassador to St Petersburg. His appointment to Istanbul was an indication of the switch of Amin al-Sultan, the Prime Minister of Persia, to pro-Russian policies after 1892. Sasani, *Payitahtın Son Yıllarında...*, p. 215.

<sup>693</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamel ed-Din Assad...*, p. 187.

<sup>694</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 420.

<sup>695</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 383-384.

Afghani's extradition for diplomacy related to secondary issues to which the Ottoman government attached greater importance at that time.

On the one hand the preference of keeping Afghani on hand was because he had gained access and insight to the aspects of Sultan Abdulhamid's Shii and Persian policies bearing highest secrecy.<sup>696</sup> It must be kept in mind that while the Sultan was enthusiastic about Afghani's schemes for Sunni-Shii rapprochement, he was nevertheless careful not to be associated directly with it.<sup>697</sup> In this context, handing Afghani over to Iranians would mean revealing them the confidentials of his own court. For instance, Nasr al-Din Shah's assassin Mirza Riza, in his interrogation, while speaking of Afghani's campaign of Sunni-Shii rapprochement, claimed that, following the Samarra Incident the Ottoman Sultan, believing that the Shah had fomented this trouble in order to disturb Ottoman dominions, had consultations on the subject with Afghani. According to Mirza Riza, the Sultan's thought was to deal personally with the Shah, who had acquired a great power in his long reign; and that the Sultan told Afghani to do whatever he could concerning him, free of any worries. Thus, Mirza Riza claimed that he had been the instrument for the accomplishment of the purpose. This, if supported by Afghani's words vis-à-vis Persian authorities, would point to Sultan Abdulhamid's instigation in the assassination, bringing severe complications in Ottoman-Persian relations.<sup>698</sup> This also partly explains the reason why Mirza Aqa Han, Sheikh Ahmed and Mirza Hasan Han, who were only of secondary rank in the Sultan's Shii program, were delivered to Iranians upon demands following the assassination.

On the other hand, the deportation of Afghani's three associates to Iran was part of a tactic to solicit favors from Persia, while retaining Afghani was part of the same tactic to put pressure on Persia. In this respect, it must be pointed out that the Ottoman government had the issue of Armenian problem on the top of its political agenda throughout 1894-1896, the years when the issue reached a crisis; and had to

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<sup>696</sup> When Abdülhamid had submitted to Afghani his imperial memorandum demanding Afghani's opinion on the issue of the reconciliation of Sunni and Shii sects, and requested a proposal from him as to the ways for the achievement of rapprochement, and Caliphial recognition and loyalty as part of Islamic unity, he had urged Afghani to keep the issue confidential. BOA. Y.EE. 3/58.

<sup>697</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism...*, p. 60.

<sup>698</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution...*, pp. 82-83, 91-92. The reliability of this report of Mirza Riza is questionable; however, it is an interesting point that he, in claim of being 'more intimate with Afghani than anyone', was really so much well-informed about Afghani's activities in Istanbul.

have *tactics* against Persia, as it had a part in the cross-border disturbances in Eastern Anatolia, and did not hesitate to play the Armenian card against the Ottoman side from time to time, giving Armenians free-hand.<sup>699</sup> Thus, it was regarding the Armenian issue that Afghani's as a demanded Persian became an asset for the Ottoman government, and the Ottoman side brought this case forward in the negotiations with Persia, at the same time that they were complaining about Persian wrong-doings in the Armenian issue.<sup>700</sup>

The Armenian Question was the outcome of a combination of separatist nationalist tendencies in the Eastern Anatolia together with the rivalry of the imperialist Great Powers in the East. In terms of geostrategical importance, Eastern Anatolia was an opening out to Caucasus, Central Asia and Iran, and adjacent to Arab lands.<sup>701</sup> The region became especially important when expansionist Russian imperialism and colonialist British imperialism came face to face in the Middle East and South Asia.<sup>702</sup> For Britain, the region was a crucial part of the policy of safeguarding the route to India.<sup>703</sup> Thus, the Armenian Question was an integral part of the Eastern Question and a result of Great Power politics.<sup>704</sup> It was when in the successive Ayastefanos Treaty and Berlin Congress clauses were inserted regarding the case of Armenians that Russia and Britain acquired the pretext to interfere in Eastern Anatolian politics of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman government undertook to carry out reforms directed to Armenians under the supervision of Britain, Russia and France.<sup>705</sup> The British feared that Russia might occupy Ottoman territories after Berlin Congress, and this pulled them into the Armenian Question, while Armenian revolutionaries tried to make use of Great Power rivalries for their

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<sup>699</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration...*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>700</sup> BOA. Y.EE. 3/58; BOA. Y.A.HUS. 358/26.

<sup>701</sup> Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896*, (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 1993), p. 9.

<sup>702</sup> Bayram Kodaman, "The Eastern Question: Imperialism and the Armenians", *The Eastern Question: Imperialism and The Armenian Community*, M. Abdulhaluk Çay (ed.), (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayını, 1987), p.9.

<sup>703</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 62.

<sup>704</sup> Kodaman, "The Eastern Question....", pp. 2-5.

<sup>705</sup> Kodaman, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in...*, pp. 86-87.

purposes. 1880s marked the transition from peaceful protest to military insurrection for Armenians, with their strategy becoming that of drawing the Great Powers into the issue.<sup>706</sup> The *Hinchak* and *Dashnaksutiun* committees were founded and began to operate in Europe toward the end of 1880s. In this respect, Armenian revolutionary movement took Bulgarian example and what they achieved after the Berlin Congress as a model, and Armenian rebellions started in 1889, and continued with the incidents of Erzurum (1890), Kumkapı (1890), Van (1892), Yozgat (1893), Sasun (1894), *Bab-ı Ali* Demonstrations (1895), Zeytun (1895-1896), Van (1895-1896), and the raid on the Ottoman Bank (1896).<sup>707</sup> Meanwhile, the Ottoman policy in the Eastern Anatolia of playing one side against another, that is the Armenians and the Kurds; and the establishment of Hamidiye cavalry corps both against the Armenian activities and to ensure Kurdish loyalty as part of the policy of Muslim unity led to clashes and exacerbated the situation.<sup>708</sup>

The Armenian Question reached a crisis in between 1894-1896, when the impact of the Armenian rebellions in the Eastern Anatolia was multiplied by threats of Great Power intervention, and also, uprisings in the Balkans, general financial deterioration in the Empire, and constitutionalist opposition in Istanbul.<sup>709</sup> The ambiguity of the boundaries of the envisioned Armenian state added up to Abdulhamid's concerns, as Armenians were scattered all over Anatolia.<sup>710</sup> During the incidents of Sasun, Zeytun and Van in 1895-1896, Anatolia witnessed terrible inter-communal conflict, and clash between revolutionary committees and the combined weight of the Ottoman military forces.<sup>711</sup> Meanwhile, Ottoman efforts against Armenian rebels were restrained by Europeans.<sup>712</sup> At that point, in 1895, European states combined to dictate their own reform programs to the Ottoman

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<sup>706</sup> Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism...*, p. 53, 59.

<sup>707</sup> Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat...*, pp. 53-54; Kodaman, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in...*, pp. 137.

<sup>708</sup> Duguid, "The Politics of Unity...", pp. 142-145, 150.

<sup>709</sup> Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy...*, p. 258; Geogon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 330.

<sup>710</sup> Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism...*, p. 88.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 97, 102-103.

<sup>712</sup> Justin McCarthy, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, (Salt Lake City, UT : The University of Utah Press, 2006), p. 47.

government by preparing and submitting a memorandum related to the restructuring of the administration of the Eastern Anatolia.<sup>713</sup> The memorandum included the principle of European supervision, and thus, represented a breach of Ottoman sovereignty and conflict with the principles of Ottoman citizenship and centralist tendencies. The Ottoman government replied by accepting some of the proposals but rejecting the most radical ones. Readjustments of the reform plan by the Ottoman government were never found satisfactory.<sup>714</sup> At that point, the British were contemplating harsher measures for the Ottoman Empire to make them comply with the reform pressures for Armenians, considering that they had the right to start a military campaign into Anatolia as a protector of Armenians, and even considered partitioning of the Ottoman territory had it been possible to settle in a solution satisfying all the Great Powers. Thus, the British were trying to manipulate the situation about Armenian Question to force implementation of a solution to the Eastern Question.<sup>715</sup> In this respect, Abdulhamid was caught in the power struggle of European powers and had to employ the tactics of balance of power.<sup>716</sup>

The Persian aspect of the Armenian problem rested not only in the fact that Armenian committees were present in Persia as well as Europe since 1880s,<sup>717</sup> and that Persian consuls were involved alongside European consuls in negotiations with Armenians for armistice, such as during the Van rebellion of 1895-1896.<sup>718</sup> In fact, Persia was more directly involved in the Armenian Question, regarding the practical aspects of the Armenian uprisings and military conflicts. The conditions in Western Iran, such as the non-existence of regular Persian troops, and the lack of central authority there, made the area a safe haven for Armenian revolutionaries. The region

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<sup>713</sup> Duguid, "The Politics of Unity...", p. 141; Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, (Sirkeci, İstanbul : Documentary Publications, 1988), p. 733.

<sup>714</sup> Jeremy Salt, "Britain, the Armenian Question and the Cause of Ottoman Reform: 1894-1896", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (Jul 1990), pp. 315-320.

<sup>715</sup> Greaves, "British Policy...", p. 48; Salt, "Britain, the Armenian Question...", pp. 323-326; Wilson, "Constantinople or Cairo...", pp. 42-44. This was the standpoint of Salisbury government in Britain, who returned to power in 1895.

<sup>716</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 335-336.

<sup>717</sup> Tolga Başak, *İngiltere'nin Ermeni Politikası (1830-1923)*, (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008), p. 96.

<sup>718</sup> Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File: the Myth of Innocence Exposed*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2007), p. 115.

became the headquarters for organization, and stocking and importation of weapons and logistics. Armenian population in the area had also augmented by refugees in 1890s.<sup>719</sup>

During the revolts of 1894 in the Eastern provinces of Anatolia, arms and ammunitions were shipped from Persia, and the city of Van became an important center for Armenian activities.<sup>720</sup> The revolutionary committees in the city were better organized and logistically stronger than those in other parts of the region, and this was facilitated by the situation in Western Persia as a secure backyard.<sup>721</sup> Armenians prepared for the rebellion in Van by bringing weapons across the border from Persia,<sup>722</sup> while there were occasions of Hamidiye troops intercepting Armenian smugglers transporting weapons.<sup>723</sup> The plan of Armenians in 1895-1896 Van Rebellion was to occupy and hold Armenian sections of the city and await the arrival of reinforcements from Persia. There was occasional fighting between Armenian armed elements from Persia and Ottoman soldiers that continued up to 1897. Thus, during the Van Rebellion the most significant raids and counter-raids were on the Persian border. There were even the involvement of Persian armed forces, and the instance of Armenian units joining Persian forces upon agreement. Thus, when Ottoman troops joined with local Hamidiye troops and fought Armenian bands, there were Russian and Persian soldiers found dead among the rebels. Meanwhile, the Persian government had a significant force across the border but refused to respond to Ottoman requests to stop the retreating revolutionaries,<sup>724</sup> as Armenians who left Van and fled made their way to Iran through a number of routes.<sup>725</sup> Moreover, after the raid on the Ottoman Bank in the summer of 1896, Armenian committees increased their activities all over Eastern Anatolia, and the Persian frontier continued to serve as the safest and most convenient route to smuggle weapons into Eastern

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<sup>719</sup> McCarthy, *The Armenian Rebellion...*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>720</sup> Duguid, "The Politics of Unity...", p. 148.

<sup>721</sup> Uras, *The Armenians in History...*, p. 755.

<sup>722</sup> McCarthy, *The Armenian Rebellion...*, p. 60.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>724</sup> Ibid, pp. 65-70.

<sup>725</sup> Uras, *The Armenians in History...*, p. 759.



Anatolia, and for withdrawals of rebel forces.<sup>726</sup> Furthermore, the Ottoman government had protested against the fact that the third son of the Shah, Kamran Mirza Naib al-Sultan, was involved in illegal arms trade with Armenian rebels.<sup>727</sup>

In this regard, Ottoman-Persian relations were quite intense in the period of 1894-1896, and Shah Nasr al-Din did not refrain from using the Armenian issue as a tactic when the Ottoman government had launched the radical program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* through the participation of Afghani and the Persian circle in Istanbul.<sup>728</sup> Thus, the Ottoman government had entered into diplomacy with Persia, on the one side being the Armenian issue and on the other side the Persian oppositionals in Istanbul being the priorities. In fact, it was as early as the end of 1893 that Ottomans wanted to be on good terms with Iran to prevent their support for Armenians, and therefore they declined to protect Sheikh al-Rais, and he had to leave in the beginning of 1894.<sup>729</sup> It was also in the same context that the issue of Armenians were brought forward in negotiations with Persian officials in exchange for the extradition of the demanded Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi and Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir al-Mulk.<sup>730</sup> In 1895 when the Armenian problem was becoming worse day by day, Abdulhamid was trying to convince the Shah not to protect Armenians. This played a role in the extradition of the three Persians in 1896, after the assassination of Nasr al-Din Shah.<sup>731</sup> As apparent in the Ottoman archival documents presented earlier, the issue of Armenian malefactors finding shelter in Persia was also made the subject of diplomacy regarding the extradition of Afghani; and the Ottoman side found a tactical asset in the presence of Afghani on their hand to put pressure on the Persian government to solicit desired favors regarding the Armenian Question.

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<sup>726</sup> Uras, *The Armenians in History...*, p. 776.

<sup>727</sup> Bakhsh, *Iran: Monarchy...*, p. 277.

<sup>728</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, p. 315.

<sup>729</sup> Cole, "Sheikh al-Rais...", p. 176.

<sup>730</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamel ad-Din Assad...*, p. 179; Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", p. 294.

<sup>731</sup> Pakdaman, "Mirza Aqa Khan....", p. 56, 60.

#### 5.4. Afghani's Downfall and his Final Year in Istanbul

As analyzed earlier, during his stay in Istanbul, Afghani was not allowed to write and publish freely, and he did not receive much publicity except for the aftermath of the assassination of Nasr al-Din Shah. Besides, his engagement in the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* program was the only case that he was assigned particular responsibility; and apart from that duty which was abandoned upon difficulties, and the domestic and foreign pressures of the political issues of the era, Afghani remained kept under surveillance and restrictions, and not given the chance to participate openly in other political activities. Thus, he had not lived up to the grandiose pan-Islamic schemes he had had in his mind while coming to Istanbul for service to the Caliph.

The situation got even worse for Afghani starting from 1895. In fact, Abdülhamid had never given up his suspicions of him; and no matter what Afghani declared regarding his adherence to the cause of Muslim unity and ambitions to serve the Caliphal seat, Abdülhamid's negative view of him as a dangerous man was never corrected.<sup>732</sup> Not only the fact that the Caliphal propaganda involving Shii ulama at the expense of the Shah as part of the Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* policy had backfired, but Persian diplomatic pressures had also worsened the situation of Afghani as well as his closest associates in Istanbul. However, there were even further discontents of the Sultan related to Afghani, that hindered any plans and fulfillments of the pan-Islamic political activist.

Afghani's earlier involvements, during his stays in Egypt and France, in Arab politics and the debate for Arab Caliphate, and his contacts with British continued to constitute a source of concerns for the Ottoman Sultan. The initial year of Afghani's stay in Istanbul had witnessed Afghani's occasional returns to the scene of Arab politics, mostly in a way not unfavorable for the Ottoman government. However, it was when in the summer of 1895 the Egyptian Khedive Abbas Hilmi visited Istanbul that Afghani had serious problems with the Sultan. The period 1894-

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<sup>732</sup> Yılmaz (ed.), *Abdülhamid'in Hatıra...*, p. 71. Here, in the Sultan's own words: "I knew Jamal ad-Din Afghani very well. He had stayed in Egypt. He was a dangerous man. Once he proposed to me that he could call Central Asian Muslims to revolt, which I knew he was definitely not capable of. Besides, he was a man of British, and it was most probable that the British had raised this man to test me. I refused his offer all at once. Then, he collaborated with Blunt. Via the person of Abu'l-Huda, revered by all Arab lands, I had him called to Istanbul. His previous patron Münif Pasha and Abdülhak Hamid acted as intermediaries. Thus, he came to Istanbul, and I never let him leave."

1896 was one that there was tension between the Sultan and the Khedive because of journalistic activities against the Sultan, and Abdülhamid had grown to be suspicious of Abbas Hilmi.<sup>733</sup> This mistrust had added up to the Ottoman concerns aroused by the speculations prevalent among Russian and French representatives in 1890s that British presence in Egypt might lead to the transfer of Caliphate to the Khedive in case of possible dislocations of Arab lands or the threat of total dissolution of the Empire.<sup>734</sup> Thus, Abbas Hilmi's summer trips had been controversial since his accession to khedivate, and Abdülhamid tried to prevent his visits to Britain.<sup>735</sup> In 1895, Abbas Hilmi visited Istanbul to negotiate over family property matters,<sup>736</sup> and Abdülhamid refrained from talking politics with him.<sup>737</sup> It was during this visit that Afghani had an informal meeting with Abbas Hilmi, despite the fact that Abdülhamid had not granted permission to the Khedive for it. This secret meeting caused rumours and was reported to the Sultan by spies, leading to a friction among the Sultan and Afghani. The latter was accused of having paid allegiance to the Khedive at the expense of the Sultan, and given him promises regarding the issue of Caliphate.<sup>738</sup> Moreover, Sayyid Abdullah of Hijaz had come to Istanbul and took

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<sup>733</sup> Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive...", p. 299.

<sup>734</sup> Ibid, p. 303; Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam...*, p. 300.

<sup>735</sup> Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive...", pp. 292-294.

<sup>736</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 176.

<sup>737</sup> Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive...", p. 290.

<sup>738</sup> Muhammed Mahzumi Paşa, *Cemaleddin Afgani'nin...*, pp. 91-98. According the report of Mahzumi Paşa: "While the Khedive and his party were received in Yıldız Palace, Afghani gave them a speech containing messages of Caliph loyalty and Islamic unity. In this convention, the Khedive desired to see Afghani, who had great reputation in Egypt, in person, but he could not receive an imperial permit from the Sultan. Moreover, the Sultan sent intermediaries to prevent him see the Khedive, as he was concerned about Khedive's presence in Istanbul. But Afghani managed to convey to the Khedive his message that despite his captivity in his house he went everyday to Kağıthane to take a walk. Thus, one day the Khedive went to the place and met Afghani. The two had a conversation, and Abbas Hilmi expressed his admiration and desire to see Afghani in Egypt. There was no other word uttered about politics or so. However, this meeting caused a stir of informer reports to the Sultan. One said: 'Afghani agreed with the Khedive to establish an Abbasid state in his name, and essentially attach Syria to it'. Then, Afghani had a great many number of visitors from the Palace condemning his act as betrayal, and saying that it was a breach of his loyalty to the Sultan. Afghani denied the calumnies. Finally, through an imperial decree Afghani was summoned for audience with the Sultan. When asked about the incident Afghani confessed that he had seen the Khedive but denied any conversation as claimed in the informer reports. The Sultan had taken the reports as serious, as one had come from a reputable person for him, allegedly Abu'l-Huda. Sayyid Abdullah Nadim was present in the meeting with the Sultan, and implicitly criticized Abu'l-Huda, but Afghani rejected and praised his qualities as an important and able Arab confidant of the Sultan."

refuge in Afghani's house who refused to surrender him and trusted him to the Khedive that took him to Egypt. This was another case that led to a tension between Afghani and the Sultan. Meanwhile, the emergence of political opposition against himself had directed Abdülhamid to form a large secret police force; and Afghani allegedly came to be watched by ten spies.<sup>739</sup> In this respect, the real fear of Abdulhamid was British designs in Arab lands and Hijaz, particularly the issue of Arab Caliphate and inculcation of separatist feelings.<sup>740</sup>

Thus, after meeting the Khedive, Afghani was no longer given the permission to enter the court. He was blamed of having links with the enemies of the Caliph, and was no longer received by the Sultan. Moreover, subsequent to that, he was interrogated for accusations regarding his declarations during an interview he made with the reporter of *The Times*, Mr Garacino.<sup>741</sup> Towards the end of the year, he also saw Wilfrid Blunt, the British pro-Arab agent with whom he had entered into contact during the Mahdi rebellion, which caused further mistrust of him by the Sultan.<sup>742</sup> In fact, Blunt had secretly visited Istanbul earlier in May 1893, during which his activities were followed by the police. From the viewpoint of the Ottoman government, Blunt who had given himself the title of 'the great protector of Arabs' did not recognize the Caliphal legitimacy of the Sultan, and engaged in anti-Ottoman activities in Arab lands with intentions to cause incitement, and therefore represented a danger with his presence in Istanbul. Thus, his meetings with Afghani and The Times reporter Mr Garacino was met with deep concerns.<sup>743</sup> It was in this respect that Afghani's link with Mr Garacino and his utterances in the latter's interview had resulted in the fierce reaction of the government.

Afghani used the interrogation as a pretext to submit a petition to the Sultan to complain about his miseries at the hands of accusations he faced in Istanbul, including the case of interrogation, and requested an imperial permit to leave the

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<sup>739</sup> Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion...", pp. 292-295.

<sup>740</sup> Hirszowicz, "The Sultan and the Khedive...", p. 303. In addition to the case of Afghani and Sayyid Abdullah, a Meccan sheikh was also arrested because he met with the Khedive in 1895 in Istanbul.

<sup>741</sup> Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 176.

<sup>742</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 384. Blunt recorded that Afghani was out of the favors of the Sultan.

<sup>743</sup> BOA. Y.PRK.ZB. 11/58. The report was prepared by the head of police.

Ottoman Empire. In the petition, he expressed his attachment and respect for the Caliphal authority, and gave a brief account his earlier activities in line with that; and emphasized his desire to serve the Caliphal seat for Muslim unity. This way, it seems that he was responding to the suspicions of not being sincere and questioning the Caliphal legitimacy of the Sultan. Besides, he also pointed to the fact that since the policy of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* had been abandoned he had remained idle and not able to serve the Caliphal seat. Commenting on the affair of interrogation, he claimed that what he had uttered in the presence of The Times reporter Mr Garacino was in defense of the Sultan-Caliph, and the genuinity of that had been attested, and he had been freed of accusations. Yet, Afghani was unhappy about the way the matter had been handled. Therefore, he asked for permission to leave Istanbul.<sup>744</sup>

Thus, Afghani made an attempt to receive protection from the British embassy and get a British passport at the end of 1895, through a letter he wrote praising British civilization and desiring his intention to go to Britain. However, British authorities declined his application.<sup>745</sup> As a result, all his efforts to leave the Ottoman Empire went unresponded, and Afghani had to spend his final years in Istanbul being confined to a narrow circle of disciples, watched over closely by spies, and not permitted to publish anything, up until his death from cancer in March 1897 which also received limited publicity.<sup>746</sup>

Part of Afghani's downfall could be attributed to his conflict with Sheikh Abu'l-Huda, one of the chief religious advisors of the Sultan, whose continuous accusations became influential in turning the Sultan against Afghani.<sup>747</sup> He blamed Afghani of heresy and, pointing to his Persian and Shii origins, called him as "el-muta'afgin", the pretended Afghan.<sup>748</sup> Sheikh Abu'l-Huda was the leader of the *Rifaiyya* order in Syria, and he possessed enormous influence over Abdülhamid, and

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<sup>744</sup> BOA. Y.EE. 9/20.

<sup>745</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 385-387.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid, p. 419-421; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 190. Nevertheless, in the last phase of his life, he was still respected by Egyptians and he had visitors like nationalist leaders Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid and Sa'd Zaghlul.

<sup>747</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 383. Afghani was also in conflict with another Arab confidant of the Sultan, Sheikh Asad, a prominent notable from Medina. Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh...*, p. 62.

<sup>748</sup> Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afgani...*, p. 97; Pakdaman, *Djamal ed-Din Assad...*, p. 177. Abu'l-Huda even wrote on this subject to Rashid Rıza, the Arab nationalist pupil of Afghani in Egypt.

even promoted his power further through expanding the influence of his order in Syria and Iraq as part of Hamidian Arab policies within Islamist framework.<sup>749</sup> He was in Istanbul after 1879, and he had established crucial contacts to rise up in government ranks. As opposed to the rising ideology of nationalism he favored Ottoman rule and the integrity of the Empire; and he was also a reputable supporter of Hamidian pan-Islamism, and he was also a theologian.<sup>750</sup> The bulk of his writings were devoted to the defense of Abdulhamid, his Caliphal legitimacy and the appeal to the Arab elements of the Empire for loyalty to the Sultan and his rule. In this respect, the content of his works embodied the defense of absolutism, and themes of umma and Islamic unity condemning Arab nationalists, that were essential to Hamidian (pan-)Islamism.<sup>751</sup> As compared to Afghani who called for an appeal by the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph to Muslims living beyond the borders of the Empire, Abu'l-Huda concentrated on Muslims within the Empire, especially Arabs.<sup>752</sup> However, the basic difference between Afghani and Abu'l-Huda was that the former with his pupil Muhammad Abduh in Egypt were, with their call for purification of religion and return to the practices of the earlier periods of Islam, had laid the foundations for the *Salafiyya* movement,<sup>753</sup> against which Abu'l-Huda with his quality of being a leading figure of the *Rifaiyya*, a sufi order, was an unconditional opponent.<sup>754</sup> Besides, the *Salafi* movement that had emerged in Syria was an oppositional force which Abdulhamid was alert against.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, pp. 324-325. Thomas Eich, "The Forgotten Salafi Abu'l-Huda As-Sayyadi", *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2003), p. 87. The order appealed to popular urban and rural classes, and it was centered around Aleppo. Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan and Sheikh Abulhuda Al-Sayyadi", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, (1979), p. 131.

<sup>750</sup> Eich, "The Forgotten Salafi..." , pp. 61-62; 79-80; 85-86.

<sup>751</sup> Abu-Manneh, "Sultan and Sheikh Abulhuda..." , pp. 140-143. Abu'l-Huda's main concern was Syria, and he struggled for the reversal of the effects of Tanzimat reforms, reinstating religious solidarity. This was in line with the general ideology of Hamidian regime. Ibid, pp. 143-146.

<sup>752</sup> Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam...*, p. 31.

<sup>753</sup> Haim, "Introduction" ..., p. 20-21.

<sup>754</sup> Eich, "The Forgotten Salafi..." , pp. 62-63.

<sup>755</sup> Hanioglu, *A History of the Late...*, p. 140. Abu'l-Huda's contacts with scholars in Damascus and Baghdad who later came to be considered as Salafis, broke off at the end of 1890s due to political reasons. Eich, "The Forgotten Salafi..." , p. 79.

In fact, the fundamental reason for Afghani's falling out of the good graces of the Sultan most probably rested in his friendly contacts with the oppositional groups in the Ottoman Empire. In his Istanbul years, the typical way of Afghani's earlier experiences of receiving honors first and then going out of favor as a result of his abilities and call for reforms and constitution<sup>756</sup> was repeated in a different sense as he and his Persian associates had links with groups disliked by the absolutist regime of Abdulhamid.

A letter from Halil Rifat Pasha, the Grand Vizier of the time, to the Sultan in the aftermath of the assassination of Shah Nasr al-Din Qajar is quite illustrative as to what kind of opinions were held about Afghani on the side of the Ottoman government. In this letter, Halil Rifat Pasha presented his ideas about the incident of assassination and the instigators behind the deed. He expressed his conviction that the assassin Mirza Riza had strong connections with Afghani and that he had committed his act at Afghani's instigation; and advised the extradition of Afghani and his three associates to Persian authorities for the soundness of relations with Persia. Besides, he accused Afghani of being a mischievous Babi heretic who had no reputation and importance of any sense. Moreover, he claimed that Afghani was trying to spread his evil doctrines and enlarge his Babi circle in Istanbul attracting and deceiving pupils from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon arriving in Istanbul. Furthermore, he claimed that Afghani maintained contacts with Masonry, and opposition groups like Armenian committees and Young Turks. Thus, he concluded that the presence of such a malicious group in Istanbul was to the detriment of the rule of the Sultan and the religion of Islam.<sup>757</sup> In this respect, Afghani, who was under strict control and watched closely by spies, was accused of having relations with groups disliked by Abdulhamid at a time when the activities of opposition groups and Armenians had reached a peak, and dominated the political agenda.

In 1880s a generation of students in the newly founded schools had grown up reading the works of Young Ottomans and being exposed to their ideas of progress, nationalism and constitutionalism. The first grouping of Young Turks emerged in 1889, under the name *İttihad-ı Osmani*, Union of Ottomans. The society

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<sup>756</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, pp. 390-391.

<sup>757</sup> BOA. Y.EE. 87/86. The document is dated May 1896.

grew rapidly gaining supporters among students of higher schools in Istanbul, and maintained contact with liberals living in Paris. The all-out opposition newspaper *Meşveret* started publishing in 1895 and the group changed its name to *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, the Committee of Union and Progress. As a matter of fact, Young Turks had arisen as an internal challenge after 1894. Among the members of the umbrella organization who shared the common purpose of overthrowing Abdulhamid and restoring the constitution and the parliament, there were even a number of ulama who constituted the Egyptian branch, defying the Hamidian regime on religious grounds.<sup>758</sup>

The problematic aspect related to Afghani was that among frequent visitors of his residence, there were members of the Young Turks, opposition poets and writers as well as Babis.<sup>759</sup> Through these contacts Afghani had an influence on various wings of Turkish thought. On the Young Turks, he had influence with his ideas of reform, constitutionalism, the use of Islam as a political force, and Muslim unity against foreign expansion as well as recognition of Western technical superiority. Halil Ghanem who was Afghani's associate from his Paris years (1883-1885), acted as a chain connecting the Young Ottomans to the Young Turks, and collaborated with Ahmed Rıza in *Meşveret* and became a devoted figure of the Young Turks especially in Syria. Apparently, Afghani also had an effect on Abdullah Cevdet, who probably was a regular visitor of him while attending medical school, especially with regard to his ideas on the instrumentality of religion in the conduct of a society, and his adherence to Bahaism.<sup>760</sup> However, Afghani's real influence was on the Turkist wing of the Young Turks that shaped after 1900. During his residence in Istanbul, Afghani had been doing daily talks with Turkish intellectuals among whom there was Mehmed Emin (Yurdakul). Thus, Afghani left his mark on the Young Turk understanding of nationalism. The role of Islam as a bond of unity to which Muslim nations should stick was a nationalist interpretation of Islam, a proto-

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<sup>758</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 302, 343-344; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern...*, pp. 195-197; Hanioglu, *A History of the Late...*, p. 145.

<sup>759</sup> Yalçinkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, pp. 67-69.

<sup>760</sup> Türköne, *Cemaleddin Afgani...*, pp. 104-107; Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, pp. 43-44; Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat...*, p. 55; Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet...*, pp. 184-185, 300, 341. Another associate of Afghani from his stay in London, Habib Anthony Salmoné had also become a Young Turk and participated in the Turco-Syrian Committee after it was established in 1895. He had close contacts with the *Meşveret* group. Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, pp. 202-203.



nationalistic approach, that was a recurrent theme in Afghani's speeches and writings; and this idea became a reference for Turkists in the sense that they interpreted it as an approval of nationalism by Islamic religion.<sup>761</sup> Along this line Afghani also had influence on Ahmed Ağaoğlu and Yusuf Akçura, that became manifest in the journal *Türk Yurdu*.<sup>762</sup> As a result of Afghani's associations with Young Turks, he was presented, in a journal of Young Turk movement, *Havadis*, as a *rükn-i mühim* (an important pillar) and *mürşid-i kamil* (guide) for the Committee of Union and Progress, shortly after his death in 1897.<sup>763</sup>

Yet, the interaction of the Young Turks and pan-Islamists was not restricted to the person of Afghani alone; but also the Persian circle in Istanbul had a links with the oppositional groups in Istanbul. In fact, Istanbul occupies a place of primary importance for Persian history towards the constitutional revolution. The works of Persian constitutionalists in Istanbul bears the mark of the Young Ottomans as well as the Young Turks;<sup>764</sup> and similarly Iranian influence was apparent in the early phases of the Young Turk movement in 1880s when Persian dissident Babis took refuge in Istanbul.<sup>765</sup> When Afghani arrived in Istanbul, he organized the community of Persian exiles as a 'Young Persians' society regarding opposition politics in Persia. Some were active in Istanbul and some were sent to Persia for propaganda. Those 'Young Persians' earned their living by importing Young Turk publications

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<sup>761</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, pp. 45-46; Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, p. 68.

<sup>762</sup> In *Türk Yurdu*, an article by Ahmed Ağaoğlu (Agayef) refers to Afghani as a religious reformer seeking the regeneration of religion and the resurrection of Muslim lands through reconciliation of Western values with Islamic principles. Ahmed Agayef [Ağaoğlu], "Türk Alemi 3", *Türk Yurdu*, Year 1, Vol. 3, (28 Dec 1911) (Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1998), pp. 46-48. Another article from *Türk Yurdu*, written by Afghani on race and unity of language as bonds of a nation, from his India times, is also included. Cemaleddin Afgani, "Vahdet-i Cinsiye (Irkiye) Felsefesi ve İttihad-ı Lisanın Mahiyet-i Hakikiyesi", Trans. by Resulzade Mehmed Emin [Yurdakul], *Türk Yurdu*, Year 2, Vol. 26, (14 Nov 1912), (Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1998), pp. 38-42. In the journal, there is also a biographic account of Afghani in which he is presented as a supporter of nationalist ideas alongside Islamic unity. "Tercüme-i Hal: Şeyh Cemaleddin Efgani", *Türk Yurdu*, Year 3, Vol. 69, (25 Jun 1914), (Ankara: Tutibay Yayınları, 1998), pp. 344-346.

<sup>763</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, p. 70.

<sup>764</sup> François Georgeon, "L'Iran vu par un Intellectuel Turc au début du Siècle", *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul*, Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr (eds), (Paris, Téhéran, Istanbul: Institut Français de Recherches en Iran et Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, 1993), p. 80.

<sup>765</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, p. 67.

and reprinting Young Ottoman works.<sup>766</sup> Those nationalist ‘Young Persians’ were, alongside Afghani, were influential on pan-Turkism.<sup>767</sup> Apart from a Persian from the group commenting on a book of the Turkist Yusuf Akçura, the Persian circle also received Ahmed Rıza.<sup>768</sup> Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani was also inspired from the ideas of Young Turks.<sup>769</sup> Besides, the group of Persians also assisted in the circulation of prohibited publications of the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire,<sup>770</sup> whereas Persian merchant community in the Ottoman Empire also had contacts with the Young Turks.<sup>771</sup> Meanwhile, Young Turks were studying the works of Persian intellectuals alongside with the Young Ottomans.<sup>772</sup>

However, the Young Turks became more aggressive at the times of Armenian insurrections and this led the government to take more radical measures.<sup>773</sup> Especially during the political crisis of 1894-1896 when the Empire was faced with the pressure of internal and external problems, the government reacted strongly against opposition; and the relations of Afghani and his Persian circle with the forces of opposition became problematic in this respect.

During the crisis of 1894-1896, European powers were considering among themselves the deposition of Abdulhamid. Meanwhile, the Young Turks abroad also speculated on overthrowing the Sultan. The Young Turk wing present in Istanbul had extended its influence in the military, within sufi orders, and among bureaucrats. The aim was to end the regime of Abdulhamid, and proclaim constitution. At that point in 1896, the situation seemed quite favorable in Istanbul: Armenians were calling Muslims to support their revolutionary cause, and there were protests among military

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<sup>766</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi...*, p. 69. A journal by Ebuzziya Tevfik, a man of pen, mentions of an organization named *Şirket-i İraniye* that printed Namık Kemal’s *Vatan* for the 50th edition.

<sup>767</sup> Zarcone, “La Situation du Chiisme ...”, pp. 107-108.

<sup>768</sup> Behnam, “Le Rôle de la Communauté ...”, p. 9.

<sup>769</sup> Sakamoto, “Istanbul and the Carpet ...”, p. 213.

<sup>770</sup> Yalçınkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, p. 70.

<sup>771</sup> Zarinebaf-Shahr, “The Iranian Merchant...”, p. 212.

<sup>772</sup> Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat...*, p. 50.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

school students and *softas*, medrese students. But the discovery of an organized plot by the government gave way to mass arrests hindering the movement.<sup>774</sup>

Interestingly, a year earlier, a report of the British ambassador had claimed that Afghani was under suspicion of being involved in the movement among *softas*, that was hostile to Abdülhamid.<sup>775</sup> Meanwhile, the Young Turk opposition made an attempt of coup d'état in 1896, including plans of assassinating the Sultan. Thus, the interval between 1895-1897 had been the most active period of opposition movement up to then, while for the Armenian revolutionary movement, the year 1895 had, in a parallel way, been the most critical year in 1890s.<sup>776</sup>

It was in this context that Afghani had fallen out of the good graces of Abdülhamid. Again, it was in this period that the assassination of Persian Shah took place. At a time when the Sultan was busy trying to preserve the solidarity of his regime at the face of the Young Turk opposition and Armenian rebellions, there was no room for protecting these Persians demanded by the Persian government, who had also aroused suspicions of the Sultan. Their case would represent, in a sense, an example to those who might consider regicide as a legitimate means of pursuing political aims.<sup>777</sup> Besides, the relations with Persia were on the eve of a new period, as the Ottoman government abandoned the policy of communicating with the *mujtahids*, and opted for a *rapprochement* with the Persian government. At the same time that open practice of Shii rituals in the month of *Muharram* was allowed for the first time as an act of benevolence, Münif Pasha mission was sent to Tehran. The aim was to get closer to the Persian Shah and reach a common point towards unity between the two states, so that the Persian government would provide support in the issue of Armenian Question. Thus, upon the news of the assassination, three of the demanded Persians except Afghani were handed over to Persian authorities immediately. Afghani was retained as a leverage in further negotiations with the

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<sup>774</sup> Georjeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 348-352.

<sup>775</sup> Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din...*, p. 385. The report of the ambassador, Sir Philip Currie, was prepared upon Afghani's application to receive British passport and leave the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>776</sup> Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat...*, pp. 56-67, 68.

<sup>777</sup> The assassination of the Persian Shah had found its echoes among the Young Turks who considered it as an epic accomplishment, desiring the same for Abdülhamid. Yalçinkaya, *Cemaleddin Efgani...*, pp. 73-75; İbrahim Temo, *İttihad ve Terakki Anıları*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 2000), p. 59.

Persian government, whereas Münif Pasha mission set off with the aim of reconciling with the newly enthroned Muzaffar al-Din Shah.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>778</sup> Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, pp. 354-355.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani's arrival and stay in Istanbul between 1892 and 1897 as a guest of Abdulhamid II represents a case that is worth studying regarding the fact that it was the meeting of a prominent nineteenth century pan-Islamist and an Ottoman Sultan who had structured his regime around Islamic legitimation, Caliphal politics and pan-Islamic appeals of *ittihad-ı Islam* reaching out to Muslims beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand there was a political activist who had been influential in the course of politics in the Middle East, including Egypt, Sudan, Arab lands, and Persia, and also India; and conveyed his message of the essentiality of unity of Muslim societies to stand out against growing pressures of the imperial West to various audiences. Afghani had both speculated on ways for Islamic solidarity and to achieve an internal revival of Muslim societies through reform. During his many endeavors in Middle East, India and Europe, he tried to suit his political outlook and pan-Islamic message to various audiences, and operate within the given circumstances of wherever he was active in. Apart from his first stay in Istanbul between 1869-1871, in which he was a support to the reforming wing in Istanbul, Afghani's involvement in politics had relevance to the Ottoman Empire all throughout his career; and he had the intention to appeal to the Ottoman Sultan and be on the same side with the Caliph, whereas the Ottoman government kept an eye on his activities and contacts.

On the other hand, there was Abdulhamid II, the "pan-Islamist" sultan. Abdulhamid had ascended to throne amid pressures of Eastern Question politics, and survived the crisis of 1878-1882 suffering the consecutive territorial losses of the Berlin Congress and the following turmoil, in the Balkans and Northern Africa. The Empire lost a large portion of its population and reduced to become a predominantly Muslim one, and a new basis of survival had to be contemplated for the integrity of the remaining elements in Anatolia and Arab lands. Thus, Abdulhamid's regime was marked by the intention to rely on the new Muslim character of the Empire whilst feeding on the popular Muslim reaction to the reforms of Tanzimat, and constructed

its legitimacy through the ascension of Islamic values, especially the emphasis on the Sultan's role as the Caliph of all Muslims. The politics of the Caliphate was the means to ensure the solidarity of the Muslim subjects of the Empire; and whereas the Ottomanist ideology of the Tanzimat Era was molded into Islamism, Abdulhamid also attempted to support his position by pan-Islamic appeals to the Muslims outside the Empire. The Sultan had perceived the propaganda value of pan-Islamic rhetoric towards the Muslims of the world, especially those under the colonial rule of European powers. In this respect, Abdulhamid was not a "pan-Islamist", in the strict meaning of the term, aiming a political union of Muslims, but the capacity of his pan-Islamic policies were rather restricted to make the potentials of the Ottoman Caliphate felt by Europeans. Thus, Hamidian 'pan-Islamism' operated on the level of rhetorics and propaganda aiming to present the Caliphal authority of the Ottoman Sultan to the Great Powers convincingly and as a diplomatic leverage so as to be able to maintain political relations on an equal basis with them. In that, Abdulhamid's (pan-)Islamism also built on the phobia of colonial West of religious rebellion and *jihad* in their dominions.

In this regard, Afghani's interpretation of pan-Islamism did not exactly with Hamidian (pan-)Islamism. Whereas Afghani envisioned political unity among Muslim states and speculated on ways to achieve such solidarity, Abdulhamid basically concentrated on the survival of the Ottoman Empire and policies to ensure the loyalty of his subjects to the Caliphal seat. In fact, on several occasions up to 1892, Afghani had attempted to enter into contact with the Sultan and conveyed him his desire to serve for the Caliphate through pan-Islamic proposals involving Persia, Afghanistan, and Indian and Central Asian Muslims. However, it was a fact that Abdulhamid never contemplated any scheme as radical as Afghani proposed; and his policies in the domestic sphere aimed at maintaining the integrity of the Empire while in the foreign sphere his policy of Caliphal propaganda was maintained as a potential power.

In fact, the viewpoint of the Ottoman government about Afghani had been an ambivalent one due to Afghani's inconsistencies in giving support to the Ottoman rule at times and criticizing absolutism at other times; and giving priority to external strength of Muslim states against foreign domination and therefore refraining from attacking incumbent governments at times, and encouraging nationalism at the

expense of religious affiliations at other times. The account of Afghani's political life in Egypt and Europe had been one marked by such controversies. Moreover, it was Afghani's activities related to Arabs that the Ottoman government had grown to be suspicious of him. In this regard, Britain, through its presence in Egypt, had been exerting its influence on Arab lands and attempting to undermine Ottoman Caliphal legitimacy through designs of transferring the Caliphate to Arabs. Afghani's links, at that point, with British intermediaries in the Middle East especially during the Mahdi Rebellion in Sudan (1883-1885) had been a concern for the Ottoman government.

Abdulhamid's invitation of Afghani to Istanbul in 1892 emanated from a combination of threats and opportunities. On the side of threats was the debate on Arab Caliphate, particularly when one considers the importance of Arab lands for Hamidian rule, and the possession of Caliphate for (pan-)Islamic appeals and retention of political position vis-à-vis the Great Powers. On the opportunities side, there was the possibility of benefiting from the service of Afghani's earlier contacts and influence in the Arab world and Persia. Thus, Abdulhamid invited Afghani to Istanbul to keep him under control as well as make use of him.

Afghani's presence in Istanbul was similar to the Yıldız Sheikhs, the religious leaders and provincial notables from Arabia, Syria and Iraq, that served as advisors or intermediaries guaranteeing the support of their followers, that resided in Istanbul as guests of the imperial court. Besides Afghani's prominence and reputation as an Islamic figure, his Persian antecedents constituted a remarkable asset to be exploited regarding policies directed to Shiis of Iraq. Afghani had been involved in Persian politics since 1886 with two stays in the country and propaganda activities from Ottoman Basra and London. Throughout all these, he had managed to establish contacts among reformers, notables and ulama, and he had been a prominent figure during the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892 regarding his role in forging the alliance between Shii ulama and secular radicals to mobilize oppositional mass movements. Thus, Afghani arrived in Istanbul with strong anti-Shah record and links with the Shii ulama of Persia and Iraq.

Ottoman Iraq represented an issue of concern for the Ottoman government and Abdulhamid's rule, as part of Hamidian Islamism required ensuring the Caliphal loyalty of its Sunni and Shii subjects as well. The problem inherent in this issue was that Shii Islam did not recognize the legitimacy of a Sunni Caliph. Moreover, the

region, being remote from the centre and under indirect rule, had traditionally been under the influence of Persia, and centralist policies had further disrupted the balance in the region resulting in an unexpected ascension of Shiism. During the Hamidian rule, initiatives to improve relations between governments and practical measures centered around education, propaganda and the promotion of Sunni establishment had neither succeeded in setting Ottoman religious authority in the region nor prevented expansion of Shiism. However, the rising prominence of Shii *mujtahids*, living in the major shrine cities of Iraq, in Persian politics and their anti-Shah tendencies that became particularly manifest during the Tobacco Protest led Ottoman officials to come up with proposals suggesting direct communication with *mujtahids* rather than with the Shah. It was in this respect that Abdulhamid thought of using Afghani's influence for the service of policies directed to Shiis. Besides, the presence of a community of Persian dissidents in Istanbul who had been active during the anti-Shah movement of 1891-1892 gave room for reinvoking and employing the religious-radical alliance that had been asserted itself as a factor in Persia as a result of the Tobacco Protest.

In response to an imperial memorandum demanding Afghani's opinion on the reconciliation of sects and improvement of relations with Shiis, the program of Sunni-Shii *rapprochement* was launched. The policy involved establishing direct relations with Shii ulama and appealing to them for support of the Ottoman Caliphate in the name of Islamic unity. Afghani and the circle of Persians around him entered into correspondence with Shii ulama, notables and reformist bureaucrats in Iraq and Persia, to achieve sectarian *rapprochement* but extending the Caliphal influence at the expense of the political authority of the Shah. The Persian circle around Afghani in Istanbul was composed of anti-Shah exiles, mostly Babis, who favored constitutionalism and pan-Islamism in proto-nationalist terms, and shared the common anti-Shah stance. The extensive web of correspondence had only produced to bring about preliminary results of expressions of benevolence that the project suffered setbacks: protests from Persia had coincided with the sectarian Samarra Incident that served as a test of sectarian attitudes; and moreover the rise of Armenian incidents in Eastern Anatolia, for which the Shah as a counter maneuver had given free hand in Western Persia, had put pressure on the Ottoman government that was too much to handle. The Armenian Question had assumed the quality of



open revolt, and this had gone parallel to the emergence of oppositional Young Turk movement in Istanbul, overturning the Ottoman political agenda of the time. The *rapprochement* policy with the Shii *mujtahids* executed by Afghani and his Persian circle had to be abandoned whereas three of Afghani's associates were detained and kept under control.

Apart from the Shii program, Afghani's activities had been restricted by the Ottoman government, and he was kept under surveillance and not allowed to publish or engage in any other political activities. He had not lived up to his grandiose pan-Islamic expectations whilst coming to Istanbul to serve the Caliph. Therefore, starting in 1895 he made attempts to leave the Ottoman Empire, including applying to British embassy for protection. However, Abdulhamid did not allow him to leave his Istanbul, and kept him under control. In this regard, especially his continued contacts with prominent Arab figures such as the Egyptian Khedive Abbas Hilmi, Sayyid Abdullah of Mecca, and also the British pro-Arab agent Wilfrid Blunt who had schemes of Arab Caliphate, led to growing suspicions of the Ottoman government about Afghani. Besides, Afghani had suffered from his conflict with one of the chief religious confidants of the Sultan, Sheikh Abu'l-Huda of the the Rifaiyya order, who became influential in turning the Sultan against him.

At that point, in 1896, the Persian Shah Nasr al-Din was assassinated by a follower of Afghani. The assassin was a servant and admirer of Afghani, and he had seen Afghani in Istanbul before he left for Persia, thereby implying Afghani's instigation. Both the Persian and the Ottoman governments were in conviction that Afghani had complicity in the incident, but despite diplomatic pressures the Ottoman side did not agree to extradite Afghani. Meanwhile, three of his Persian associates had been handed over to Persian authorities and suffered execution. Notwithstanding the negative Afghani view of the Ottoman government and the mistrust of Abdulhamid, he was kept on hand as a political leverage against Persia. In this respect, the extradition of the three Persians and the retention of Afghani as a diplomatic asset were part of the same strategy to solicit Persian support in the Armenian issue that was at the top of the Ottoman political agenda. The Armenian rebellions in Anatolia had reached a peak between 1894-1896, and the region of Western Persia provided a safe haven for Armenian revolutionaries in tactical and logistic terms; therefore, the Ottoman government tried to compel Persia to act on

their side. The Ottoman side played their tactic consistently and refused to surrender Afghani, till his death in March 1897.

The final year of Afghani's stay in Istanbul was therefore marked by a fall out of the favors of the Sultan. Part of the reason for his downfall rested in the fact that he and the Persian circle in Istanbul had contacts with Ottoman oppositionals. The interval 1894-1896 had been the most active period for the Young Turk movement in 1890s, and Abdulhamid had grown to be wary of any potential opposition. This explains both the the case of Afghani's downfall and the decision to give up the most remarkable of the Persian associates of him who had secular, reformist, and constitutionalist ideas, and had links with the Young Turks. Abdulhamid had attempted to use Afghani and his associates in service of his Shii policies, yet he had no intention to tolerate the bulk of their ideas, especially at a time when his regime was under domestic and foreign pressures.

Thus, Afghani's stay in Istanbul had not been the match of a pan-Islamist political activist with a 'pan-Islamist' Caliph. The pan-Islamism of Afghani had been one focused on large-scale schemes of Islamic unity neglecting political and social realities, whereas Abdulhamid's pan-Islamism had been a partial and differential one that made use of Caliphal policies as a survival strategy for the Ottoman Empire, and as a tool to interact with European powers on an equal basis. In this respect, the period of 1892-1897 had been a test revealing the true nature of Abdulhamid's pragmatic pan-Islamism, and it provided insights as well to various aspects of the Shii and Arab policies, and the Armenian Question and the emergence of opposition movement in the Ottoman Empire in that era. For Afghani, the final period of his life had been one that he had to operate according to the constraints of the Hamidian regime, and demonstrate his political stance within that framework.

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