

THE EFFECTS OF *TANZİMAT* AND ORIGINS OF POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN
THE ARMENIAN AND KURDISH COMMUNITIES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE,
1839-1876

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis, depending on some Ottoman archival documents, examines the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms on the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds and the origins of the conflicts amongst these communities in the Ottoman Empire. The reforms initiated in the *Tanzimat* era had such a transformative effect both on the Ottoman Armenian and Kurdish societies that social, political and economic structures of the two communities changed radically. Due to the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms and of these structural changes, the relations between the Ottoman Armenian and Kurdish communities started to deteriorate and the communal conflicts emerged during the *Tanzimat* era. These conflicts between the Armenian and Kurdish communities continued after the *Tanzimat* era.

Keywords: *Tanzimat*, Reform, Armenian, Kurd, Conflict

ÖZ

TANZİMATIN ETKİLERİ VE OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA ERMENİ VE KÜRT TOPLUMLARI ARASINDAKİ SİYASİ ÇATIŞMANIN KÖKENLERİ, 1839-1876

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Bu tez, Tanzimat reformlarının Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki Ermeni ve Kürt toplumları üzerindeki etkileri bu toplumlar arasındaki çatışmaların kökenlerini bazı Osmanlı arşiv belgelerine dayanarak incelemektedir. Tanzimat döneminde başlatılan reformlar Osmanlı Ermeni ve Kürt toplumları üzerinde öylesine dönüştürücü bir etkiye sahiptir ki bu iki toplumun toplumsal, siyasi ve iktisadi yapılarını büyük ölçüde değiştirmiştir. Tanzimat reformlarının ve bu yapısal değişimlerin etkisiyle Osmanlı Ermeni ve Kürt toplumları arasındaki ilişkiler Tanzimat döneminde bozulmaya başlamış ve toplumsal çatışmalar başgöstermiştir. Bu çatışmalar Tanzimat döneminden sonra da devam etmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tanzimat, Reform, Ermeni, Kürt, Çatışma

To my Advisor.....

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. APRELIMINARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS AND KURDS	4
1.1. A Brief History of the Ottoman Kurdish Society from the 16th Century to the 19th Century	4
1.2. A Brief History of the Ottoman Armenian Community from the 15th Century to the 19th Century	10
2. THE TANZİMAT ERA AND THE ROOTS OF ARMENİAN-KURDISH CONFLICTS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE	15
2.1. Reform Period: Tanzimat Reforms and Their Effects on the Armenian Community	15
2.2. Catholic and Protestant Missionaries and Their Effects on Armeian Society	38
2.3. The Transformation of the Kurdish Political Organizations due to the Ottoman Policy of Centralization during the Tanzimat Era	53
3. ARMENIAN-KURDISH CONFLICTS IN THE 19 TH CENTURY	62
3.1. Armenian-Kurdish Socia-Political Relations and Conflicts in the Tanzimat Era	62
3.2. Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 and Increasing Tension between the Kurds and Armenians	69
3.3. Uprising of Sheikh Ubeydullah	76
3.4. Armenian-Kurdish Conflicts after 1876	79
CONCLUSION	88
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	96
APPENDICES	106
A- Tables Showing the Numbers of the Protestant Missionary Schools and of the Students Attending to These Schools.....	
	106

B- Copies of Miscellaneous Ottoman Archival Documents	108
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LIST OF TABLES

Table I. Protestant Schools in Anatolia and the Numbers of the Students
Attending to Them, 1840-1870

Table II. Protestant Schools in Anatolia and the Numbers of Students Attending
to Them, 1870-1900

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.C.F.M.	:	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission
B.O.A. HR. SYS.	:	Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Documents of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<i>Hariciye Siyası</i>)
E.I.	:	Encyclopedia of Islam
IJMES	:	The International Journal of Middle East Studies
OTAM	:	Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi

INTRODUCTION

This thesis emerged out of a question about the adequacy of historical studies on the communal relations in Ottoman eastern Anatolia in general, socio-political relations between the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds during the Tanzimat era. There are abundant studies on the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds but most of them focus solely on their history; the studies on communal relations and their interactions with the state are limited. For example, Esat Uras' colossal work titled as "Armenians in History and the Armenian Problem"; the critical study of Kâmuran Gürün on the so-called 'Armenian Question', "Ermeni Dosyası"; Louis Nalbandian's book on the emergence of Armenian nationalism, "Armenian Revolutionary Movement"; Richard Hovannisian's study on Armenian independence, "Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918"; Vartan Artinian's work on the history of Armenian constitutionalism, "The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, (1839-1963)" are some of them. Nevertheless, they were written on the basis of the history of Armenian nationalism and the consequent reaction of the Ottoman State in order to analyze or distort the tragedies experienced during the late 19th and early 20th century. On the other hand, Garo Sasuni's work titled as "Kurdish National Movements and Armenian-Kurdish Relations from the XVth Century to the Present" and Tessa Hofmann's "The History of Armenian Kurdish Relations in the Ottoman Empire" are the only studies on this subject but they solely depended on the individual memoirs or notes of foreign travelers. Consequently, because of the absence of a historical study based on the Ottoman archival documents on the subject of the Ottoman Armenian-Kurdish political relations and conflicts in the 19th

century, this study came into existence to display the political relations and frictions between the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds in the 19th century in the light of Ottoman archival documents. More significant was that it focused on how the inter-communal relations worsened as a result of the ongoing Ottoman administrative transformation which stemmed from the constant European pressure on the Ottoman Empire since 1839.

The primary concern of this thesis is to analyze the evolution of Kurdish and Armenian communities and of their inter-communal political relations during the period of Ottoman modernization/westernization which is generally called as *Tanzimat* Era. Under this major concern, the study will seek to shed light on why and how the Armenians and Kurds confronted each other in eastern and southeastern Anatolia.

The first chapter of this study will briefly examine the historical background of these two communities, the Kurds and Armenians, from the 15th century onwards. Before the Ottoman Empire dominated these regions in the 16th century both lived scattered throughout Mesopotamia, eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. From this time onwards, the Kurds and Armenians experienced the Ottoman rule. Once the Ottoman rule was instituted throughout the Ottoman realm, they were easily integrated into the Ottoman system which offered the Kurds a relative economic and political autonomy while the Armenians benefited from all of the facilities of the *millet* system.

In the second chapter, the impacts of *Tanzimat* reforms and missionaries on the formation of Armenian national consciousness will be examined. The ongoing Ottoman efforts of centralization, which led the transformation of Kurdish political organizations in eastern Anatolia, will additionally be stressed.

Finally, in the last chapter, the Armenian-Kurdish political struggles up to the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 will be examined in order to comprehend the bases of communal interactions in eastern Anatolia, and to clarify what lies behind the deterioration of the Armenian-Kurdish relations.

The subject of this thesis is widely analyzed in many scholarly works dealing with the socio-political history of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Ottoman regulations and decrees regarding the conflict emerged out of the Tanzimat reforms between the Armenian and Kurdish communities are generally neglected in these works within their analysis of the effects of reforms over Ottoman communities. This study also employs the Ottoman documents to display the historical reasons and consequences of the conflict between the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds in the nineteenth century. Therefore the method of historical analysis will be used in the first and second chapters to be able to comprehend the historical facts and their reasons. The roots of nationalist movements and their consequences between the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds will be examined historically; and then the idea of emergence and development of Armenian nationalism will be criticized retrospectively. Also in the final chapter, the use of historical documents will continue in analyzing the political relations (mainly the frictions) between the Ottoman Armenians and Kurds, and the developments resulted from the nationalist activities of the Armenians and the Kurdish reactions against them.

CHAPTER 1

A PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS and KURDS

1.1. A Brief History of the Ottoman Kurdish Society from the 16th Century to the 19th Century

History of the Kurdish people under the Ottoman rule started with the Shah Ismail's emergence as a rival against the Ottoman Empire in Iran in the early 16th century¹. When his *Kızılbaş* troops entered Diyarbekir, Mosul and Baghdad², Selim I' decided to act against him in 1514 (Kodaman 1987:10). Selim I won a victory over Shah Ismail at Çaldıran (near Erzincan), however this did not bring a concrete result to political conflicts. After the Treaty of Kasr-ı Şirin a long-lasting peace was constituted between the two empires (Chaliand 1994:24, McDowall 1996:25-26 and Pitcher 2001:148-149).

Under these circumstances Kurdish populated regions became boundary between the Ottomans and Safavids. Now living on a buffer zone, the Kurdish tribal chiefs welcomed the sovereignty of whoever promised them more autonomy and prosperity (Chaliand 1994:24). When Ismail invaded the eastern parts of Asia Minor, *Shi'ism* spread amongst the Kurds as well as the Turcoman tribes; and many tribal chiefs adopted *Shi'i* Islam

¹ Ismail launched two campaigns during the reign of Bayezid II into the central Anatolia, upto Ankara. In addition to this, Shah Ismail was supporting the Shah Kulu who was *Shi'ite* in Anatolia. Besides these, he made an alliance with Venice and *Turgut* and *Varsak* Turcoman tribes in Karaman against the Ottomans. These activities irritated Selim I; for detailed information about Ismail-Selim struggle see Pitcher (2001:148-151) and Allouche (2001:83-101).

² Ismail during his expeditions to Anatolia sought to expand the *Shi'i* order into Asia Minor, that is why he supported the *qizilbash* Turcoman tribes who resisted against the Ottomans' efforts for settling them to be able to increase the agricultural production and taxable sources; for the role of the Turcoman tribes in expanding the Safavids influences into the eastern Anatolia. The influence of Shah İsmail in Anatolia was so effective that Anatolian *qizilbash*es sent an amount of money under the names of *nezr* and *sadaka* every year; see Uzunçarşılı (1954:243).

(Allouche:2001:85,106). Nevertheless after the Ottoman victory at Çaldıran, the majority of chiefs accepted Sultan Selim I as their suzerain instead of Shah Ismail, because the Sultan promised not to remove the Kurdish local chiefs in 'Kurdistan' (Gibb & Bowen 1969:161-162).

Ottoman direct rule and full authority in the eastern part of the empire could not be established until the reign of Abdulhamid II, because of geographical distinctness and multi-ethnic socio-cultural structure of eastern Anatolia. Awakened by the very famous Kurdish elite *İdris-i Bitlisi*³ about the socio-political susceptibility of eastern Anatolia, Selim I did not act as *Akkoyunlu* and *Safavid* rulers who had removed local Kurdish chieftains in the region. İdris advised Selim to re-grant the former positions and privileges of the local Kurdish elites in order to establish the Ottoman suzerainty in eastern Anatolia. By doing so, he could secure the eastern borders of the empire from the Safavid danger. İdris acted as a mediator between the Kurdish leaders (*emirs*) and the Ottomans to institute an administrative system in which semi-independent Kurdish chiefdoms (*emirates* or *hükûmets*)⁴, and the Ottoman provincial administrative units,

³ İdris of Bitlis (*İdris Bitlisi Mevlana Hakim*), son of Sheikh Hüsame'd-din, the former *Akkoyunlu* governor of Bitlis, as a statesman and historian, supported Selim I through convincing the *Sunni* Kurds and their chiefs to help the Ottomans against the Savafids in 1514 and played an important role in completing the conquest of eastern and south-eastern Anatolia by the end of 1515. He wrote a lyrical book (*manzum*) in Persian titled as *Heşt-bihişt* which is about the initial eight Ottoman sultans, and died in 1520 (Driver 1922:496 and Huart 1967:936).

⁴ In the classical and pre-modern period in the Ottoman Empire besides the classical *sancaks* there was another type of sancak called *hükümet sancaks* the administrations of which were granted to the local notables. These sancaks were being recorded not as *liva* but as *hükümet*. Those who were administrating the *hükümet sancaks* were called *hakim*. For instance, the Kurdish ruler of Bitlis, İdris-i Bitlis, in the 16th century was also called *Hakim* İdris. (Kılıç 1997:10-11). In an imperial code of law (*kanunnâme*) issued during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent *hükümet sancaks* are defined as: "bunlardan mâada dokuz hükümet vardır ki, hîn-i fetihde hıdmet ü itâ'atleri mukâbelesinde ashâbına tefvîz ü temlik olunmuşdur. Mülkiyet târiki üzere tefrik ederler. Hatta memleketleri mefrûzül-kalem ve maktû'ül-kademdir. Ebvâb-ı mahsulâtı dâhil-i defteri sultanî olmamışdır. İçlerinde ümerâ-i Osmâniyye'den ve kul tâifesinden hiç bir ferd yokdur. Cümle kendülere mahsusdur. Ve bunların 'ahidnâmeleri mûcibince azl-ü nasb kabul eylemezler. Amma cümlesi mutî-i fermân-ı Hazret-i Sultandır. Sâir ümerâ'-i Osmâniyye gibi kangı eyâlete tâbi'ler ise, beğlerbeğleriyle ma'an sefer eşerler. Kavın-ü kabîle ve başka asker sâhibleridir..."; see Akgündüz (1992:439-440) and Gibb & Bowen (1969:162-165).

sancaks under centrally appointed officials could exist (Akdağ 1995:39; Gibb & Bowen 1969:162; Chaliand 1994:24 and Kılıç 1997:11-12). The status of *hükümet sancaks* which were determined by codes (*kanunnameler*) was valid as long as they were loyal to the Ottoman Sultan (Akgündüz 1992:439-440). The primary reason for granting this status to the *hükümet*s in Diyarbekir, Van, Şehrizer and Bağdat provinces was to convince the local notables to accept the Ottoman suzerainty, at least nominally through giving them official duties (Hourani 1974:70). In the early eighteenth century there were six *hükümet sancaks*⁵ in Diyarbekir, four in Van, and one for Şehrizer and Bağdat (Gibb & Bowen 1969:161-165; Kılıç 1997:11). In addition to these, there were a few *sancaks* governed by Kurdish Beys whose duties were also hereditary.⁶ But contrary to *hükümet sancaks* the rulers of this type enjoyed less autonomy. For example, in the seventeenth century Çıldır, Diyarbekir, Van and Şehrizer were divided into a number of *sancaks* some of which were ordinary whereas some were governed “irregularly”. In Diyarbekir there were eleven ordinary *sancaks*⁷ and eight other types ruled by Kurdish Beys. While the governors of *hükümet sancaks* could not be dismissed by the Paşa (*Beylerbeyi*), the rulers of this type could be dismissed by senior officers in case of failure in performing their duties (Gibb & Bowen 1969:162).

⁵ In these *sancaks* there were no fiefs (*timars*). All of the taxes directly went to the ruler (Gibb & Bowen 1969:163).

⁶ Gibb & Bowen asserted, “this system was maintained even in the regions that ceased to lie on the Persian frontier owing to further Ottoman conquests and was applied in other parts of Kurdistan incorporated in the Empire at later dates. By the middle of the sixteenth century there were at least thirty of these hereditary Kurdish governments established in various districts of Armenia and Kurdistan.” (1969:162).

⁷ These *sancaks* contained *timar* holders and governed by the centrally appointed officials (*sancakbeyis*). It was obligatory for the *timariots* to serve under the command of *sancakbeyi*; for detailed information on *sancaks* see, Kunt (1978:15-25) and İnalçık (2003:117).

The definition by the 17th century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi on the administrative structure of province of Van may be an illuminator for a better comprehension on this occasion: according to Çelebi, twenty of the thirty-seven *sancak* governors of Van were centrally appointed or dismissed by the Ottoman Porte.⁸ Çelebi listed those who are autonomous and governed by Kurdish dynasties: “*Vastan kal’ası* (Vastan Castle, south of Van) *ve Şatak kal’ası* (Şatak Castle, south of Van), *kal’a-i Cülomerg* (Cülomerg Castle, homeland of *Cülo* tribesmen)... *Hakkari... Bitlis* (the territory of the Rozhiki tribesmen under the leadership of Abdal Khan who had 50.000 troops), *Mahmudi, Pinyanişi, Biredûsi, Çovlânî, Dündümi*, and *Dümbüli*.” Çelebi described them as “those who do not accept the supersession from their sphere of control in the province of Van (*eyalet-i Van’da azl kabul etmez hükümetler*)” (Evliya Çelebi 2001:117-119).

In the sixteenth century, military fiefs (*timars*) were given to the Kurdish leaders as *yurtluk* and *ocaklık*⁹ in return for providing soldiers in

⁸ Çelebi listed them as follows: “Sancağ-ı Erciş, sancağ-ı Adilcevaz, sancağ-ı Muş ve Bargiri ve sancağ-ı Karkar ve sancağ-ı Kesani ve sancağ-ı kal’a-i Bayezid ve sancağ-ı Berda’ ve sancağ-ı Ereçik ve sancağ-ı Korladik ve sancağ-ı Çobanlılık ve liva-i Şürker ve liva-i Dalegird ve sancağ-ı Ziriki ve sancağ-ı Van-ı sedd-i iman (the residence of the officials)... liva-i Hizan ve liva-i İspa’ird (Siirt) ve liva-i Ağakis, liva-i Şirvan, liva-i Beni Kotur, Van...bu zikrolunan sancakların cümle beğleri Âl-i Osman tarafından azl u nasb kabul eder sancak beğleridir ve livâlarında hâs u harâclar cümle Van kulları aklâmlarıdır ve arâzî oşûr verir, ze’âmet ve timâra bağlanmış yedi yüz pare ma’mûr u âbâdân kurâları vardır” (Evliya Çelebi 2001:117-119).

⁹ *Yurtluk* and *Ocaklık* meant ancestral properties, especially lands or fiefs granted to the Ottoman statesmen in payment for their service and efficiencies but here these two terms are used in a different way: during the classical period, those Muslim dynasties who accepted the Ottoman suzerainty on their own will were given / re-granted their former domains as *yurtluk* and *ocaklık*. Moreover the former statues and socio-economic rights of these dynasties were kept. For instance, in eastern Anatolia, Syria, and Iraq there were many loyal Kurdish and Arab dynasties who continued to rule in their realms autonomously, see Akdağ (1995:39), and Gibb & Bowen (1969:48). These sancaks were governed as *hükümet* sancaks. In contrast to the *hükümet* sancaks, *yurtluk* and *ocaklık* sancaks were registered as *liva* on which the Ottoman cadastral registration (*tahrir*) was made. *Yurtluk* and *ocaklık* were defined in a *Kanunnâme* issued during the reign of Suleiman I as follows: “ve bir bahşi dahi ocaklık dur ki, hîn-i fetihde ba’zı ümerâya hizmet ve itâ’atleri mukabelesinde ber vech-i te’bîd arpalık ve sancak hâssı tarikıyla tevcih olunmuşdur. Erbâb-ı divan ve kanun istulâhında bu makûlelere yurdruk ve ocaklık derler. Sancak i’tibâr olunur ve sâir ümerâ gibi tabl u ‘alem sahibleridür. Selâtîn-i selefden ellerinde olan temessükâtları mücibince cidden bunlar azl ü nasb kabul eylemezler. Ammâ elviye-i sâire gibi kurâ ve mezârî’inin mahsulâtı tahrîr olunmuşdur... İçlerinde ze’âmet ve timâr vardır. Sefer-i hümâyûn vâki’ oldukça, zu’amâ ve erbâb-ı timârı alay-beğleri ile kendüleri ma’an sâir sancak-beğleri gibi kangı eyâlete tâbi’iler

time of war. The Ottoman state resorted to this method not only to benefit from the influence of local notables but also to bring the central authority to the region partially (Kılıç 1997:12). Just after the Ottomans captured eastern Anatolia, the Porte entrusted to İdris making the cadastral registration (*tahrir*) and to determine the administrative status of the region. Thus, he was entrusted by an imperial edict (*ferman*) to carry out *tahrir* and prepare the title-deeds (*temessük*).¹⁰ As time past, these fiefs became hereditary (Dankoff 1990:11; Gibb & Bowen 1969:162; Kodaman 1987:10-11).¹¹ In addition to this, the formation of nomadic tribal confederations composed of Turcoman and Kurdish tribes was allowed by the Ottoman state in some parts of the eastern Anatolia; for instance, one named *Boz Ulus* emerged in Diyarbekir in the 16th century. The number of the members of this confederation was about 80.000. The confederation had two million sheeps pasturing in Syrian deserts in winter and Dersim (Tunceli) in summer. Another confederation of this type but composed of totally Kurdish tribes was the *Kara Ulus* in Diyarbekir. It is estimated that there were approximately 400 tribes in three vilayets: Van, Diyarbekir and *Şehrızor*

ise, beğlerbeğleriyle ma'an konub ve göçüb, sefer hizmetin edâ edegelmişlerdir. Ve bunlardan birisi fevt olsa yâhud edâ-i hizmet eylese, yurdu ve ocağı olmağla, sancağı ve ocağı, evlâdına ve akrabasına verilir; hâricden kimesneye verilügelmemişdir. Meğer ki, evlâd ü akrabası münkarız ola, ol zaman da sancak tasarruf eylemiş bir umûr-dîde kimesneye verilür. Amma yurdruk ve ocaklık i'tibârı olmaz, belki sâir elviye gibi tasarruf olunur." Memorandums and *kanunnames* in the 17th century repeated the former definition of *ocaklık* and *yurtluk* sancaks. Therefore it can be assumed that they kept their same status. In the eighteenth century, Diyarbekir, Van, Çıldır, Kars, Baghdad, Erzurum, Şehr-i Zor and Bosnia had this kind of sancaks (Akgündüz 1992:440 and Kılıç 1997:11-12). Gibb and Bowen assumed that there were four hundred tribal chieftains holding hereditary *ze'amets* in Diyarbekir, Van and Shahrizur; they were obliged to supply troops to their *sancakbeyis*. In addition, in the seventeenth century's Çıldır there were four hereditary *sancaks* as *yurtluk* given to the Kurdish Begs, and in the eighteenth century there were at least nineteen (1969:163).

¹⁰ In an imperial edict sent to the semi-independent Kurdish chiefs before a campaign during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, it is said that those who had been holding the *temessüks* since the old times (*kadimden temessükleri üzere*). This proves that sancaks were given as *yurtluk* and *ocaklık* during the reign of Selim I. In the following periods, the *temessüks* of the Kurdish notables were to be renewed (Kodaman 1987:11).

¹¹ The replacement of *Abda'l Khan*, the Kurdish governor of Bitlis, by his son in 1660s is an example for the hereditary sancaks governed by the Kurds, see (Dankoff 1990).

some of whom were totally nomadic. It is interesting that some of these tribes were charged with the duty of controlling the eastern borders by the Ottoman government. Beside these, the Ottoman Empire benefited from the Kurdish tribal troops (*Mukri*, *Baradust* and *Suran* Kurds) not only in defending Diyarbekir in 1515 and capturing Mardin and northern Cezire; but also in the clearance of the regions around Musul-Cezire bin Umar, Amadiya-Arbil and Urumiya from the *qizilbash* Turcoman tribes¹² (McDowall 1996:27-29).

To conclude, the Ottoman-Kurdish relations depended mainly on clientalism that provided the Kurds a legal autonomy and authority to secure their *de facto* domination over the Kurdish populated areas since the reign of Seljuqid Sultan Sandjar. The eastern borders of the Empire were now safeguarded by the Kurds¹³ against the political or military danger of Safavids and the heresy of *Shi'ism*. Although both the Ottomans and Kurdish chiefs were ever contented with the relation of this type,¹⁴ the sensitive balance of power between the Ottoman political authority and regional powers continued until the second half of the 19th century (Kodaman 1987:11 and McDowall 1996:30).

¹² For instance, 40.000 Kurds from Kirkuk, Shahrizur, Erbil, Musul helped the Ottomans in regaining Baghdad from the Safavids in 1638 (McDowall 1996:29).

¹³ Tribal Kurdish troops constituted an important part of the Ottoman provincial forces and contributing to Ottoman army by scouting, raiding and skirmishing when launching a campaign to the east. For example, the Ottomans formed an army composing mainly of Hakkari, Mahmudi (*Khushab*) and Bitlis Kurds during an expedition into Iran in the 1630s (Dankoff 1996:16 and McDowall 1996:29).

¹⁴ Each party strove to expand its domain whenever an opportunity appeared (McDowall 1996:30).

1.2. A Brief History of the Ottoman Armenian Community from the 15th Century to the 19th Century

When the Ottomans became a strong political power in Asia Minor in the 15th century, Armenians were living scattered around Cilicia, eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus under foreign dominations. The first Ottoman-Armenian relations started after the conquest of Bursa by Osman Bey who transferred the Armenians and their former religious center from Kütahya to the new capital, Bursa (Çetintaş 2002:8). It can be said that the entire political stabilization, religious freedom and the economic welfare came with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople for the Armenians. Sultan Mehmet II instructed the foundation of an Armenian Patriarchate in 1461 in Constantinople independent from the other four Armenian Patriarchates: Jerusalem¹⁵, Edchmiadzin (*Üç Kilise* near Yerevan), Akhtamar (a small island in the Lake Van) and Sis (in Kozan the district of Adana). The Armenian bishop in Bursa, Ovakim¹⁶, became the first Patriarch of Armenian community (*millet*) under the Ottoman sovereignty (Artinian 1969:8-9; Cahen 1960:640 and Cevdet Paşa 1309:45).¹⁷ Apart from the Armenians, the religious affairs of other Monophysite¹⁸ Christians such as

¹⁵ In terms of spiritual matters the Church of Edchmiadzin was superior to the other apostolic Armenian churches. On the other hand the Patriarchate of Constantinople, paralleled with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, had an increasing secular authority over the Armenians under the Ottoman domination; see Çetintaş (2002:8).

¹⁶ According to an Armenian narrative, Mehmed II had met with Ovakim in Bursa before the conquest. During this meeting, Ovakim heralded the conquest of the city by Mehmed II; thence the Sultan asked him to pray for his victory and promised in case of achievement that he would bring him with his peoples to Constantinople and make him patriarch with the same prerogatives of the Greek Orthodox patriarch. The Conqueror awarded the Armenians, who supplied many benefits to the Ottomans during the campaign, with a wide range of privileges as well as the status of distinctive community (*millet*); see C.J.F.D. (1966:421) and Çetintaş (2002:8).

¹⁷ It was determined that the patriarch was to be elected amongst the prelates who were the supreme bishops and called *markhassa*. A council of the clergy and a council of the laymen/laity were to assist the patriarch; see Cahen (1960:640).

¹⁸ The Christians in the Ottoman Empire can be divided into two main groups on the ground of faith. The primary reason for division was the problem on the nature of Christ. The Orthodox Christians entirely believe in the dual nature of Christ who has the divinity and humanity in his body separately; that is to say, he is both God and human-being. This is the

Ethiopians, Georgians, Syrian Jacobites, Chaldeans and Copts began to be administered by the Armenian Church in Constantinople. The Armenian Patriarch became the civil and religious master and political authority of these communities. Marriages, funerals and permission for travels “were procured for the members of these communities only upon the presentation of a certificate from the Armenian patriarch,” (Artinian 1969:9). Moreover Mehmet II bestowed almost all of the civic, cultural and religious rights to the Armenians, as he granted to the Greek Orthodoxies and Jews (Shaw 1976:59).

Owing to the Turkish invasion, Constantinople was gradually depopulated by the Greek intellectuals, artisans, craftsmen and variety of qualified personalities who preferred to emigrate to Italy, particularly to Venice, Florence and Genoa. As a consequence, Constantinople became a half-populated city in 1453.¹⁹ Under these circumstances, Mehmed II asked the Armenians to settle in Constantinople in order to reconstruct the city. The Sultan supplied all the facilities for the Armenians to immigrate to the new capital.²⁰ The first Armenians immigrating to the city were Patriarch Ovakim and his community among whom there were clerics, farmers, artisans, architects, craftsmen, tradesmen and so forth (Artinian 1969:2; Shaw 1976:59-60 and Simeon 1999:141-142). The first wave was welcomed by the Sultan, and settled in six districts of Istanbul: *Kumkapı* where the

duophysite doctrine determined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and followed by the Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholics. On the other hand, the non-Orthodox Christians remained faithful to the monophysite doctrine formulated at the Council of Ephesus in 435 and stated that divinity and humanity were united in Christ; see H.M.W. (1966:424).

¹⁹ According to Stanford Shaw 60.000-70.000 inhabitants left Istanbul; consequently the population of the city reduced to 10.000 (1976:59).

²⁰ It was not only the Armenians who were encouraged to migrate to Constantinople but also the Jews, the Greeks and the other communities were transferred to the capital. Within a few years as a result of the Mehmed's policy of migration, the population of the city reached to number 100.000 (Shaw 1976:59-60).

seat of Armenian patriarchate existed, *Samatya*, *Edirnekapi*, *Balat*, *Yenikapi* and *Narlıkapı*. Therefore those who were among the first immigrants were also called “six community” (*altı cemaat*) (Kılıç 2000:46 and Uras 1987:149). Mehmet II transferred many Armenian qualified laborers such as, artisans, tradesmen, bankers, craftsmen...etc. from Crimea²¹ and Karaman (central Anatolia) between 1475 and 1479. The only Ottoman sultan who used to transfer the qualified Armenians to the capital was not Mehmed II, his successors Selim I, Suleiman the Magnificent and Murat III also resorted to this method.²²

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the periods of prosperity for the Armenians in terms of their social and economic developments. After the long-lasting wars and chaos Armenians were reshaping their lives, societies, social status, economic roles and socio-economic relations within a new context. They did not find any difficulty in adopting a new culture, polity and socio-economic institutions. The Armenians, spreading to the lands under the rule of the Ottoman sultans and having the advantages of *zimmi*²³ status, achieved to occupy the most advantageous and profitable occupations throughout the Ottoman world,

²¹ The number of those who were transferred from Crimea changed from source to source: Salahi Sonyel gives the number as 70.000 whereas Osman Ergin mentions the total 40.000; see Çetintaş (2002:9).

²² Bayezid II imported a number of the Armenians from Theodocia; Selim I, after his victory at Chaldiran in 1514, brought quite a few number of the artisans from Tabriz, Erzurum, Kemah, Muş, Sivas and Erzincan along with him. Like his father Suleiman the Magnificent, when he captured Van in 1534; Murad III, after the recapture of Tabriz and Georgia in 1590, brought a lot of Armenian artisans, jewelers, architects and farmers to Istanbul; see Artinian (1969:2), Mazıcı (1987:4) and Çetintaş (2002:9).

²³ *Zimmi* was derived from the *zimmet* of Islamic law, Shari ‘a, and constitutes the very basis of the *millet* system. According to this, if the non-Muslims (Jews, Christians and who are accepted as “People of Scripture according to jurisprudence of Prophet Mohammad) accept to live under the flag of Islam without converting their religions, turns into the *zimmi* status. In return for this status the non-Muslims are obliged to pay two annual tributes called *cizye* (poll tax) and *haraç* (security tax). Because of being non-Muslim, the *zimmis* were subjected to distinct codes different from *şariat*; however they were subjected to the Islamic laws when they were included in the public matters; see Artinian (1969:12), Lewis (1998:326) and Çetintaş (2002:2).

especially in banking and trade (Ubicini 1856:311-318). Ubicini in his *Letters on Turkey* portrayed the socio-economic positions of the Armenians and their effective relations with the provincial paşas and the Ottoman government as follows:

The Armenians have been, and still are, the richest and most commercial people of the empire, and by their wealth they are the surest guarantees the Porte could obtain: by their knowledge of the Turkish language, by their intimate acquaintance with all commercial dealings, and by their condition of raiah [*reaya*], they offer to the pashas every quality that can recommend them as able men of business, as bankers of solidity, and as docile creditors...The Sultan views their prosperity with no unfriendly eye...The confidential agent who accompanies the pasha to his province is generally a relation of the sarraf; all money transactions pass through him...it may be thought that so powerful and united a body as the sarrafs would strenuously oppose any change...The sarrafs...and their capital, and commercial habits, would secure them better rewards in the honorable career of industry than they can reap in the successful hazards of gambling... the sarrafs are still the intermediate agents between the treasury and the revenue contractors, and guarantees to the former for the payment at the appointed period of the money due (1856:311-318).

The Armenians were tradesmen and caravan leaders carrying out the role of commercial links between Istanbul, Antwerp, Bruges, and Nuremburg. Like the other *zimmis*, they were exempt from military service; as a result they could divert their efforts to economic activities such as trade, handicrafts, printing press²⁴, architects, house-painting, manufacturing (silk stuffs and gunpowder) and so forth (Deny 1960:640). While the empire expanded the vocations the Armenians were engaged in increased. Owing to the fact that the Turkic elements of the empire were occupied in military and agriculture in general, the Armenians, like the other *zimmis*, flourished and professed in other activities. Consequently, they began to acquire a crucial place in the Mediterranean and Oriental trade and became indispensable intermediaries between the European

²⁴ The Armenian printing press in the Ottoman Empire was found in 1679 in Istanbul, but it was not the first one which had been found in Venice in the 16th century; for further information on the Armenian modernization see Koçu (1971:5206) and Zekiean (2001:41-42).

merchants and the Ottomans. Their monopoly on this sector could not be broken until the 19th century. They were active all over Anatolia, particularly in Sivas, Tokat, Ankara, Kayseri, Bursa as well as Istanbul. Meanwhile, the majority of the Armenians were engaged in agriculture, just like the Turkish peasantry (Çetintaş 2002:10 and Sonyel 1993:124).

CHAPTER 2

The **TANZİMAT** ERA and the **ROOTS OF ARMENIAN-KURDISH CONFLICTS** in the **OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

2.1. Reform Period: *Tanzimat* Reforms and their Effects on the Armenian Community

The new institutions and law codes of the *Tanzîmât-ı Hayriye*, the “Auspicious Reform,” began with the promulgation of the *Gülhane* Rescript of 1839 and culminated in the convening of the Ottoman parliament in the spring of 1877. These dates bracket decades of social conflict and profound economic and political change undergirding and defining Ottoman citizenship from the very bases of imperial sovereignty. The *Gülhane* Rescript, rightly considered an Ottoman “bill of rights,” was announced only a year after the granting to Great Britain of the *Balta Limanı*, an open-door commercial agreement, and at a time when Russian, French, and British navies restrained Muhammad Ali’s Egyptian armies in Syria from marching on Istanbul (Salzman 1999:39).

Due to the general decay in administrative, military and judicial institutions since the beginning of the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire resorted to new arrangements concerning mainly the army. For example, Sultan Mustafa III invited the French military experts to the Empire to teach new military methods and techniques in the newly founded military school (*Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayun*) which was opened in 1773 for training engineers equipped with modern military techniques emerged in Europe. Sultan Selim III went further and initiated a more extensive reform movement called *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Order). He established a new regular army (*Nizam-ı Cedid*) dressed and trained in European style. Many military and medical students were sent to European capitals, Paris, London and Vienna where the Ottoman embassies were also opened in order to be informed about the political and scientific developments for the first time. Although Sultan Selim III could not realize all of his reform projects, his

successor Mahmud II accomplished various reforms extended from military to education (Kara1 1999:57-73).

Mahmud II was aware of the fact that the prevention of military and administrative collapse required measures for centralization and rationalization of authority in general, and a modernized army, a reformed bureaucracy, and a uniform tax system in particular, Mahmud II urged first to transform the tax system which was particularly crucial since it provided the financial basis for military and administrative reforms. To begin with, he abolished the Janissary corps in 1826 because the Janissaries, who usually collaborated with ulema to prevent the reforms, were one of the most serious obstacles before the reform projects. Mahmud II also established consultative assemblies (*Meclis-i Valâ, Dar-ı Şurayî Bâb-ı Ali...etc*), crushed the local notables to strengthen the central authority and treasury. He initiated an educational reformation by founding primary and secondary schools (*rüşdiyes*), and new higher schools in European style such as *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane* where the language of education was French. The first Ottoman official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, was founded in 1831. In the same year, a census for military conscription was made. The 1831 census brought the Ottoman government a new awareness of the resources and distribution of wealth among the empire's population (Kara1 1999:143-164 and Salzmann 1999:42).

The Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 which brought about the Greek independence and the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Treaty of 1838 marked a turning point both in the scope of the reform movement and in its relations with the western powers.²⁵ Needless to say, the foundation of independent

²⁵ Together with *Tanzimat* reforms, this treaty enabled the British ambassador in Istanbul to influence the government, as a result British goods dominated the Ottoman markets. These developments paved the way for the Armenians an ever increasing superior position, while

Greek Kingdom was the result of European political intervention on behalf of the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. From then on, the Ottoman statesmen strove to find ways to prevent foreign intervention in its internal affairs. Therefore the Edict of 1839 announced in *Gülhane Park* on November 3 by Mustafa Reşid Paşa in the name of Sultan Abdülmecid was the first serious step to overcome the destructive effects of the nationalism on its non-Muslim subjects and the European intervention in its policies (Davison 1968:73-76 and Salzmann 1999:41).

The *Gülhane Hatt* was the first reform edict in Ottoman history. It was designed by Mustafa Reşid Paşa who firmly believed that the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire could be rescued from the dissolution caused by nationalism through implementing indiscriminative reforms for the non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan (Davison 1992:517). It was constructed mainly on three principles regardless of religion and nationality: 1) guaranteeing the security of life, honor, and property of all Ottoman subjects; 2) introducing a fair tax system on the basis of level of income; 3) implementing a fair and universal military conscription system (Salzmann 1999:41 and İnalcık 1964b:624 and 1964a:614).

The announcement of *Tanzimat* in every corner of the Empire caused repercussions among all segments of society. It was interpreted by every group from their own points of view, as the government was afraid. Muslims did not like the privileges or rights granted to non-Muslims, they were even agitated by the *ulema*, notables (*âyân*) and the provincial governors who were anxious about their political and economic privileges. The non-Muslims in the Balkans got excited upon the promulgation of *Tanzimat* and

the interventions of Russia and Britain in the domestic affairs of Turkey began to play an important part in the explosion of the Armenian Question, see Sonyel (1993:200).

its egalitarian principles. Cyrus Hamlin who witnessed that period noted his impressions about it as follows:

The promulgation of *Hatt* was met with a great astonishment and amazement in the country. Narrow-minded Muslims damned the *Hatt*. They stated that Şeriat was violated and the Muslims were reduced to the levels of infidels. Christian subjects considered it as the beginning of a new era. Proclamation of the *Hatt* was a victory of British policy. Its principles spread throughout the Empire... *Gülhane Hatt* encouraged the *reâyâ* to struggle for their rights and introduced the equality of people before the laws. It reduced the authority of *ulema* on civil life...As for the effects of *Tanzimat* on *reâyâ*, for example, in Philippopolis the news about the abolishment of serfdom caused a wave of excitement. As soon as the *Hatt* was announced, *reâyâ* who were encouraged by their leaders demanded their independence. Nevertheless, the landowners resisted brutally against these demands...*Gülhane Hatt* stimulated the national sentiments among the Bulgarian subjects particularly in Bulgaria and Macedonia (İnalçık 1964b:624).²⁶

As noted by Cyrus Hamlin the *Tanzimat* Edict heralded socio-political and economic facilities for the non-Muslims such as the abolishment of tax-farming system and that of serfdom. Although the tax-farming system could not be immediately abrogated, a document in Ottoman Archives dated as 4th of November, 1851 (9 *Muharrem* 1268) clearly shows that the strict measures were taken to secure the peasantry from forced labor which had been very exhausting burden on the Ottoman peasants, particularly in the Balkans. The imperial order sent to the governor of Harput upon the complaints of the Armenians who had been forced to work in public service without payment instructed if the Armenians should not be employed without salary (BOA HR. SYS. 80/29)²⁷.

The other two favors of the *Tanzimat* for non-Muslims were the establishment of mixed police forces and mixed courts in which the testimony of non-Muslims was accepted against Muslims thenceforth. This was a radical step on the path to equality. *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*

²⁶ Cited from Cyrus Hamlin (1878 48-57).

²⁷ For the original language of the order, see footnote 80. For the original text, see Appendix B.

(the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances) which supervised the application of the *Tanzimat* reforms was reorganized²⁸ and turned into a legislative organ in the state apparatus (Seyitdanlioğlu 1994:43 and İnalçık 1964a:615). In 1840, it completed a new penal code which confirmed the principle of equality of all Ottoman subjects and abolished the death penalty without judgment. In doing so, it was hoped that the social integrity of the Empire could be secured and the separatist movements as well as the foreign intervention was prevented.

The abolition of tax-farming system (*iltizam*) represented the economic dimension of *Tanzimat* which, according to Halil İnalçık, constituted the basic motivation for all reforms. *Tanzimat* statesmen conceived *iltizam* as the main obstacle before the economic reforms by which fiscal centralization was aimed. To transfer all of the revenues to central treasury and to discard the usury and malpractices of the provincial governors and notables²⁹, it was planned to appoint tax-collectors (*muhassıl*) from the center to the provinces.³⁰ Besides these, new taxation system was introduced on the basis of wealth, which prescribed that *reâyâ* should pay the taxes of their parts on the ground of the amount of their possessions. The imperial decrees dated as 30 October 1853 (27 *Muharrem* 1270) (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/12)³¹ and 24 May 1855 (7 *Ramazan* 1271) (BOA

²⁸ It was united with *Dâr-ı Şûrâ-yı Bâb-ı Ali* following the propagation of *Tanzimat* (Seyitdanlioğlu 1994:43).

²⁹ They took generally part in the state apparatus as tax-farmers and by using their titres they plundered the peasants, see İnalçık (1964:632).

³⁰ Nonetheless, *iltizam* could not be abolished as a result of the serious reactions from the representatives of the status quo (*mültezims, voyvodas, âyân, local beys*)³⁰ and lack of competent officers in the provinces. Therefore, it was restored on March 11, 1842 (İnalçık 1964b:627).

³¹ “Teb’ay-ı devlet-i ‘aliyyeden Diyarbekir’de bulunan Protestân tâifesinin umur ve husûsâtı Ermeni milletinin zir-i idâresinde iken tâife-i merkûmeye hâl ve tahammüllerinden ziyâde vergi tehmil olunmuş olmasıyla bu husûsu taraf-ı alilerine ifâde ve beher haneye nizâmî vechile kırk üçer gurus tevzi’ ve taksimi istid’â olunmuş ise de havâle-i sem’i i’tibâr

HR. SYS. 2821/40)³² which were successively sent to the governor of Diyarbekir upon the complaints of Protestant Armenians show how the Ottoman government considered the implementation of the *Tanzimat* principles important for all of the subjects regardless of religion and faith. Furthermore, these decrees also demonstrate that the economic principles of the *Tanzimat* which prohibited collecting excessive taxes reached to southeastern part of Anatolia. In these decrees, it was ordered that no one could be forced to pay excessive and unfair taxes.

The other destination of the *Tanzimat* reforms was to reorganize the administrative structure in the provinces where political and economic power of the notables and the provincial governors was at its climax. In order to break the authority of local lords and to restore the central authority, the Sublime Porte appointed certain officials called *muhassıl-ı emvâl* who were empowered with extensive prerogatives, particularly in financial matters. Therefore, the authority of governors was restricted to public security. In addition to the centrally appointed representatives of the Porte, provincial assemblies were established in the provinces to ensure

olunmayarak bunun için kocabaşı bulunan Şemsi Salib dahi mahbus-u ilkâ olunmuş olduğu ve bu keyfiyet tâife-i merkûmeye gurer-i mucib görünmüş iddûğu beyânıyla bunların dahi milel-i sâire misillü beher hanesine kırk üçer guruş vergi taksim olunmuş ve mahbus-ı merkûmun dahi sebeb-i tahliye kılınması husûsu Protestan vekili tarafından bu kere bi't-takrir ve istid'â olunmuş olup beyâna hâcet olmadığı üzere işbu vergi husûsunda mizân-ı 'adl ve hakkâniyetin gözetilmesi lâzımeden ve tanzimât-ı hayriye usûl-ü m'adeletsumûlû icâbından olduğu halde bundan dolayı merkûm kocabaşının habsolunması vâki' ve sahih ise nârvâ görünmüş olduğundan muktezâ-i destûrileri üzere keyfiyetin tahkik ve tedkikiyle vergi-i mezkûrın bermûceb-i nizâm tâife-i merkûmenin dahi hâl ve tahammüllerine göre taksimesi ve mahbus-ı merkûmun dahi bir güne kabahat-ı kânûniyesi olmadığı...." (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/12). For the original text, see Appendix B.

³² "Diyarbekir'de Ermenilere bağlı olarak vergilerini ödeyen Protestan Ermenilerin garazından mütevellid diğer unsurların hânebaşı 43 guruş vergi verirken kendilerine bu rakamın katlanarak ödetilmek istendiği şikâyeti ile bu durumun düzeltilerek eşit vergi alınmasına dair Kürdistan Valisine gerekli emrin daha önce verildiği hususu: "Teb'ay-ı devlet-i 'aliyeden Diyarbekirde bulunan Protestân tâifesinin umur-ı husûsâtı Ermeni milleti zeyr-i idâresinde olarak hasbû'l-mezheb...tâife-i merkûmenin vergilerinin yerine bir kat daha zam ve 'ilâvesiyle hâl-ü tahammüllerinden ziyâde vergi tehmil olunmuş ve vergi husûsu mahall-i sâirenin beher hâne kırk üçer guruş tevzi ve taksimi..." (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/40). For the original text, see Appendix B.

participation of the *reâyâ*³³ to decision-making process. The members of the provincial assemblies came together two or three days in a week to discuss civil and the other administrative affairs. Although the provincial assemblies were established to eliminate the notables in the provincial administration and, thus, to increase the influence of central government in the provinces; they were nevertheless gradually occupied by former notables under the title of assembly member, director of district...etc. selected by the provincial governors among them (*vücûh-ı memleket*) (İnalcık 1964:625-627, 635).

Tanzimat also rearranged the military conscription system. According to the *Gülhane Hatt* non-Muslims were to serve in the army equally with Muslims however the Muslims could hardly accept Christians in military offices. It is notwithstanding that in 1847, Ottoman government ordered the Armenian patriarchate to enlist all males of his *millet* in the Ottoman army instead of paying the traditional exemption tax. A small number of Armenians were enrolled in the imperial army; however they were allowed to use only inferior weapons. As a matter of fact, before that development, a few numbers of Armenian students were accepted to *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* (Ottoman Military Medical Academy). Furthermore, forty Armenian students were allowed to study at the academy each year while the other sixteen were accepted to *Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayûn* (Imperial Engineering School) together with sixteen Greek and six Jewish students. After graduation they served in the Ottoman army as pharmacists, physicians, and engineers with military ranks (Artinian 1969:50).

³³ The communal assemblies were established in every administrative units, even in villages. In the centers of provinces and districts, greater assemblies were formed. The thirteen members of the greater assemblies were *muhassıl* and his two scribes, *kadı*, *müfti*, police chief, four notables from Muslims community and, if any, the metropolit of non-Muslims and two *kocabaşıs*. In the other districts and villages having no *muhassıl* minor assemblies with five members were established (İnalcık 1964:626).

Many historians acknowledged that the *Gülhane Hatt* was a revolutionary 'charte' in the history of the Ottoman Empire because it introduced new social, economic and administrative reforms and guaranteed the security of life, honor, and property of all Ottoman subjects for the first time (Dadrian 2003:14; İnalcık 1964b:624 and 1964a:614 Karal 1999:193).

The announcement of the Reform Edict on 28 February 1856 (*11 Cemâziyelâhir 1272*) opened a new era in the history of the Ottoman reform movements. The primary concern of the edict was to grant social, economic and political rights (which were the same with that of Muslims) to non-Muslims subjects by the Ottoman government so that all subjects became equal regardless of religion and ethnicity. The main characteristic of the era was the intervention of Great Powers in the Ottoman internal affairs on behalf of the Christian subjects. Each power urged the Porte to make further reforms for the Christians (Karal 1995:27 and 1983:128).

It should be remembered that the main tendency in the *Tanzimat* reforms was to treat subjects as individual, rather than a member of community. Although *Tanzimat* reforms encountered considerable social opposition from all segments of the society (even from the non-Muslims), the Ottoman statesmen (headed by Mustafa Reşid Paşa and his disciples Ali and Fuad Paşas) insisted on retaining westernizing reforms which were to create a supra identity (Ottomanism) for all Ottoman subjects. They thought that if Ottomanism worked as a social bond, it would be possible to counteract separatist nationalist tendencies among the minorities and to secure the integrity of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire. All these integral characteristics were culminated in the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856 which stemmed from the European pressure for reforms on Ottoman non-Muslims

in return for help the Ottoman Empire against Russian threat. During the Crimean War of 1853-1856 Western powers (Britain and France) increased their pressures on Ottoman government for the reforms regarding the Ottoman non-Muslims in order to get rid of the Russian demands for protection over Orthodox Christians. They suggested that to be able to defy the Russian manipulation of European nations against the Ottoman Empire through using Ottoman Christians and the problem of Holy Lands, Ottoman government had to make new arrangements concerning non-Muslims' rights. The Vienna Congress which was assembled after the war on 1 February, 1855 to determine the subjects of future peace treaty prescribed a reform programme promised equality of individuals, socio-economic progress and prosperity, establishment of banks, improvement of public works and communications, development of commerce and agriculture (Davison 1968:80-81 and Karal 1999:249-251).

The Reform Edict of 1856, while ratifying the principles of *Gülhane Hatt*, introduced new arrangements regarding the non-Muslims. It announced that all Christians, with the concession of a commission consisted of their communal members and with the consent of the Sublime Porte, shall examine and discuss the necessary reforms for their communal progress, and submit them to the Sublime Porte. The prerogatives granted to the Christian patriarchs and bishops by Mehmed II were re-insured. The property of different Christian clerics remained intact while the civil administration of non-Muslims was to be conducted through an assembly composed of religious and lay communal members.³⁴ All rituals and

³⁴ The original language of Reform Edict speaks as follows: "Gülhane'de kıraat olunan hatt-ı hûmayunum ile ve Tanzimat-ı Hayriyye mücibince her din ve mezhepte bulunan kâffe-i tebaa-i şâhânem hakkında bilâistisna emniyet-i can ve mal ve mahfuziyet-i nâmus için taraf-ı eşref-i pâdişahanemden va'd ve ihsan olunmuş olan teminat bu kere dahi tekid ve teyit kılınığundan bunun kâmilin fiile çıkarılması için tedabir-i müessirenin ittihaaz olunması ve zîr-i cenâh-ı âtîfet-i seniyye-i pâdişahanemde olarak memâlik-i mahrusa-i şâhânemde

practices of any religion and sect became free to be performed. No one shall be forced to change his/her religion or sect. Any expressions or speeches such as *gâvur* (infidel) which were used by the Muslims to insult non-Muslims were prohibited. *Cizye* (the poll tax) and non-Muslims' military exemptions were abolished so that they became eligible for public offices and institutions. For example, non-Muslims were allowed to enter military service in which they could be promoted as high as to rank of colonel (*miralay*). They were also allowed to benefit from educational institutions (military and civil schools) which had previously been designed for Muslims. Joint tribunals/mixed courts (*muhtelit divanlar*), in which the testimony of non-Muslims from then on was to be accepted against Muslims, were established. Moreover, regulations (*nizamnâme*) were issued for fair elections of Muslim and non-Muslim members of provincial assemblies. All subjects were to pay the same taxes regardless of religion and sects. In addition, confiscation of prisoners' properties and torture were abrogated (Bozkurt 1994:283; Karal 1999:250,252 and 1995:1-4; and Quatert 2002:255).

The implementation of the edict caused some incidents in various parts of the Empire. The permission of free ritual practicing to non-Muslims

bulunan hristiyan vesâir tebea-i gayr-i müslime cemaatlerine ecdâd-ı ızamım taraflarından verilmiş ve sinîn-i âhirded îta ve ihsan kılınmış olan bilcümle imtiyazat ve muafiyat-ı ruhaniye bu kere dahi tahrir ve ibka kılınıb fakat hristiyan ve tebea-i gayr-i müslime-i sâirenin her bir cemaati bir mehl-i muayyen içinde imtiyazat ve muafiyat-ı hâzıralarının rüyet ve muayenesine ibtidar ile olbabda vaktin ve gerek âsâr-ı medeniyet ve malûmat-ı müktesibenin icap ettirdiği ıslahatı irade ve tensib-i şâhânem ile Bâb-ı âlimizin nezareti tahtında olarak mahsusan patrikhanelerde teşkil olunacak meclisler mârifetiyle bilmûzakere cânib-i Bâb-ı âlimize arz ve ifade eylemeye mecbur olarak cennetmekân Ebûlfeth Sultan Mehmet Han-ı sâni hazretleri ve gerek ahlâf-ı ızamları taraflarından patrikler ile hristiyan piskoposlarına îta buyrulmuş olan ruhsat ve iktidar niyat-ı fütüvvetkârâne-i pâdişahanemden nâşi işbu cemaatlere temin olunmuş olan hâl ve mevki'i cedid ile tevfiik olup ve patriklerin elhaletü hazihi câri olan usûl-i intihabiyeleri ıslah olunduktan sonra patriklik berât-ı âlisinin ahkâmına tatbiken kayd-ı hayat ile nasb ve tâyin olunmaları usulünün tamamen ve sahihen icra ve Bâb-ı âlimizle cemaat-ı muhtelifenin rûesây-ı ruhaniyesi beyninde karargir olacak bir surete tatbikan patrik ve metropolit ve murahhasa ve piskopos ve hahamların hin-i nasbında usûl-i tahlifiyenin ifâ kılınması ve her ne suret ve nam ile olursa olsun..." (Karal 1999:259).

such as ringing church bell annoyed Muslims who began to think that *Şeriat* was overturned. On the other side, the non-Muslims were frustrated by the rumor that Muslims prepared to attack them. The Muslim attacks on foreign merchants in Maraş, Aleppo and Syria population caused immediate foreign intervention owing to the 9th article of Paris Treaty³⁵ which had granted the right of intervention in Ottoman internal affairs to the great powers (Cevdet Paşa 1991:88-89). After that, the great powers of the European Concert individually or collectively began to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs permanently.

Upon the intense European pressure the Ottoman government reorganized *millet* administration by preparing new regulations (*nizamnâme*), which could be, regarded as communal constitutions for each non-Muslim community. To do so, the government limited the extensive prerogatives of religious leaders in the *millet* administration; however in the long run the limitation of religious leaders' prerogatives affected the status quo of the Ottoman Armenian community radically. Up to that time, whatever unhappiness existed among the Armenians was absorbed within the structure of their *millet* whose leaders (clerics and *amiras*) supported the status quo to maintain themselves in power. The regulation granted to the Armenian *millet* prearranged a communal assembly composed of 400 members. The executive organ of this assembly, which was to deal with daily affairs of community, comprised of fourteen religious and twenty lay members. The Sublime Porte rearranged the provincial organization and introduced a new provincial law (*Vilayet Kanunu*) on 7 October 1864 (7 *Cemaziyelahir* 1281) by taking the example of the French "department system". The Provincial Code of 1858 preserved the institution of the

³⁵ For a good evaluation of the 9th article of Paris Treaty; see Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, (pr. Cavid Baysun), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p. 88 and Davison (1973:413-414)

provincial communal assemblies which were introduced into the Ottoman administrative system by *Tanzimat* reforms.³⁶ In 1868, again under the French influence³⁷ the Lycée of Galatasaray (*Mekteb-i Sultani*) was opened in order to give children of all Ottoman subjects a western instruction in French (Jorga 2005:504; Davison 1968:82 and 1973:54-57 and Shaw 2002:201).

Tanzimat statesmen resorted to make structural changes in traditional laws and legal procedures at the expense of the *Şeriat*³⁸ in order to satisfy the ever-increasing European demands and to neutralize the negative sanctions of the capitulations. Their endeavors led the promulgation of some laws and regulations out of the control of the *ulema*. The Penal Code of 1843 (revised in 1851 and 1857), Commercial Code of 1850 (revised in 1861), Maritime Commerce Code of 1863 and Civil Code of 1870-76 were some of them (Shaw 2002:118).

The *Tanzimat* reforms were prepared to reassert the Ottoman sovereignty over people, lands, and resources by reorganizing its military and civil institutions; and by granting basic rights to its subjects. Besides the social and military reorganizations, certain economic renovations were introduced in trade and agriculture, the backbone of the Ottoman economy. The agrarian policy of *Tanzimat*, after certain inquiries, started with the

³⁶ Thirteenth provision of the *Vilayet Kanunu* ordered that Vâlinin ma'yyetinde bir İdâre Meclisi olup işbu İdâre Meclisi sûret-i ta'yini fasl-ı sâlide beyân olunacak müfettiş-i hukâm-i şer'iyye ve defterdâr ve mektûbcu ve hâriciye müdürü ve ikisi müslim ve ikisi gayr-i müslim ahâleden müntehab kimselerden mürekkeb olacak ve Meclis-i İdârenin riyâseti vâlîde olup gıyâbında me'mûrinden kangısını tensib ve ta'yîn eder ise o vekâlet edecektir (Maliye Bakanlığı 1997).

³⁷ The French influence on the newly established Ottoman institutions became much visible during 1860s when Ali and Fuad Paşas dominated the Sublime Porte. They invited the French minister of education Jean Victor Dury to Istanbul to advise the Ottomans on further educational development. His report, which proposed the establishment of secondary schools open to all subjects, a secular university, new professional technical schools, and a public library system; see Shaw (2002:108).

³⁸ According to Donald Quatert, with the *Tanzimat* reforms, the superiority of *Şeriat* ended (Quatert 2002:255).

redefinition of the legal status of peasant landholding which was rationalized by the Land Reform of 1858. This could be done first by the classification and organization of various ways of land possession which stemmed from the applications of Ottoman sultans since the early times. The second step was the rearrangement and codification of the numerous land regulations (Cevdet Paşa 1991:45). The third one was to update the outmode rules and terminology all of which remained from the time of abolishment of *timar* system. *Tanzimat* statesmen decreased the agricultural tax rates and offered tax inducements to open new lands for cultivation in order to increase the taxable resources (Davison 1997:115 and Salzman 1999:46).

Another intention in preparing the Land Code of 1858 was the registration of title deeds (*tapu*) of landed properties on the names of individuals who were to be directly responsible for the taxes. This meant the abolishment of several intermediaries who, as a result of *iltizam* system, had gained extra tax revenues out of the state control. The illegal transformation of state lands (*mîrî*) into private properties (*mülk*) and endowments (*vakıf*) could be prevented through a regular land registration. It was more significant that the Land Code of 1858 represented the fortification of central authority by diminishing the influences of local powers (tribal leaders, sheikhs and *âyan*) who, had attained wide range of economic (big farms or huge amount of tax revenues) and political power. That is why the provision which abolished the right of gaining extensive lands was introduced in particular. Nevertheless, the law could not be implemented effectively because of the lack of competent executors. Therefore, the aims of supplying individual title deeds and extending the equality among the Ottoman subjects could not be realized in practice. On

the contrary, only the landlords (tribal leaders, sheikhs and *âyan*³⁹) benefited from this reform. For example, Kurdish sheikhs and *aghas* (large landowners) in eastern Anatolia increased the amount of land they owned. In consequence, the local lords and rant providers obtained the legal status of land ownership instead of the real cultivators of lands, peasants who thence became landless and dependent totally on the will of the former (Davison 1997:116 and Olson 1989:4). The actual impact of the Ottoman Land Reform of 1858 on the conditions of the peasantry in eastern Anatolia with the assertion of improvements and new peasant rights due to European demands for Christian equality gave a new dimension, which was certainly nationalistic, to the Armenian-Kurdish conflicts and subjected the Ottoman government perpetual European inspection and sanction (Salzmann 1999:47-48). This, in the long run, extended the socio-economic gap between the ruled (non-Muslim peasants, especially the Armenians) and Muslim rulers (Kurdish local beys and sheikhs in particular) and sharpened the nationalistic overview of the two communities upon each other in eastern Anatolia.

The egalitarian renovations in the *Tanzimat* era such as the establishment of mixed courts and that of provincial assemblies caused gradual limitation of the civil authority of the religious leaders of non-Muslim *millets* whose prerogatives were confined to religious and personal matters e.g. divorcing and fasting. After 1840 even the religious prerogatives of the Armenian patriarchs were restricted upon the establishment of the Armenian Judicial Council the formation of which was ordered by the Ottoman government. It was composed of four married priests and four

³⁹ Among the *âyân* in the provinces, there were many Armenians (*çorbacılar*) who abused their authority over their own peoples by collecting excessive taxes from them; see Davison (1997:140).

amira who were appointed by the patriarch. The participation of lay elements in the council was a radical development in the Armenian tradition; however the patriarch kept the right to appoint its members. The Armenian patriarch was not the only one whose extensive authority over the community was limited by the reforms of the *Tanzimat* which also weakened the economic powers and influence of the *amira* class on communal administration. The abolition of tax-farming system nullified the contracts of wealthy Armenian bankers and moneylenders who had previously obtained the farm-taxes by financing Ottoman officials. As a consequence, their influence on Armenian community and Ottoman officials weakened because many of them fell into financial difficulties (Artinian 1969:51-57).

Another economically destructive movement for the *amira* and Patriarchate came with the imperial rescript of 1840 which obligated the patriarch to collect the taxes from the members of his *millet* throughout the empire and submit them with collective responsibility to the imperial treasury. At the same time, the tax exemptions of Armenian churches, monasteries, and other religious properties (except for the religious institutions of the capital) were abolished. These developments resulted in extra financial burden on the patriarchate which, thence, resorted to Armenian people for economic help because it could not obtain financial support from *amira*. As a solution, patriarch Yakob appointed a committee composed of twenty-four members to fund the expenses of patriarchate and national institutions. Two members of the committee were appointed by the Ottoman government among the *amira* whereas twenty-two amongst the various Armenian *esnafs* in the capital. It is important that the financial administration of the Armenian *millet* was entrusted to a committee which was composed mainly of *esnafs* for the first time. Because of the resentment

of the *amira*, patriarch Matheos Çukacıyan formed, in 1844, a new committee which comprised of sixteen *amiras* and fourteen *esnafs*. The new committee acted as an advisory board to the patriarch and responsible body for the management of financial affairs of the Armenian community. The establishment of equally mixed committee opened a phase in *millet* administration on which the monopoly of any group ceased to exist; instead, the Armenian communal affairs were held by both *amiras* and the representatives of *esnafs* equally. On 20 May 1847, the Armenian *millet* administration was divided into two separate bodies, one for the civil and the other for the religious matters.⁴⁰ The Supreme Civil Council consisting of twenty lay members (five *amiras*, tens artisans, two architects, two government officials, and one executive secretary) was responsible for secular education, communal property, and justice. The Spiritual Council composed of fourteen clergy from Istanbul managed the ordination of clergy, religious education, and arrangements of dogmas (Uras 1987:158-159 and Shaw 2002:202 and Artinian 1969:58-64). Nalbandian claimed that these were great steps towards the democratization of the affairs of the Armenian Church (1963:43-45). Although it seems that the Armenian people attained the right to choose their leaders and the privileges of the *amira* began to be broken, the elections of the members of two councils were in the hands of the Armenian *amira*, and in no sense constituted a popular representation of the Armenian *millet*. Therefore, liberal and educated Armenians who called themselves 'Young Armenians' (*Jeune Armenië*) were not satisfied with these developments; hence they continued to work and agitate for a

⁴⁰ The imperial decree which was sent to the governor of Erzurum as a response to the communal complaints made by the Armenian patriarch and Communal Assembly on 23 March, 1853 (12 Cemaziyelahir 1269) upon the attacks of Kurds to Armenian monasteries and properties clearly shows that the communal administration of Armenian *millet* was shared between the patriarchate and the lay elements. In this document, such a description can be seen, "...Ermeni Patriği ve Millet Meclisi tarafından müştereken takdim olunan..." (BOA HR. SYS. 80/29). For the original text, see Appendix B.

more popular and democratic form of administration. During 1860s, some of these Armenians joined the Young Ottomans and worked in the propagation of representative government both in Ottoman society and their *millet* (Artinian 1969:58-64; Davison 1973:120-126; Redgate 1999:269; and Sonyel 1993:203-204).

While the struggle for the participation in the Armenian *millet*'s central administration continued between the *esnaf* and the *amira*, many young Armenian students, particularly the sons and relatives of wealthy families, came into contact with western cultures and thoughts in various European institutions of higher education. When these young men equipped with scientific knowledge and ideas about democracy returned to their homes, they began to play a crucial role in the transformation of the Armenian *millet*. The first Ottoman Armenians who received higher education went to Italy. Most of these students received medical and theological education. During the first quarter of the 19th century, more than twenty Armenian students graduated from Italian universities (Artinian 1969:58-64).

France was the other country attracting the Armenian youth because during the European style military reforms of *Tanzimat* era the teaching in the Ottoman medical, military and naval academies was given partly in French. Therefore, it became the dominant foreign language in the Armenian college and secondary schools in Istanbul. As a consequence, most of the Armenians who preferred to receive western education went to France. The administrators of the Armenian *millet* were encouraged by the Ottoman educational measures initiated by Mustafa Reşid Paşa, thus they stipulated a collective educational drive sponsored by prominent *amira* e.g. Karapet Balyan, Ovhanneş Dadyan and Polos Odyan within the Armenian

millet. This collective educational enterprise aimed at creating the necessary pioneers equipped with western knowledge for the enlightenment and the progress of the *millet*. For this aim, two student groups which were solely composed of the children from *amira* class were sent to Paris between 1840 and 1850. The first group of students included Nikolos Balyan, son of Karapet, later drew the preliminary sketches of the Armenian constitution. Grigor Odyan (son of a wealthy Armenian whose name was Polos) later became an advisor to Midhat Paşa and played an important role in framing both the Armenian Constitution of 1863 (*Ermeni Milleti Nizamnâmesi*) and the Ottoman constitution of 1876, also belonged to this group (Artinian 1969:60-61).

More than sixty Armenians graduated from French schools, and then returned to Istanbul. It was hoped that these men were to intellectually and economically contribute to the welfare of their people. Most of these students, during their education in Paris, became familiar with European political systems and thoughts which were elaborated with nationalism, positivism, and the ideas of Rousseau, Voltaire, Lamartine and Guizot. Some students even witnessed the 1848 Revolution which impressed them so much that they became adherents of the idea of transforming and reforming their *millet*. For example, the Armenian students of Muratyan College (*Collège de Samuel Moorat*)⁴¹ often came together and debated ardently on the 'miserable' conditions of their people and the domestic situation of the Empire. These young Armenians at the end founded a non-sectarian and non-political organization (*The Ararat Society*) in Paris in 1849 to change the educational and administrative structure of their *millet* (Artinian 1969:61-61).

⁴¹ This college was founded by the Catholic Mechitarist Order in Padua in 1834 but moved to Paris in 1846 and henceforth became a centre for Armenian students (Sonyel 1993:204-205).

The Ararat Society immediately affected the Armenian society because they initiated the foundation of several elementary and secondary schools and colleges first in the capital and later in the provinces. Grigor Alaton, for example founded the Armenian Agricultural Society which brought together the Armenian students of the Ottoman Agricultural School. He sought to develop, through the society, agricultural techniques among the Armenian peasantry, and hence raise the economic standard of his people (Artinian 1969:62-63; Nalbandian 1963:46-52; Shaw 2002:126,202 and Sonyel 1993:204-205).

More significant was the development in Armenian journalism which was in fact a very revolutionary innovation of the *Tanzimat* era because it played a major role in the reformation of the Armenian *millet*. In 1832, the first newspaper in Armeno-Turkish (*Lroy Gir Meci Terutyen Osmanyen*) was printed as a part of *Moniteur Ottoman* which was the first Ottoman official newspaper in French founded in 1831. Eight years later, the first journal in Armenian, *Arsaloy Araratyan*, was founded by Lukas Baltazaryan who had received high education in Paris. It started its publication with a slogan that the enlightenment of a nation comes from education and knowledge. A weekly journal *Azdarar Bizandyan* began to be published in the same year. In 1846 the official newspaper of the Armenian patriarchate started to be printed weekly under the name of *Hayastan* (Armenia), which, at the beginning, was for the most part the official mouthpiece of the conservative Armenian notables. By the end of 1852, the Young Armenians succeeded in dominating the editorial board of the newspaper and changed its name as *Masis* (Mount Ararat) which turned into an official organ of the Young Armenians. *Massis* became the most influential Armenian newspaper from 1852 to 1907 in the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, another influential

newspaper *Ardzvi Vaspurakan* (Eagle of Vaspurakan) was founded in Van in 1855 by Mıgırdic Hirimyan and retained its publication until 1864. Hirimyan who was known among his people as *Hairig*, founded the journal *Ardzvik Darono* (Eagle of Daron) in Muş in 1863. The editors of these newspapers and journals were generally men who had European experiences and liberal tendencies. It is significant to note that between 1840 and 1870 more than ninety Armenian journals and newspapers were founded (Artinian 1969:66-72).

These developments above resulted in an unprecedented cultural revival within the Ottoman Armenian society. The works of Lamartine, Hugo, Goethe, Rousseau, Voltaire and many others were translated into Armenian. The flow of western ideas into the Armenian society took place through these translations all of which, before printing as books, were published on the Armenian newspapers and journals (Artinian 1969:66-72 and Nalbandian 1963:52-57).

Taking the example of *Meclis-i Maarif-i Umûmî*⁴², one more radical step towards the reformation of *millet* occurred on 22 October 1853 with the foundation of the first Armenian Educational Council. It was composed of fourteen members all of whom were graduates of European universities. The Council focused on the language reform by following the Ottoman linguistic and literary reform which was embodied in Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's *Kavaid-i Osmaniye* published in 1851. It is the first work on Turkish grammar and a millstone in the Turkish language reform. Members of the council proposed that the archaic Armenian language (*Grabar*) should be revised and turned into a modern literary one which could be understood by everyone. To

⁴² *Tanzimat* statesmen headed by Mustafa Reşid Paşa gave much more importance to education, thus on 17 July 1846 they founded *Meclis-i Maarif-i Umûmî* which was supervised by *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adli* (Seyitdanlioğlu 1994:80).

advocate that proposal, they gave the example of replacement of Latin and Classical Greek by Italian and Modern Greek on the road to formation of nation state. For this aim, they published a pamphlet titled as *Aracarkutiwn Asharhabar Lezun Kanonavorelu ev Hasarakac Lezeli Enelu Vray* (Proposal to Modify the Armenian Vernacular and to Make it the Common Language). In 1853, the second book on the Armenian language, *Ullakhossutiwn Ardi Hay Lezuin* (Correct Speaking of Modern Armenian), was published by Nahabet Rusinyan. The idea of reforming Armenian and purifying it from foreign influences, particularly Turkish, were spread among the peoples through Armenian newspaper *Masis* (Artinian 1969:65-73 and Sonyel 1993:200-210).

The reforms of the *Tanzimat* era inaugurated a golden age for the Armenian *millet*. The efforts of Young Armenians in education and journalism precipitated national sentiments in Ottoman Armenians. Foreign influence, Russian in particular, on Armenians reached its climax in the second half of the 19th century. Armenians were deceived by the Czar's promise that the so-called 'Armenian provinces' of the Ottoman Empire would be constituted into a separate kingdom under the Russian protection. The Crimean War was a good opportunity for Russia to incite the minorities of the empire to rebel. During the war some of the Armenians in the eastern provinces of Anatolia took the Russian side and made provocations (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/45-46). In March 1854, a few Armenian spies were arrested in Kars (Redgate 1999:268-269 and Sonyel 1993:208). The provocations continued without interruptions. The Imperial order which was sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Erzurum on 26 February 1868 notified the Governor about the intrigues of the Russian Consul of Erzurum. The document clarifies that the Russian Consul of

Erzurum together with the Armenian Bishop of Erzurum (Harintyun) made provocations among the Armenians. It also revealed that the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul collaborated with the Russians to establish Russian protectorate over the Ottoman Armenians which automatically brought the Russian intervention in Ottoman internal affairs.⁴³ Another report which was sent from the Ottoman Embassy in Petersburg to the Sublime Porte on 13 May 1875 (7 *Rebiülahir* 1292) informed the Porte about the activities of an Armenian named as Cebrail Zarmik. According to the report, Zarmik requested from the Russian Consul of Tiflis the protection of Russia over the Ottoman Armenians and establishment of Russian Consulate in Van (BOA HR. SYS. 2819/7).⁴⁴

⁴³ “İngiltere Sefâretine 26 Şubat 1868 tarihiyle müverrihen devlet-i müşârilileyh Erzurum Konsolosundan vârid olan tahrirâtın tercümesidir. İki seneden berüdü ki Erzurum’da mukim Rusya Konsolosu Devlet-i ‘Aliye ‘aleyhinde icrâ itmekde olduğu entrika ve fesâdâtına Ermeni Piskoposu Harintyunu vâsita ve alet ittihaz etmiştir. Bu keyfiyetin vaktiyle cânib-i sefârete bildirilmesi lâzımeden idiye de bu bâbda külliye def’i şübhe itmeklik icâb eylediğinden piskopos-ı merkûmun kâffe-i harekât ve sekenâtını deviren tedkik ve tecessüs olmaklığı lâzımeden ‘addeylemişdim...takriben bundan oniki sene evvel katoğikos Nerses’in vefâtıyla yerine Mateos’un nasbı esnasında elhâletü hazihi Eçmiyazın’de bulunan katoğikos ders’âdet patriği bulunduğu ve piskopos-ı merkûm dahi serkitâbet ve vekâletini ifâ itmekde olduğu halde bunlar elyevm Van piskoposu bulunan İknâdiyos ile diğer iki piskoposun biri Barutcubaşı familyâsından Dadyan ve diğeri dahi geçen sene ders’âdetde vefât etmiş olan Murad oğlu Hacı Kabatur; bunlar Ermeni kilisesinin Ortodoks kilisesine ilhakı için Rusya Sefâreti huzurunda bir mukâvelenâme imzâ etmişlerdir. Ermeni milletinden bazılarının efkârına göre mücerred menâfi’-i zâtiyeye mebnî yapılmış olan bu işde en ziyâde mûmâileyh ders’âdet patriği ile serkâtib-i merkûm Haruntyun’un eli olub hatta merkûm Haruntyun bunun için Rusya devletinden kayd-ı hayât şartıyla bir m’âşa nail olmuştur...Piskopos Haruntyun mevâ’izinde ve cem’iyyet ve ziyâfetlerde Rusya devletine ‘alenen izhâr-ı meyl ve mürtede hiç bir fırsatı fevt itmemektedir. Ve hatta Van ve Bidlis ve Muş ve Erzurum ve ‘Arabkir muğbirânından birkaç Ermeniye Rusya pasaportu istihsâline vâsita olmuştur. Merkûmun dâhil-i vilâyetde ve bâhusus Rusya hudûdu üzerinde birkaç Kürd kabilesi rûesâsıyla olan münâsebâtı ergeç Devlet-i ‘Aliyeye büyük gâile çıkaracak haldedir. Keyfiyeti vâli-i vilâyet devletlü Mehmed Reşid Paşa Hazretlerine açdım. Onların dahi tahkikâtı bu merkezde olduğunu ve bayağı câsus nazarıyle bakmakda olduğu piskopos-ı merkûmun harekâtını Bâb-ı ‘Aliye bildireceğini ifâde ettiler” (BOA HR. SYS. 2819/6). For the original text, see Appendix B.

⁴⁴ “Makâm-ı ‘Aliye-i Cenâb-ı Hazretpenâhilerinden 24 Muharrem 1292 [2 March 1875] tarih ve yüzseksenekiz rakamı ile vürûd olan emir-nâme-i serire Van’dan Cebrail Zermenik Şâmir nâmında bir Ermeni Tiflis’e giderek hemşehrileri hakkında Rusya devletinin himayesini ve Van sancağında devlet-i müşârilileyh tarafından bir konsoloshâne ihdâsını taleb ve istid’â eylediğine dair Tiflis Başşehbenderliğinden yazılarak Petersburg Sefâret-i seniyyesinden takdim kılınan mektûb sûretinin irsâl kılındığı beyân ve ilâsiyle şahs-ı merkûmun ahvâl-i ve ahâlinin böyle teşebbüsâte kıyâmlarının esbâb-ı mücibesi üzerine tahkikât-ı lâzıme bilâ icrâ teşebbüsât-ı mezkûreden ferâgat ettirilerek keyfiyetin arz ve irâde ve iş’âr buyrulmaktan nâşi...” (BOA HR. SYS. 2819/7). For the original text, see Appendix B.

The financial condition of the Ottoman Empire was worsened by the Crimean War. Its economic and technological dependency allowed European powers (France and Britain) to dictate institutional priorities in a new reform edict containing numerous provisions to satisfy European economic and financial concerns with programs that explicitly sought to redress non-Muslim inequality. The European insistence on minority rights resulted in the promulgation of the 1856 Reform Edict which ultimately caused the dissolution of social integrity of Ottoman Empire because the Reform Edict prescribed the preparation of separate constitutions (*nizamname*) for each *millet*. Thus, Protestant, Catholic, and Gregorian Armenians became separate *millets* by the promulgation of the Armenian National Constitution (*Ermeni Milleti Nizamnâmesi*)⁴⁵ on March 29, 1863.⁴⁶ Although the provincial law of 1864 which was to rationalize the provincial administrative units removed the former privileges of local elites and establish the state authority as far as the villages, the great powers intended to fragment state authority regionally and encourage the non-Muslim proto-citizens⁴⁷ to demand new forms of institutional autonomy (Salzmann 1999:44 and Shaw 2002:126).

In consequence, the reforms, which were planned to consolidate the social unity of the Empire, failed to preserve the integrity of its different social segments. The concept of Ottomanism was never generally accepted by the Ottoman minorities, even though various efforts were made toward equal treatment of all subjects. As a matter of fact, while the nationalistic ideas spread among the Ottoman non-Muslim subjects, to unite the

⁴⁵ For the full-text version of Armenian National Constitution in English; see Lynch (1990:444-467); for the Turkish version see, Uras (1987:159-171).

⁴⁶ Jorga gives the date as 17 March 1863 (2005:504).

⁴⁷ According to Salzmann, the concept of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire emerged in the *Tanzimat* era (1999:38).

different segments of such a huge empire was very difficult to achieve. Such was the case that Serbia and Romania attained entire internal autonomy. Mehmed Ali and his sons succeeded in taking Egypt under their hereditary rules. Moreover, Lebanon was given partial autonomy as a result of French intervention. The Greeks achieved to establish independent Greece by the assistance of the great powers. Finally, among the Bulgarians and Armenians separatist movements grew rapidly (Davison 1968:84).

2.2. Catholic and Protestant Missionaries and Their Effects on Armenian Society

The Catholic mission in the Ottoman territories was initiated by the Italian⁴⁸ and French missionaries in the early 16th century and intensified by a Papal organization-*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (The Propaganda, or Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith)⁴⁹-in the middle of the 17th century. In 1662 a Catholic monk, Clement Galano, was sent to Constantinople to evangelize the Ottoman subjects. Galano and his disciples,⁵⁰ under the French protection⁵¹, spread throughout Anatolia and converted many Gregorian Armenians to Catholic faith (Ubicini 1856:254-256).

⁴⁸ Due to the good relations with France since the reign of François I, the Ottoman state allowed the Catholic missionaries to settle at Galata; later king Henry IV of France found appropriate to bring them under the protectorate of the French Embassy in Constantinople. From the beginning of the 17th century, the Catholic missionaries settled in Selanik, İzmir, Sakız, Naksus, Atina, let alone Istanbul, and started their propaganda. Another Catholic missionary organization, *Capusin*, sent a preacher, whose name was Pacifico, to the Ottoman lands. He founded missionary stations in Rumeli, Istanbul, Suriye, Filistin, Irak and Kıbrıs (Uzunçarşılı 1954:118). The French aim in protecting the Catholics was not only religious but also political and commercial (Çetintaş 2002:36).

⁴⁹ This organization was found by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 to spread Catholicism all over the world and to convert non-Catholic heretics and schismatics to Catholic Christianity. And his successor Pope Urban VIII joined the apostolic seminary called *Collegio della Propaganda* (College of Propaganda), a school at Rome to train the missionaries (Ubicini 1856:254).

⁵⁰ Galano and his disciples left Istanbul and passed to Anatolia after the reactions of the Gregorians. They continued their evangelic activities in Trabzon, Gümüşhane, Bayburt, İspir, Hasankale and Kars (Çetintaş 2002:37).

⁵¹ The missionary activities within the Ottoman territories were headed by the French Embassy in the capital (Uzunçarşılı 1954:117).

Catholic missionaries did not specifically focus only on the Armenians. At the beginning, they sought to preach among the Muslims and the Orthodox Christians; however they could not get any positive result. On the other hand, they were successful in their efforts to convert the Gregorian Armenians many of whom willingly accepted Catholicism to be freed from the misrule of the Armenian Patriarchs (Uzunçarşılı 1954:119-120). The activities of the Catholic missionaries soon alarmed the Gregorian Patriarch of Constantinople who tried to prevent such activities. The Gregorian Patriarchate took harsh measures against the missionaries and converts (Adıyeke 1999:256). The primary concern of the Armenian millet administration in taking severe precautions against Catholic missionary activities was basically economic because any division or separation from the communion meant probable reduction in tax-revenues. As a result of the harsh measures taken by the Gregorian Patriarchate, missionary activities lost impetus until 1673 when the capitulations, which had been formerly granted to France, were renewed. With this renewal France, while extending the privileges of protectorate over Catholic Christians, made the Ottoman sultan accept the legality of Catholic mission. This gave the missionaries such a new motivation that by the last decade of the 17th century, the numbers of the converts reached to 30.000. The missionaries also succeeded in converting some of the prominent Armenian families such as *Düzyans* and *Tıngıryans*. They were also active in the provinces. For example, four of the seven Armenian churches in Ankara were held by the Catholics and they established a missionary college in 1688 in Erzurum where 300 young Armenians were converted to Catholic faith. The branches of this college were opened in Kars, Bayezid and Trabzon. In 1707, the Catholic Armenians preferred to attend the Latin

churches of foreigners instead of Gregorian churches. In 1758, Pope Benedictus XIV Lambertini appointed the first Armenian Pontifical Vicar to Constantinople whose authority extended over Constantinople and Asia Minor except for Cilicia (Çetintaş 2002:37-39 Redgate 1999:264 and Ubicini 1856:256).

The most important development in the Catholicization of Gregorian Armenians was the establishment of Mechitarist sect or congregation in Istanbul in 1700 by an Armenian monk, Méchitar⁵² of Sivas (*Sebastia*). Although he sought to illuminate the Gregorian Armenians by his doctrines, he was not welcomed by them. On the contrary, he was mistreated and persecuted by the Gregorian patriarch and priests. Furthermore, he was not morally and financially supported by his Catholic missionary colleagues. Because of these and the negative atmosphere in Constantinople caused by the Catholic missionaries, Mechitar fled to Venetian parts of Morea. He established his Benedictine monastery, which was approved by Pope Clement IX, in Modon. He took refuge to Venice after the Turkish conquest of Morea. Mechitar was allowed to found his monastery on the small island of St. Lazarus by the Venetian Republic. He found the opportunity to develop and write his doctrines there. He and his disciples collected classical manuscripts, edited the Armenian dictionaries such as *Hayzakian Bararan*, translated the works of European intellectuals. Thus, they brought the Armenian classical literature to life. He strove to serve for the extinction of schism between the Roman church and the Armenian Gregorian church and for the unification of the two churches. According to Ubicini, his concern in uniting the two churches was “not for the sake of Rome, but in the hope of producing national unity, and, as a consequence, national

⁵² Born in 1675 in Sivas, Méchitar was converted to Catholicism by a Jesuit monk in Aleppo. Then he went to Constantinople to establish his Catholic sect in 1700 (Ubicini 1856:254).

emancipation” (1856:258). The principles of Mechitar and Mechitarism played such a crucial role in the Armenian cultural revival and in the formation of Armenian nationalistic thoughts and in Armenian history (Göçek 1999:559).

Upon these developments, it was natural that the administrators of Armenian *millet* especially the Armenian patriarch resorted to some extreme penalties for Catholic propaganda (Cevdet Paşa 1309:44). For example, in 1734 a few Armenians who participated in Catholic propaganda were punished. The Ottoman society was organized on the grounds of *millet* system; hence the state did not appreciate any factions within the recognized *millets*. The fragmentation in Armenian community challenged the social order and cause serious unrests⁵³ within the Ottoman Armenian community. Moreover, passing of the Gregorians under the papal religious authority meant that the foreign powers (France and Austria⁵⁴) had an opportunity to intervene in the Ottoman internal affairs by claiming their protectorate over their core-religionists. Therefore the Ottoman government was not positive towards the activities of Catholic missionaries from the beginning. As a matter of fact, after the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739 France gained extensive prerogatives regarding with her Catholic protégées in the Ottoman Empire (Artinian 1969:29-30).

The pressure and persecution implemented by the Armenian patriarchs and *vartapeds* on the Armenian Catholic converts, and the frictions between the Catholics and the Gregorians never ended. On the

⁵³ As a matter of fact, when the numbers of converts increased so much in Constantinople, the Muslims in Galata and the Gregorian Armenians revolted against the Europeans in the capital. It was suppressed by the mediation of French Ambassador (Çetintaş 2002:37).

⁵⁴ In 1779, the Gregorian patriarch Zakarian who vehemently opposed to conversion from Gregorianism to Catholicism and took rigid measures against the Catholics was driven from his office as a result of pressures of the Austrian ambassador (Çetintaş 2002:42).

other hand, the Catholic mission continued without any serious interruption and the numbers of the Gregorian converts significantly increased towards the end of the 18th century; however some strict measures were taken by the Armenian patriarchate.⁵⁵ The Armenians, poor or wealthy, were attracted by the propaganda because it promised religious and economic capitulations resulting from being under the religious authority of Pope and the political protectorate of France (Cevdet Paşa 1309:46). Failure of oppressive policies led the Armenian patriarchate to loosen pressure on the Catholics. In 1810, Patriarch Ovhanne assembled a council, in which the religious and civil authorities of each party participated, in order to unite two communities but nothing could be achieved. The second attempt to unite the Catholics and the Gregorians was in 1817 by Patriarch Bogos, however it was unsuccessful too. Ever-increasing tension and serious quarrels between them forced Mahmud II to create a decisive solution for the frictions. Thus he entitled Patriarch Bogos to overcome this destructive problem. Then in 1820 Mahmud II convoked a conference in which the secular and religious representatives of both participated. Ultimately, after long-lasting deliberations on two parties came to an agreement which united two sects under the roof of Gregorian Church. Nevertheless, it lasted for a short period because of the intrigues of Catholic missionaries whose provocations resulted in an attack to the Patriarchate in 1820. Reconciliation between the Catholics and the Gregorians was broken off. It became apparent that the Catholics did not want the unity of two communities; instead they desired to have their own

⁵⁵ The Patriarch Ephrem, by obtaining an imperial firman, expelled the Catholic missionaries from Constantinople. Moreover, the Catholics were forbidden to attend churches. His successor, Avedik, closed the Catholic printing houses in Istanbul and Catholic college in Erzurum and sent the Catholic priests to exile in Persia (Ubicini 1856:256).

separate church and independent patriarchate.⁵⁶ To achieve this goal, they appealed to Sultan Mahmud II in 1827 under the leadership of Yakob Amira Tingiryan to constitute them as independent *millet*. Two years later, Sultan Mahmud II issued an imperial edict that announced the establishment of the Catholic *millet* headed by Bishop Yakob Çukuryan in 1831 (Artinian 1969:29-30).

As a consequence, the spread of Catholicism among the Armenians opened the doors of the west for the Gregorian Armenians who had the opportunity to go to Europe (Rome and Venice in particular) for education. Many of them, almost all of the aristocratic young generation, made use of this opportunity and closely met the western culture. For example, Karabet graduated from the University of Padua and became the chief physician in Sublime Porte in 1761. Yovahim graduated from the University of Vienna and wrote many medical books. Moreover, Latin missionaries founded several printing houses in the capital and provinces where several geographical, grammatical works and the translations of Latin classics were printed. In 1750 Stephanos Petrosyan founded a printing house and published the works of ancient Greek and French authors. All of these paved the way for the Armenian enlightenment and their national consciousness.

⁵⁶ A communal request sent from Catholic Armenians in Tekirdağ on 29 December 1858/21 *Rebiülahir* 1275 clearly depicts the desire of the Catholic Armenians for being separate from the Gregorians. In this request, the bishop of the Catholic Armenians of Tekirdağ (Andon) demanded the separation of the population and tax records of the Catholic Armenians from the Gregorian Armenians in order to prevent the malpractices implemented by the Gregorians. The original language of the document is as follows: “Tekfurdağı ile havalisinde bulunan millet-i kemteranemizin nüfus kayıtları Ermeni milleti sırasında bulunduğundan tefrik olunarak Katolik milleti nâmına sebt-i defter olması ile millet-i merkûmenin müdahaleleri akdemce bi'l-emir-nâme-i semî-i hazreti sadâretpenâhi men olunmuş ise de vergileri elhâletühhazihi millet-i merkûme ile karışık olduğundan bu husus bazı cihetle uygunsuzluğa muceb olmakda bulunduğu hasebiyle vergilerinin dahi tefriki hususunu mahall-i mezkûrdan bi-mahzar-ı niyâz ve istidâ olunmuş olmağla işbu tefrik olunub millet-i çâkerânemiz nâmına sebt-i defter olunmuş olan kesânın vergileri dahi adâlet ve hakkâniyet-i seniyyeye makrûn suretde tefrik olunarak ayırub mahall-i mezkûr emvâl sandığına teslimleri hususuna dair Tekfurdağı valisi devletlû paşa hazretlerine hitâben bir kât'a emir-nâme-i semî ihsân buyrulması arz ve niyâzı bâbında emr-ü fermân-ı hazreti menlehu'l-emrindir.” (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/47).

The Ottoman subjects became familiar with the Protestant mission upon the arrival of Puritan missionaries of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (referred to as *ABCFM*⁵⁷) at İzmir in 1820. The first missionaries of the Board were *Pliny Fisk* and *Levi Parsons*. Parsons later went to Holy Land (Palestine) where he met the Armenian pilgrims. In the first step, the missionaries founded a printing house in 1820 in Malta Island where they prepared and copied the brochures and pamphlets.⁵⁸ Along with the following four years; they made researches on the every corner of the Ottoman lands and collected data about the social, economic and cultural structure of the Empire. After that, they sent the data and statistics to the center of the Board which, after analyzing the information, instructed to its missionaries what to do then. After all, realizing the fact that the Ottoman society was in need for educational and medical institutions, they generally established schools and hospitals in various parts of the Empire. This was the initial method of the missionaries. Indeed, the first American missionary school within the boundaries of Ottoman Empire was opened in 1824 in Beirut where an American missionary center⁵⁹ was opened previous in 1823. Following year, the number of schools grew up to five. For the Anatolian part of the Empire, the first school (primary school) was founded in İzmir in 1826 by Mary Reynold (Akgün 1989:91 and Kocabaşoğlu 1999:340-341).

⁵⁷ American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Mission was founded in Boston-Massachusetts in 1810 by the Puritans who determined to expand their activities out of the American continent. Turkey was included in the Board's programme in 1819 (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:340-341).

⁵⁸ In the printing house on Malta, 350.000 works (books, brochures, pamphlet...etc.) in various languages were printed between 1820 and 1830. This printing house was transferred to İzmir in 1833 (Açıkses 2003:44-45).

⁵⁹ The first missionary center was founded in İzmir in 1820 and then in Beirut in 1823; in Istanbul in 1831; Trebizond in 1835; Erzurum in 1839; Antep in 1847; Sivas in 1851; Adana and Merzifon in 1852; Diyarbakir in 1853; Urfa, Maraş and Kayseri in in 1854; Harput in in 1855; Tarsus in 1859; and Van in 1872 (Akgün 1988:5).

The Ottoman-American Commercial Treaty of 1830 gave impetus to Protestant missionary. William Goodell and his wife, who settled in Istanbul in 1831, opened four schools ("Lancaster style")⁶⁰ for the Greeks at Büyükdere in the same year. Within a year, Goodell and his wife succeeded in increasing the number of the Lancaster schools to thirty. The number of female students in the school opened in Goodells' house was twenty-eight. Because of offering free education facilities, they attracted many teenagers among the Gregorians; therefore Goodell opened a high school for the Armenian boys at Pera in 1834. English, etymology, moral philosophy, history of the Reformation and theology were the principle subjects of its curriculum. During this time another Protestant school was opened at Hasköy. It was designed for females and attracted several Armenian girls %75 of whom were converted to Protestantism. The goal of this school was to train the future wives of Armenian ministers, teachers and of the other members of the intellectual strata. After graduation, the Armenian boys and girls became the assistants of the missionaries in Constantinople and the provinces. It is significant that the ultimate goal of the missionary schools was to create intermediaries who were supposed to conduct the affairs of foreign commercial companies in the Ottoman territories. In the initial years, the Protestants did not only found schools in Beirut and Istanbul but also in the provinces such as İzmir, Bursa and Trabzon (Akgün 1989:92 and Açıkse 2003:35-40).

After the promulgation of the *Tanzimat* in 1839, the Ottoman Empire went through a structural transformation which brought about an increasing demand for education from almost all segments of the society.

⁶⁰ Lancaster Style Schools were designed by Andrew Bell, a Scottish clergyman, towards the end of the 18th century to develop popular education by the method of supervised mutual teaching among the students. In such kind of schools, elder students taught to younger ones (Açıkse 2003:48).

The Protestant schools were very successful in responding to this demand because they had qualified staff and their curriculum were more scientific. For example, in addition to theological courses, mathematics, algebra, trigonometry, natural sciences, history, French, English, Turkish, philosophy, literature, rhetoric, painting, instrumental music, and gymnastic were given in the Protestant schools, to which, for the most part, the Armenians attended.⁶¹ Although the Protestant missionaries intended to proselytize the Muslims and Jews, their first contact was with Armenians, a Christian minority which was mostly Gregorian. The missionaries after 1850 focused their efforts on them.⁶² For instance, from 1822 to 1881 the proportion of printed materials in the printing houses of Istanbul, İzmir and of Malta in Armenian language was 48%, 24% in Greek, 14% Bulgarian, 6% in Italian, 4% in Turkish and 4% in Ladino (Akgün 1991:347 and Kocabaşoğlu 1999:344).

It is not necessary to say that like the Catholic missionaries, the Protestants encountered strong reactions from the Armenian patriarchate which, in 1836 closed the school at Pera. In 1839, Armenian Patriarch forbade the Armenians to take part in the missionary activities and to send their children to Protestant schools. Not only the participants, but also all those who concealed facts about Protestantism were punished. Several Armenians were dismissed from their occupations and houses; and some religious men were sent to exile. The reactions against the missionaries were also supported by Catholics and Orthodox, let alone the Gregorians.

⁶¹ Towards the end of the 1880s, Muslim children started to be sent to Protestant schools (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:345).

⁶² The *Euphrates College*, which was opened in Harput in 1870s, was designed especially for the Armenians because the medium of school was Armenian. 80% of its education staff was composed of the Armenians whereas there were 3 or 4 American professors and 1 Turkish instructor. Another example to the case was *Anatolian College* of Merzifon: one third of its staff was composed of the Armenians (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:347-348).

The main supporters of the reactionaries were France and Russia. The documents in Prime Ministry Archive dated as 27th of May, 1868/4 *Safer* 1285 (BOA HR. SYS. 51/29) and 2nd of June, 1854/6 *Ramazan* 1270 (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/28) show clearly the extent of the reactions against the Protestant mission and the Armenians who converted to Protestantism from Gregorian sect. The first document displays that an American Protestant monk, Montgomery, and his Protestant Armenian followers were attacked and injured by some Gregorian Armenians in Zeitun, a district of Maraş. The second one demonstrates the reaction of the Gregorian Armenians against the Protestant Armenians. In 1854 in Maraş, some Gregorians attacked the Protestants in church during the ritual and injured some of them.⁶³ Another archival document dated as 17 July 1855/2 *Zilkâde* 1271 is a petition sent by the members of the Protestan parish in Tekirdağ (*Tekfurdağı*) to the Sublime Porte in order to demand the prevention of the Gregorian attacks on the Protestants in Tekirdağ (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/44).⁶⁴

Although there was a strong resistance from the Gregorian Patriarchate against the Protestant missionaries and Armenian converts at

⁶³ The original language of the document was as follows: “Maraş sancağında kain teba-i devlet-i aliyyeden millet-i kemteranemiz bir Pazar günü ibadethanelerine necm birle icrâ-i âyin itmekde iken Ermeni milletin eşkiyâ takımından çend nefer eşhas ibadethane-i mezkûreyi basıp derûnunda bulunan millet-i acizanemizi darb ve bazılarını cerh idüb hatta içlerinden Serkiz nâm kullarına taş endâhtile cerh ve kemiklerini şikeste etmiş olduklarından merkûman sancâğ-ı mezkûr kâimakâmına beyân ve ifâdeye müsâraat ederek kâimakâm mumaileyh eşkiya-i merkumeyi celb ve mahbûsen tevkif idüb...” (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/28).

⁶⁴ “Tekfurdağı’nda Protestan mezhebinde bulunan teba-i devlet-i aliyye Ermeni milleti tarafından öteden berü müdahale ve icra-i nefsanîyyet olunmakda ve bu mu’ameleye aza-i meclisden bazıları dahi müsâ’ade göstermekde olub hatta geçenlerde tâifei merkûmdan Pabrem nâm kimesne hanesinde kendü haliyle meşgûl iken hane-i mezkûra Ermeni milletinden çend nefer eşhâs girüb baş ve gözünü cerh eyledikden sonra hanesinin kapısını katran ile boyayarak misillü harekât-ı gayr-ı lâıkiyyeye ictirâ eylediklerinden kendisi keyfiyeti meclis-i memlekete ifade ve iştikâ eyledikde azadan Ali Bey bundan böyle müzevvir Protestanlar himayeye kabul olunmayacağı cevâbıyla mersûmu meclisden tard eylediği ve mir mumaileyh mukaddemâ tâife-i merkûm kocabaşısını dahi olsuretle meclisden tard iderek hakaret itmiş olmasıyla...” (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/44).

the beginning, Protestantism continued to spread throughout the Empire especially after 1840. With the formal recognition of the Protestants by Sultan Abdülmecid on November 27, 1850, the evangelical activities of the Protestant mission expanded throughout the Ottoman Anatolia without any fear of persecution (Karal 1983:128). One of the most important reasons for the continuous spread of Protestantism among the Armenians was that a significant number of the Armenians were discontented with the exploitative and suppressive authority of the Gregorian Church (BOA HR. SYS. 2821:12).⁶⁵ Therefore, Protestantism emerged as a good opportunity for the Gregorian Armenians to escape from the misrule of the Armenian Patriarchate. A communal request, which was sent by the Protestant Armenian community of İzmit to the Ottoman government on 13 November 1853, shows the clues about the economic malpractices of the Gregorian authorities and the efforts of the Protestant Armenians to be freed of the authority of the Gregorians. In this request, the Protestant Armenians of Bağçecik (the district of İzmit) complained about the mistreatment of the Gregorian executives and demanded from the Sublime Porte to appoint a Protestant *kocabaşı* who was to be responsible for collecting the *cizye* and the other annual taxes from the Protestant Armenians.⁶⁶ In 1846, the first Protestant church was established in Istanbul and then in Trabzon, İzmit, Sakarya. Within the next three years in Erzurum, Bursa and Antep the

⁶⁵ For the original language of the document, see the footnote 31.

⁶⁶ The original language of the request was as follows: "Teba-i devlet-i aliyyeden İzmid sancağı dahilinde kâin Bağçecik karyesinde mütemekkin Protestan taifesinin cizye ve vergi-i mesâlihleri Ermeni milleti tarafından tahsil olunmakda olduğu cihetle millet-i merkûme tarafından güne renciș vukû' bulmakda ve bu ise tâife-i merkûmenin perişanlıklarını müceb olmakda olduğu beyânıyla bunların cizye ve vergi-i senevilerinin Ermeni milleti vergi ve cizyesinden bi't-tefrîk içlerinden birinin bilâ intihâb kocabaşı nasb ve ta'yin ile ânın ma'rifetiyle idâre itdirilmesi husûsu Protestan vekili tarafından bi't-takrîr ifâde ve istidâ olunmuş ve iki taraf dahi teba-i devlet-i aliyyeden olmasıyla nazar-ı ma'delet ve himâyetde yeksân olarak bu cihetle millet-i mezbûre tarafından tâife-i mezbûr hakkında bilâ müceb tea'ddi vukû'su lâyıksız göründüğünden öte taraftan vukû'a gelen renciș ve teadiyâtın külliyyen men ve def'iyle vergi ve cizyelerinin kocabaşlarına teslim olunarak ba'd-ezin kendülerinin sair sınıf teba-i devlet-i aliyye misillü saye-i ma'delet-i hazreti şahânedde mazhar-ı emniyyet ve himâyet olmaları husûsu..." (BOA HR. SYS. 2821/14).

Protestant churches were founded. Towards the midst of the 19th century, the number of the Protestant members of the first four churches was over 1000. The Protestants and the Armenian converts did not endure punishments and persecutions for a long time because of the formal recognition of the Protestants by Sultan Abdülmecid on November 27, 1850 (Kirakossian 2003:10). From that time onwards, it expanded the evangelical activities without any fear of persecution. For instance, in 1854 the number of Protestant churches rose to fifteen and the registered members to 2300. In the next five years, the numbers were almost doubled. It is noteworthy that the numbers of published religious and educational books in all spoken languages of the Empire were over 150 (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:344).

The Reform Edict of 1856 (*Islahat Fermanı*), which furthered the freedoms and rights, also facilitated the missionary activities in the Empire (Karal 1983:128). In the annual conference of missionaries in Harput in 1860, the mission for the Gregorian Armenians was decided to be managed regionally. West of the line from Trebizond to Mersin formed the *Western Turkey Mission* the stations of which were Istanbul, Merzifon, İzmit, Kayseri, Bursa, Manisa and Sivas. Antep, Aleppo, Adana, Antioch and Maraş formed the *Central Turkey Mission*. The *Eastern Turkey Mission* was composed of Harput, Bitlis, Erzurum and Mardin. Table VI⁶⁷ displays the data about the development of educational activities of Protestant missionaries in Anatolia between 1840 and 1870.

The statistics of each year signify that there was a constant increase in either the number of the schools or that of students. The velocity of growth in the numbers of the American Protestant Schools and that of the students attending to them did not cease during the last thirty years of the

⁶⁷ See Appendix A.

nineteenth century. The reason for this steady increase may well be explained by the fact that the Ottoman Empire continued to transform its political and economic institutions according to *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* edicts which brought about new social and individual arrangements during the second half of the nineteenth century. Social equality and religious freedom were some them (Akgün 1991:347 and 1989:92). During this period, the Empire opened its doors completely to European and American capitals to be integrated into the world economic system. The economic and political opening to the west provided an atmosphere in which the missionaries could act more freely. Table VII⁶⁸ depicts the increase in the numbers of the Protestant schools in Anatolia and that of the students attending them between 1870 and 1900.

This period (1870-1900) witnessed a significant development both in the quantity and the quality of the educational institutions of the Protestant missionaries except for the theological schools. The principle that “School should follow Bible” was given up in the schools. Furthermore, the number of students who were registered at these schools considerably increased, especially those who were at primary and secondary schools. By the end of the 19th century approximately 700 missionary schools were opened in the Ottoman Empire. 550 of 700, (77%) of the total, belonged to American and English Protestant missions. It should be added that the medical institutions were inseparable instruments of the Protestant mission. The physicians of the mission began to come into the Ottoman lands after 1830 and traveled all around the Empire. Many hospitals, clinic and dispensary were established in the Ottoman Empire. Antep, Kayseri, Mardin, Van,

⁶⁸ See Appendix A.

Istanbul, Merzifon, Sivas, Harput and Diyarbekir were the main medical stations of the mission.⁶⁹

Consequently, “albeit their late arrival, the Protestant American missionaries became the most influential group in the Ottoman Empire” (Akgün 1991:347). From the beginning, the Protestant missionaries tried to find out any economic, social and cultural deficiencies which might be used to approach the Armenians. They established philanthropic institutions such as Sunday schools, colleges, adult classes, medical centers, orphanages. The American missionaries used these institutions to spread their beliefs, ideas and lifestyle because by doing so, they were able to access to children, and through them to parents and families. Women were excluded from men in Ottoman society, and female missionaries, particularly among the medical staff, gave the Americans opportunities for establishing acquaintances among the Gregorian Armenians. The offer of medical services to all Ottoman subjects without religious discrimination and the introduction of educational institutions were particularly effective in encouraging both Armenians and Turks to fraternize with missionaries and participate in their services. It is interesting to point out that according to Seçil Akgün, the philanthropic attitudes of the missionaries even led Turkish women who previously had rarely engaged in public life to accept, after a brief training, employment in healthy centers (1989:93). By 1908 Protestantism had over 15.000 communicants, 40.000 adherents, 54 educational institutions and 130 churches. They did not miss any chance for propaganda e.g. *kahvehane* (coffeehouse) meetings, sermons and house-calls through which they displayed Anglo-Saxon life style. They were careful about maintaining good relations with the Ottoman government which

⁶⁹ Azariah Smith Hospital, for example, served for 3.130 patients, realized about 300 surgeries in 1866 (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:344).

welcomed them because they were considered as a “bastion against the provocative designs of the imperialistic nations over the Armenians” (Akgün 1991:347 and 1989:93).

American missionary activities helped spread western ideas among Armenians and information about Armenian matters among westerners. Although their activities seemed completely philanthropic,⁷⁰ American missionaries, in the course of time, were included in the foreign policy of the United States which started to establish consulates around the missionary stations in the second half of the 19th century. Moreover, as the American capital investments within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire grew, American government was increasingly involved in the Ottoman internal affairs through its embassy the principal mission of which was to protect the American missionaries. Foreign Secretary of the ABCFM, James L. Barton, described the amount of American investments in the Ottoman Empire as follows:

Measured by the amount of money invested in Turkey and by the number of Americans devoting their lives, through religious, education and charitanle institutions in that country, America’s interests in the Turkish Empire surpasses that of any other country in the world. A careful estimate, based on reports from the various organizations, societies and colleges carrying on work in that country reveals the fact that during nearly a century of benevolent work in and for Turkey Americans have expanded nearly \$40,000,000, about \$8,000,000 of which represent the value of present investments in real estate, buildings and equipment. The expenditure of these various organizations and societies amounted last year to something over \$1,000,000 and the institutions established in that country by American benevolence have endowments of nearly \$3,500,000 (Akgün 1989:98-99).

Thus they were gradually politicized and took part in the Armenian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the century.

⁷⁰ The principle target of the Protestant missionaries was to approach to the Armenian youth with humanitarian purposes and to educate them in order to create a concious Armenian community. The Armenian National Constitution of 1863 was the proof of how much the missionaries and their institutions (educational, medical...etc.) affected and awakened the Armenian society on the road of nationalism (Akgün 1988:10).

Some of them learned Armenian and restricted their relations to Armenians alone. It was these missionaries who wrote most vociferously against Turks and supported Armenian nationalist claims. For instance, Mary Rogers of Tarsus was one who supported the aims of Armenian nationalists. The propagation of the ideas of nationalism, autonomy and even independence by the missionaries among Armenians, Assyrians, and others disrupted the missionaries' relations with Turks and even relations between the American and Ottoman governments, which sometimes became quite hostile because American institutions became notorious for their Armenian sympathies, sometimes sheltering and hiding revolutionaries, and even providing arms for them (Akgün 1991:347-348 and 1989:99, and Redgate 1999:266, 268). Meanwhile, it is necessary to underline the impacts of the missionary activities on the inter-communal relations in east and southeast Anatolia. As the Protestant mission intensified the evangelical activities among the Christian subjects of the eastern part of the Empire, the Kurdish local notables were increasingly irritated by the idea of losing their socio-economic privileges and rights over the Armenian and Nestorian farmers. According to Jwaideh, one of the reasons of the clashes between the Kurds and Nestorians in 1843 and 1846 was the activities of American Protestant missionaries, especially that of Dr. Grant (1999:134-137).

2.3. The Transformation of Kurdish Political Organizations due to the Ottoman Policy of Centralization during the *Tanzimat* Era

Since the end of the twelfth century Kurds settled on the lands on the Armenian plateau of eastern Anatolia while in the same region in the 16th century the Ottoman Empire and the Safavids confronted each other. The struggle for establishing supremacy over the region ended by the battle of Çaldıran in 1514 in favor of the Ottomans who then conquered the half of

the territories populated by the Armenians. Suleiman I extended the Ottoman hegemony over the region by conquering most of the remaining part of the plateau. During the Ottoman-Safavid struggle for east Anatolia, Kurds in general got involved in the battles on the Ottoman side because of common religious bond (*Sunni* belief) between Kurds and the Ottomans. As a result, Kurdish tribal leaders were awarded by the Ottoman sultans (Selim I and his successor Suleiman I) with fiefs on which they could act autonomously and exempted from taxes as long as they obtain military troops to the Ottomans in times of war (Gibb & Bowen 1969:161-162; Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:4 and McDowall 1996:15-27).

Eight districts (*sancaks*) of Diyarbekir province were granted to Kurdish chieftains who made great contributions to the Ottoman Empire in the war against Shah İsmail of Safavids. Furthermore, Cezire, Eğil, Palu, and Hazo were granted them as autonomous and hereditary properties (*yurtluk and ocaklık*). The principalities of Malatia, Hakkari, Urfa and Bayezid were of the same status too. Upon the advise of *İdris Bitlis*, Selim I deported the majority of the Kurdish nomads to northeast Anatolia (Bayezid and Eleşkird) as well as to Yerevan and Azerbaijan in order to counterbalance the Safavid danger. Because of the socio-political susceptibility, geographical distinctness and multi-ethnic socio-cultural structure of east Anatolia, the Ottoman sultans allowed an administrative system in the region where the autonomous Kurdish chiefdoms (*emirates* or *hükümete*), and the Ottoman provincial administrative units *sancaks* under centrally appointed officials dually. The Ottoman State also condoned the formation of nomadic tribal confederations comprising Turcoman and Kurdish tribes different from the emirates in some parts of the eastern Anatolia. For instance, Boz Ulus Confederation emerged in Diyarbekir in the

16th century (Akdağ 1995:39; Gibb & Bowen 1969:162; Chaliand 1994:24; Kılıç 1997:11-12; McDowall 1996:27-29; and Sasuni 1986:66).

The friendly relations established during the reign of Selim I began to deteriorate in the second half of the 17th century due to the diminishing Persian threat. Between 1650 and 1730, majority of the autonomous Kurdish chiefdoms were disbanded by the Ottoman State. Experiencing the destructive effects of decentralization⁷¹ which started towards the end of the 17th century with the expansion of tax-farming system (*iltizam*), the Ottoman State initiated various civil, military, and fiscal reforms to reinstate a strong central state mechanism in the beginning of the 19th century. Needless to say, one of the most important steps towards centralization was to suppress the local notables (*ayan*) who had acquired considerable economic and political power as a result of *iltizam*.⁷² Their authority and power reached to an alarming level that they succeeded in deposing the Ottoman sultan (Selim III). Because of these reasons, Mahmud II strove to annihilate provincial landlords to restore the state authority as in the 15th and 16th century. Dissolution of the Kurdish chiefdoms in east Anatolia by the Ottoman state was a part of this policy, thus he charged the governor of Sivas, Müşir Mehmed Reşid Paşa⁷³ with the duty of destroying them. He was very successful in repressing the tribal uprisings and cleaning the Kurdish chieftains among whom Muhammed Paşa of

⁷¹ For the detailed information on the historical process of Ottoman decentralization, see, İnalçık(1977:27-52) and Yücel (1974:657-708).

⁷² The emergence of *ayan* (local notables) in the 18th century as a result of introduction of *iltizam* instead of *timar* brought about the transition of economic and political power from center (Istanbul) to periphery (provinces); see Lewis (1998:38), McGowan (2004:782-783) and Özkaya (1994).

⁷³ Müşir Mehmed Reşid Paşa, Georgian in origin, slave of Grand Vizier Koca Hüseyin Paşa, governor, commander in chief, and Grand Vizier (1829-1833), see Bayrak (1999:281).

Rewanduz and Bedirhan Bey of Bohtan deserved particular attention (Brant 1836:221 and Minorsky 1986:462).

The extension of Ottoman authority naturally alienated the Kurdish chieftains or emirs, some of whom sought to attain complete independence while the majority desired to get rights and privileges (McDowall 1992:14). Muhammed Paşa of Revanduz was one of those who fought against the Ottoman State for full autonomy or complete independence. After invading the entire Revanduz region south of Hakkari, and then Arbil, Altunköprü, Hoy, Raniya, Mosul, Akra, Zibar, Amadiya, Muhammed Paşa tried to make a coalition with İbrahim Paşa, son of Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt in order to found an independent Kurdish state. The Ottoman State did not tolerate such kind of action and sent army on Muhammed Paşa under the command of Mehmed Reşid Paşa who won a decisive victory in Rewanduz. Muhammed Paşa was caught and sent to the capital in 1834. After putting an end to the most influential Kurdish tribe in southeast Anatolia, Mehmed Reşid Paşa suppressed a tribal uprising in Mardin. And then, he ended another tribal upheaval led by *Millî* tribe⁷⁴ in Upper Mesopotamia. Müşir Mehmed Reşid Paşa also succeeded in controlling Mafkan-Sason region where he encountered strong resistance of unified forces of powerful Kurdish Beys who got the support of Kurds and Armenians living in the region (Jwaideh 1999:105-118 and Celil 1992:25-26).

Another big tribal chieftain challenging the Ottoman authority in east Anatolia was Bedirhan who was appointed by the Sublime Porte as commander to his tribal forces under the Ottoman authority in 1839 (Moltke 1999:220). It was the general policy of the Ottoman Empire to grant

⁷⁴ *Millî* tribe was composed of 40.000 Kurdish households scattered around Siverek, district of Urfa. Its leader, Teymur, holding the title of paşa could levy 70.000 cavalries during the times of war, see Celil (1992:26).

official titles (even vizierate) to local notables⁷⁵, who might challenge the central authority, in order to make them part of the state mechanism (Bruinessen 1992:41). He with his tribal forces participated in a battle which took place between the Ottoman State and İbrahim Paşa of Egypt in 1839 in Nizip, a district of Antep. After the Ottoman forces were defeated in Nizip, Bedirhan retreated to his capital Cezire (*Cizre*), south of Lake Van. He then, through utilizing the absence of authority due to Mehmed Reshid Paşa's activities which ended the existence of local powers, began to consolidate his authority in eastern and southeastern Anatolia at the expense of Ottoman authority. Paradoxically, the Sublime Porte tolerated the strengthening Bedirhan because the Egyptian crisis was not yet concluded at that time. According to Garo Sasuni, the Ottoman Empire, since the reign of Selim I, allowed the formation of various small semi-autonomous Kurdish principalities to prevent the emergence of big and powerful local dynasties which might challenge the Ottoman authority in such a susceptible region as eastern Anatolia (1986:47).⁷⁶ Consequently, in 1847 the Ottoman army under the leadership of Topal Osman Paşa entered Cezire after a long-term siege which lasted eight months. Bedirhan and his retinue fell captive and were sent to Istanbul. It is so interesting that the arrest of Bedirhan and dissolution of his tribal forces were met with great excitement and enthusiasm by the Armenian *millet* (Sasuni 1986:67). This

⁷⁵ The archival document dated as 1799-1800 (1214) is a good example to the case. In this document, it is narrated that after the title of vizierate was granted to Pasbanoğlu Osman Paşa, who was one of the most influential notable (*âyan*) of Vidin, he ended his revolt and became loyal to the Ottoman State (BOA Hatt-ı Humayun 2617).

⁷⁶ Bruinessen claimed that the relations between the Sublime Porte and Kurdish chieftains depended mainly on economic and political patronage. Until the second quarter of nineteenth century there were several formal arrangements between the state and semi-autonomous Kurdish principalities. As long as they paid the taxes and did not collaborate with Iran against the Ottoman Empire, the Sublime Porte recognized the Kurdish emirates. When these *emirs* were replaced by centrally appointed governors, more casual power-sharing developed between the state and the tribal chieftains and sheikhs in the region (1992:43).

is very clear in the circular (*gontak*) which was sent to provincial administrators of Armenian *millet* by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople on 9 December 1847. In this document the patriarch spoke as follows:

You, full of faith and of exceptional quality in the eyes of world's nations, and our Armenia which turned into a desert in the hands of ruthless and atrocious Kurdish despots, and our poor Armenian nation who fell into ferocious paw of the Kurds as victim! God saw this unique and beautiful country desperate in the hands of ruthless tyrants, and had compassion for it; thence God, with his divine will, fed the character of magnificent Sultan Abdul Mecid with compassion. Sultan then determined that Armenians shall be freed from the despots in the country...He caused the leaders of these despots Han Mahmud and Bedirhan Bey to fall in the hands of Ottoman Pasha as disgraceful and hopeless (Sasuni 1986:80-81).

This *gontak* clearly indicates that the relations between the Armenians and Kurds in the region were strained due to the despotic and ruthless treatment of the Kurdish emirs against the Armenians who regarded the Ottoman Sultan as the protector of Armenian *millet*. Conditions were worsened in eastern Anatolia due to the Kurdish-Armenian problems which stemmed from the Armenians' obligation of giving free winter quarters (*kışlak*) to the Kurds. These problems caused suffering, fear, and emigration to Russia. In 1848, Patriarch Matteos, to draw the Porte's attention to worsening conditions in eastern Anatolia, did not hesitate to menace the Sublime Porte by giving an ultimatum to the Ottoman government that if the government did not take effective measures against the Kurds, Armenians in the region would immigrate to Russia. After the promulgation of Armenian National Constitution in 1863, the Armenian complaints about the Kurdish mistreatment toward the Armenians were multiplied. Under these circumstances, Ottoman government had to wipe out the local power centers; however it never achieved in obliterating them completely because during the second half of the 19th century new political

figures emerged under the name of *sheikh* in the eastern part of the empire (Nalbandian 1963:26; Redgate 1999:268-269 and Sasuni 1986:67, 81-83).

The dissolution of the emirates led to fragmentation and “individualization” of Kurdish tribes. From then on, tribal frictions and struggles, previously prevented by the emirs by mediation between various tribes, spread over the region. Porte’s failure in establishing direct central authority in the region led to the emergence of sheikhs as new political figures (Bruinessen 1992:41 and Yeğen 1996:219).

The emergence of sheikhs can be explained by several reasons but the most important one is that the Kurdish people, after long-lasting socio-economic turmoil, desired an outstanding figure that could bind the numerous small tribes together and lead them in the absence of former emirs. As indicated in the first chapter, religion played a significant role in socio-political life of the Kurds. Therefore, religious figures or clerics were always respected by Kurds who believed that the sheikhs were sanctified by God and perceived as the successors of prophet Muhammed.⁷⁷ Furthermore, as they acted as intermediaries between the conflicting tribes, their social and political influences strengthened. Besides this, the sheikhs succeeded in acquiring tribal affiliation and consolidating their exceptional socio-economic status through marriage with the daughters or relatives of tribal leaders. For these reasons, they were expected by the Kurds to restore order among Kurdish tribes because they were the only figures whose influence exceeded the limits of the tribes. As a consequence, while the

⁷⁷ For instance, the *Şemdinan* family and its well-known member Sheikh Ubeydullah enjoyed high prestige in the Hakkari region due to its religious genealogy prior to the 19th century. Connected to the spiritual genealogy of the *Halidiyye* branch of the *Nakşibendi* order, the family traces its origin back to Abdülkadir Geylani who was the founder of *Kadiri order*. The *Şemdinan* family assumes that its family line reaches to prophet Muhammed through his daughter Fatima. Assuming such a pretentious genealogy, members of the *Şemdinan* family became the spiritual leaders of local communities and advisers to Kurdish emirs in the first half of the 19th century. More significant was that this spiritual leadership generated sufficient income to become a great landowning family (Özoğlu 2001:388).

sheikhs became the new political leaders, their ascetic principles (Sufi brotherhood or *tariqa*) and peculiar communal network started to serve as a communal bond in Kurdish society after the tribal chiefdoms were disbanded.⁷⁸ For instance, the *Şemdinan* family in Hakkari emerged as political and military leaders of the Kurds in the second half of the 19th century and controlled a vast region in southeastern Anatolia and northwestern Iran. The rise of this family, headed by Sheikh Ubeydullah in the 1870s and 1880s was a turning point in the history of Kurdish society because political power past from the hands of tribal leaders to the Nakşibendi Şemdinans in the Kurdish populated areas of the Ottoman Empire (McDowall 1996:11; Olson 1992:3-4; Özoğlu 2001:387 and Yeğen 1996:220).

Among others, two *tarikats* (ascetic order) were of crucial importance: *Kadiri* and *Nakşibendi*. The former was practiced among the Kurds since the 14th century while the latter started to prevail in the region in the 19th century but became widespread and more effective than *Kadiri*. The reason for the spread of *Nakşibendi* order among the Kurdish society, according to Uşak, was because of its way of organization. Unlike the *Kadiris*, *Nakşibendi* sheikhs allowed their successors (*halife*) to appoint *halifes* on behalf of the sheikhs. Thus, many *halifes* established *Nakşibendi tekkes* or *dergâhs* in every part of the east and southeast Anatolia (2005:134-138).

Owing to their dual characters (religious and political) the sheikhs of *Nakşibendi* order who were very successful in intermediating between conflicting tribes extended their influences over the Kurds. Bringing peace to the Kurdish society was so significant that the region was politically

⁷⁸ Until this time, the sheikhs generally functioned under a tribal leader as spiritual advisers (Özoğlu 2001:387). A Kurdish idiom clearly demonstrates how far they became the indispensable part of the Kurdish society that “those who are not adherents of a sheikh, evil is the sheikh of them.” (Uşak 2005:140).

stabilized; hence, economically revived. As a result, social and political influences of the sheikhs and the respect showed to them increased day by day. Sheikhs were also economically influential. They had numerous adherents who traditionally had to bring valuable presents either in cash or in kind for the sheikhs. The sheikhs were even granted lands as gift, which were later parceled in their names due to their relations with the Ottoman officials (Uşak 2005:140). For example, as a respected *Nakşibendi* family, the Şemdinans became great landowners and accumulated a vast amount of land around the Hakkari region in the 1880s. Sheikh Ubeydullah, the best known member of the family due to his revolt in 1880, purchased from the Qajar and the Ottoman states.⁷⁹ Consequently, Ottoman Kurdish community witnessed the rise of sheikhs as new power centers after the tribal notables were eliminated from the provincial administration. From then on, sheikhs took over a challenging role against policy of Ottoman (later Turkish) centralization under the name of Sheikh Ubeydullah in the last quarter of the 19th century.

⁷⁹ General Abbot, the British Consul in Iran, noted, "I learnt that Ubeydullah is purchasing villages both in Turkey and Persia, which will greatly increase his influence in the region", cited in Özoğlu (2001:387).

CHAPTER 3

ARMENIAN-KURDISH CONFLICTS in the 19th CENTURY

3.1. Armenian-Kurdish Socio-Political Relations and Conflicts in the *Tanzimat* Era

Before the Ottomans came to dominate east Asia Minor, majority of the Armenians had already turned into the *reaya* of the Islamic rulers/landlords, Kurdish in general. Most of the Armenians were engaged in agriculture and settling on the plains, valleys, and mountainous regions such as Sason where they mostly dealt with animal husbandry. Ubicini's notes on the Armenian rural population in east Anatolia were as follows:

The rural population, especially in Turkish Armenia, retain the habits and manners of their forefathers, and are wholly employed in husbandry and in pasturing their cattle and flocks in the rich plains of Armenia. They are more advanced in agriculture than the Muslims; and if the government would only assist their efforts by the construction of roads, and establishing facilities for inter-communication throughout the country, agriculture would progress, instead of retrograding as at the present day. For example, in the province of Van a peculiar kind of wheat was formerly cultivated, of excellent quality, and resembling in productiveness the many-eared wheat of Egypt, but from neglect it has now almost disappeared. The Armenian peasants flock in numbers to Constantinople and the principal Levantine cities, where, under the name of bekars, they seek to make fortunes. These migrations are periodical, and take place in the months of August and September, when the people set out in troops of three or four thousand, and return at the end of two or three years, rich enough to marry and purchase a little land or a few sheep (1856:317-318).

One can think that since they lived together with the Kurds for centuries, the Armenians of the region had similar social and economic system as the Kurds. According to Hofmann and Koutcharian, Armenians living in the urban areas constituted the small part of the total population until the 19th century when the rural population began to migrate to major cities (Van, Trabzon, the region of Cilicia, and Constantinople) as result of the Kurdish depredation of the Armenian farmers (1986:5). Kurdish depredations and

Armenian emigration never ceased, even in the nineteenth century. The British Consul of Erzurum, James Brant demonstrated the situation in the Erzincan plain and Malatya in 1830s as follows:

There were stated to be about 100 villages in the plain, but the Kurdish depredations have been gradually diminishing the number of the inhabitants. A village I stopped at, formerly contained 100 families which had now only about thirty, and I was informed that most of the villages were similarly reduced... *Malatiyah* and *Aspuzi*, which may be considered as one town, contain 3923 families-2800 of which are Turkish, and 1123 Armenian. Plague, cholera, and Kurdish depredations have been gradually causing a diminution of the population; and the extensive and fertile plain of *Malatiyah* is nearly reduced to an uncultivated waste (Brant 1836:202).

The region was ruled by the Kurds until 1614 because the Ottoman Empire could not dominate eastern Anatolia immediately. After the establishment of the Ottoman rule in east Asia Minor, Armenians were brought under two authorities: the central government and the autonomous or semi-autonomous Kurdish tribal leaders (*hakim* or *emirs*). The duality or power sharing in the Ottoman provincial administration continued until the last decades of the 19th century (Brant 1836:203; Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:7). According to McDowall, by the beginning of the 19th century banditry became a growing problem in eastern Anatolia. The main perpetrators were the Kurdish nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes on their seasonal migrations. They plundered the villages on their migration ways. Due to the failure of the Ottoman authorities in exerting control over the rural areas the absence of adequate restraint led to the continuation of banditry, which resulted in serious decline in the economic condition of the country, well into the 19th century. The excessive exploitation and plundering of Armenian peasants by the Kurdish *emirs* and tribal chieftains resulted in abandonment of several Armenian villages (McDowall 2004:40, 49).

As noted in the second chapter, Armenians were governed according to law of *zimme* which offered protection in return for certain taxes (*haraç*) under Islamic traditions. The Ottoman State granted them fiefs on which they could cultivate and pay tithe (*cizye*). They also had to pay a military exemption tax to be excluded from military service which was closed to all non-Muslims according to Islamic principles. Apart from the official taxes, Kurdish local beys levied arbitrary taxes, which often exceeded the official ones, on Armenian farmers. Among them, the most extensive taxes were *hala* (paid by the parents of a new bride), *kâfir* and *olam*. *Kâfir* and *olam* were paid yearly in kind (wool, sheep, carpet or mine) in return for compensation for the patriarchal protection that was left by the Kurdish rulers to the patriarchal authorities in the region (Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:8; and Salt 1993:73). Hofmann stated that in the border zones of the Ottoman Empire where the Kurds immensely settled, the tax *kâfir* evolved into forced labor which was later forbidden by the *Tanzimat* reforms (1986:8).⁸⁰ Although the *Tanzimat* gave the non-Muslims a broad range of social rights and guaranteed the security of life and property, employment of Armenians without salary continued until the last decades of the 19th century.⁸¹ The order which was sent from the Sublime Porte to

⁸⁰ The imperial edict dated as 4 November, 1851 (9 *Muharrem* 1268) upon the complaints of Armenians utterly ordered the governor of Harput to prevent the employment of the Armenian peasants without salary and to provide their security and comfort in accordance with the *Tanzimat* principles, "Harput eyaleti dâhilinde vâki' Ergani Ma'deni kazasında mütemekkin Ermeni ahâlisi merbut olan vergi-i senevîleriyle cizye-i şer'iyelerini edâ etmekde oldukları halde mevsim-i şitâda dağ açmak ve konakları temizlemek ve kar dökmek ve yapılara hatab taşımak ve fırınlarda bilâ ücret işlemek misillü hizmetde istihdâm olunmakda ve bu ise Tanzimât-ı Hayriye usûl-ü muhassen şumulüne muğayir bulunduğu beyânıyla men'i hususu Ermeni Patriği ve millet meclisi tarafından müştereken bi't-takrir ve istid'â olunmuş olunduğu üzere her sınıf teb'â-i 'aliyyenin mutemett'-i ni'am huzur ve rahat olmasıyla ahâli-i merkûmenin hizmetlerde bilâ ücret istihdamları muğayir-i rızâ-i 'âli ve m'adelet-i seniyyenin hilâfı olarak Tanzimât-ı Hayriye usûlüne dahi muvâfık olmadığından husûs-u mezkûrun men'iyile ahâli-i merkûmenin asâyiş ve istirahatleri husûsuna himmet buyrulmalarına...(BOA HR.SYS. 80/29).

⁸¹ The British traveler and politician Lynch who traveled throughout east Asia Minor during the 1890s described the continuation of the employment of Armenian farmers without payment and their relations with the Kurdish notables as well as with the Ottoman

the governor of Bitlis on 18 January 1889 not only reveals the employment of Armenians without salary but also oppression and exploitation implemented by the Kurdish notables on the Armenian farmers in Sason region.⁸²

The notes of Brant were indeed good evidences for the treatments of the tribal Kurds toward their neighbours who were for the most part the Turkish and Armenian farmers. His following description clearly demonstrated the Kurdish depredations which the Turks and Armenians around Gürün (a district of Malatya) and in Kayseri suffered:

government as follows: "Serfdom is an institution which is not unknown in the country, though its existence is softened over by the Turkish authorities, who shrink from dispensing a purely nominal sovereignty. The serfs, who are Armenians, are known as *zer kurri*, signifying bought with gold. In fact they are bought and sold in much the same manner as sheep and cattle by the Kurdish beys and aghas. The only difference is that they cannot be disposed of individually; they are transferred with lands which they cultivate. The chief appropriates as much as he wishes from their yearly earnings, capital or goods; and in return he provides them with protection against other Kurdish tribes. Many stories are told to illustrate the nature of the relation. A serf was shot by the servant of a Kurdish agha who possessed lands in the neighbourhood. The owner of the serf did not trouble to avenge his death on the person of the murderer, still less upon that of the agha, his neighbour. He rode over to the agha's lands, and put bullets through two of his serfs, the first that he happened to meet... The serf of a chieftain residing a few hours' distance from the town of Hazo had settled in Hazo, where he had become treasurer to the Turkish Government. One night his house was attacked by another Kurdish chief, his money carried off and he and his cousin murdered. In this case the owner was not so easily propitiated. He gathered his people together, bearded his fellow-brigand in his lair, killed him, burnt down his house, and put to death every living thing. Both these incidents occurred during the lifetime of people who are still living; the one is related by no less an authority than a British Consul, and the other by an individual in a responsible position, whose sympathies are on the side of the Turkish Government", see Lynch (1990:430-431).

⁸² See footnote 146. Furthermore, German Vice Consul of Erzurum, Anders noted about the continuation of forced labor implemented by the Kurdish notables on the Armenians in Muş in 1910s: "The archbishop described to me in detail the situation of the Armenian farmer in Modikan Kaza. The relationship of bondage by the Derebeys is extended to such a degree that they, as Gogol describes present serfdom in Russia, sell whole villages together with the slaves, whereby they pay 5-15 Turkish liras for one person on the average. Thus the Shegoli, a branch of the Balikli race that owns 30 villages⁸², have recently purchased the Armeninan village of Pishnek from a Derebey... The farmers must make some deliveries to the Beys. Yet the poverty of the Armenian and Kurdish slaves is supposed to be terrible. There is only one Armenian school in the whole Modikan Kaza which is situated in the village of Khisek. A school was supposed to open in Khinist with money from Boghos Nubar Pasha [a renowned Armenian politician working in Egypt]; however, the teachers fled after just a few days, due to threats from the Kurds. It is peculiar the way in which the tax on sheep is collected. Shortly before the appearance of the Tahsildars, the Balikli Kurds drove three hundred sheep into the Armenian village of Khuit despite the protests of the inhabitants. Since the farmers refused to pay the resulting increased tax of approximately 20 Turkish liras, their cows and oxen were then sold compulsorily. Such incidents of sheep theft and property flights led to animosity between Kurds and Armenians, but the bishop admitted that in the past months there had been fewer complaints with regard to the endangerment of life of family honor. Only recently four to five Armenians were killed by the Bedri Kurds in Sasun"; quoted in Hofmann and Koutcharian (1986:19).

Manjelik, at 25 miles from Ghurun, in a northerly direction, is a small village, and the only one on the road; it formerly contained above 100 families, but all the Turks abandoned it from the depredations of the Kurds, and 15 Armenian families only now remain... I lodged in a house belonging to four brothers, all of whom had received five wounds each, in defending themselves and their property against Kurdish aggression... The town [Kayseri] contains 8000 houses-5000 Turkish, 2500 Armenian, and 500 Greek... This [Kayseri] is the principal commercial mart in the central part of Asia Minor; its natives are remarkable for their enterprise and activity, and they are found assiduously following their pursuits in the remotest corner of the empire. Of the late years the importance of the palace has very much declined, owing to the insecurity of the country on account of the Kurds... those destroyers of everything like civilization. Twice during this part of my route I fell in with bands of Kurds; the villagers were all obliged to watch their fields during the night, lest the sheep and cattle should be turned into them, or the grain which was cut should be carried away. In the spring migration of the Kurds, the young crops are often eaten by their sheep, which are so numerous that a field is speedily cleared, and thus the poor peasant's hopes of a harvest are totally destroyed, or perhaps his crops, which had escaped the danger in spring, are reserved only to be plundered in the autumn (1836:214, 216).

The Armenian farmers also endured the obligation of supplying winter shelter (*kışlak*) to the semi-nomadic Kurdish tribes for four to six months. During winters, Kurds violated the Armenian farms and properties in the villages; therefore, there often occurred bloody disputes between the Armenians and Kurds. It was obligatory for the Kurds to pay an amount of money to the Armenians as a rental fee for winter quarters; however the Armenians, in practice, were not paid. The Ottoman government after the promulgation of *Tanzimat* reforms attempted to abolish the practice of supplying winter quarters to semi-nomads but the attempt failed because of the resistance of the pastoral-nomadic Kurds who saw the shelter places (*kışlaks*) as their ancient rights (Lynch 1990:423). In consequence, they continued to attack the Armenian lands, pastures and properties (BOA HR. SYS. 80/48).⁸³

⁸³ The petition which was sent by the bishop of the Armenian community of Kars (Agop) to the Sublime Porte on 31 October 1851 (5 *Muharrem* 1268) demonstrates the situation: "Erzurum eyaleti dahilinde medine-i Kars'da vaki Ermeni milleti kullarına mahsus Guş(a)van

The relations between the agrarian Armenians and the tribal Kurdish notables in the second half of the 19th century were well portrayed in a trip report written by Theophile Deyrolle on a journey through east Anatolia:

As everywhere in Kurdistan, the Armenians of Tatvan complained bitterly about the amount of the regular and special taxes, the latter being the stiffer taxes because they are collected endlessly by the Kurds and the high-and low-ranking Turkish officials who pass through... The Kurds operate even more informally: at any moment five or six well-armed men appear at a farm and take as many provisions, grain and cattle as they please, without the owners daring to resist. If farmers refused the demands, the Kurds would readily disappear; during the next night, however, they would burn down a grain field and would return on the following morning in greater numbers and with more demands. For a while a strong energetic "Vali" like Ismail Pasha a few years ago, would be able to control this abuse; as soon as such a person is replaced by another, however, in the quick succession of Turkish officials, the lawless activities of the Kurds gain ground again and add to the drudgeries of the tax collectors. The Armenians complained bitterly about the Kurds in their letter of loyalty which they handed over to the distressed Turkish government in July, 1876 and pleaded for protection against them; yet a few months ago a Kurd killed one of the most distinguished prelates of the Armenian church treacherously, the Bishop of Aghtamar... (Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:10).

Furthermore, the imperial order sent to the governor of Diyarbekir province on 31 October 1851 upon the complaints of the Armenians living in Muş clearly shows the oppression of Kurdish chieftains (*aghas*) on the Armenian farmers. The document ordered the governor to prevent those (Kurds) who damaged the Armenian monasteries and pastures.⁸⁴

nâm manastırın malı olan Keğac nâm mahallede vâki çayır ile derununda kain su değirmenini ehl-i İslamdan bazıları tagallüben zabt ile manastırın hayvanlarını orada otlamaktan men itmekde ve manastır-ı mezkûrdan nim saat mesafede Daylar nâm mahallede vaki olub Katoğike nâm kilisemize mensub olan çayır ile ziraat mahallerinde İran hükümetinden gelen adamlar ve gerek bahar mevsiminde vârid olan Kürdler nasb-ı hıyam ile iskan iderek manastır hayvanlarının otlamalarına mani olmakta ve Akrân karyesinde vâki Ermeni milleti kullarına mahsus beş kiliseyi Ekrâddan Cafer nâm kimesne tagallüben zabt ile derununda ve gerek kilise-i mezkur ittisâlinde bulunan mağaraya hayvanlarını vaz' ve imlâ' ve refikası olan sekiz hane Kürtleriyle karye-i mezkurda iskan iderek reaya-i mevcûdeyi derun-ı karyeden tard ve ihrac etmek emeliyle haklarında gûna gûn zulüm ve teadi icrâsına ictirâ idelmekte..." (BOA HR. SYS. 80/48).

⁸⁴ "Muş müftüsü Fethullah Efendi ile ahâliden Çerki ve Bayram Ağalar orada mütemekkin Ermeni milletini birtakım örfiyât ile tazyik ve izrâr ve azhâb-ı de'avidan ahz-u rüşvetle iysâl-i hukûka ictirâr etmekte ve Ekrâddan bazılarıyla birleşerek millet-i merkumenin manâstırı ve ot ve sâir yığınaklarına ateş bırakıp bu cihetle dahi icrâ-i hasâret etmekte oldukları ve bu keyfiyet millet-i merkûmenin insılâb-ı emniyet ve rahatlarıyla berâber müceb-i gadr ve perişân-ı halleri olacağı beyânıyla istihsâl esbâb-ı mân'iesi hususu Ermeni Patriği ve millet meclisi tarafından ifâde ve istidâ' olunub bunların işbu harekâtı rıza-i 'aliyenin usûl-ü ma'deletin hilâfı olduğundan..." (BOA HR. SYS. 80/28).

To conclude, the patterns of Armenian-Kurdish relations from the beginning of the 19th century to the last decades of the 19th century depended on circumstances, so changed from time to time. For instance, the Kurdish attitude toward the Armenians was positive in their hard times (tribal wars, Iranian attacks...etc.) but they pillaged and exploited them in peace times. A Kurdish historian Garo Sasuni portrayed the relations between two communities as follows, “a relationship between oppressors and the oppressed from the beginning” (1986:67, 80-81). This might be true for the relationships between the agrarian Armenians and the nomadic Kurds; on the other hand the relationships between the sedentary Kurds and Armenians were relatively good or at least neutral. According to Hofmann, Armenian-Kurdish relations have always been defined by the changing relations between the local Ottoman bureaucrats and the Kurdish landlords and determined by the degree of independence of the Armenians (Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:6; Lynch 1990:429-433). This statement seems to be true if the demands of the Armenian delegation for their security against the Kurds and Circassians in the Berlin Treaty of 1878 and Sason uprising of 1894 are taken into consideration. Until the last decades of the 19th century the relations between the two communities were actually not friendly. The Armenians were usually distressed due to the oppressive and exploitative treatment of the Kurds toward the neighboring communities. The relations between two communities were much more deteriorated after 1878 because of the provocative activities of Armenian revolutionary committees and instigators who were financially and logistically supported by Russia in particular (BOA Yıldız Collection 1989:XIV-XVII).

3.2. Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 and Increasing Tension between the Kurds and Armenians

The Pan-Slavism policy of Russia throughout the Balkans in order to establish independent satellite Bulgaria and Serbia in the first step and finally bring the whole Balkans under Russian influence resulted in a war on 24 April, 1877 between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the Balkans and Caucasus. Having been assured by the European major powers about their neutrality in case of a war against the Ottoman Empire, Russian and the Romenian armies occupied the Danubian provinces in the Balkans. The Ottoman army showed little success in preventing Russian advance both in the Balkans and in east Anatolia. On 18 November 1877 Kars was invaded by the Russians, who thereafter advanced up to Erzurum. With the fall of Plevne the ways to the Ottoman capital were opened for the Russian troops to invade Constantinople.

The Anatolian front of the Ottoman-Russian war was highly significant for the history of the Armenians and Kurds because the war was accepted as the beginning of the emergence of Armenian question and of the serious frictions between the two communities. During the war when the Ottoman army started to retreat, the Kurds of Iran and eastern Anatolia took the advantage of the inefficiency of Ottoman authority in the area. They began to plunder the Christian villages on both sides of the border. Mainly the Iranian Kurds headed by Sheikh Celâleddin from Iran caused excessive damages to the Muslim and Christian inhabitants of twenty-five villages in Van. Moreover the Kurds of Shikak tribe pillaged the Muslim and Christian villages on the road from Van to Bayezid. Furthermore, the irregular Kurdish regiments in the Ottoman army committed ravages and killed the Turks, Kurds and Armenians without discrimination in Bayezid. Armenians, on the other hand, were not late to retaliate. Under these

circumstances, the relations between the Kurds and Armenians inevitably worsened. The Armenian activities during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 resulted in increase of Kurdish hostility toward the Armenians. Sonyel asserted that during the Turco-Russian war of 1877, when the Russian armies commanded by Russian generals of Armenian origin occupied Erzurum in June, some of the Ottoman Armenians joined the invaders. Several other Armenians in the eastern regions of Anatolia collaborated with the invading Russian armies. In some remote parts of Anatolia Armenian armed bands took advantage of authority gap and attacked unprotected peaceful Turcoman and Kurdish villages (Jorga 2005:504-5006; Nalbandian 1963:27; Sonyel 1993:283 and Tozer 1881:418-419).

Russian officers who were Armenian in origin, such as general Lazaroff at Kars, and major Kamsaragan in Erzurum, convinced many Armenians to join the Russian military troops. The Armenians together with Russian soldiers killed many Muslims. More important was that many Armenians (especially intellectuals, magnates and clerics) began to believe in an overwhelming Russian domination over the Balkans and east Asia Minor because of the irresistible advance of Russian military forces across the Caucasus and Balkans. Therefore, they expected the fall of Ottoman sovereignty on the region and succession of Russian domination instead (McCarthy and McCarthy 1989:25-26). The Ottoman archives documented the Russian policies and the attitude of the Armenian community (BOA HR. SYS. 2819/6 and BOA HR. SYS. 2819/7).

Finally, the Ottoman demand for a truce prepared the grounds for an unfavorable treaty for the Ottomans on 3 March, 1878 at Ayastefanos (Yeşilköy) which fulfilled the demands of the Pan-Slavs. Bulgaria the

borders of which would extend from the Danube to the Aegean became autonomous. Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania with parts of the Dobruca region assumed their independence while the Bessarabia was annexed to Russia (Zurcher 1999:114-115).

As to the Armenians, the Treaty of Ayastefanos was conceived by the Armenian nationalists as a good opportunity to demand their independence or at least autonomy. To do so, an Armenian delegation headed by the patriarch Nerses Vartabedian went to Ayastefanos to ask the Russian Grand Duke Nicholas to help create independent Armenian state in eastern Anatolia in return for their help against the Ottomans during the war. Although Grand Duke Nicholas did not accept to bring the Armenian demand of independence before the Ottoman delegation, he succeeded in imposing a provision which prescribed certain reforms for the Ottoman Armenian subjects. With the 16th article⁸⁵ of the Ayastefanos Treaty the Ottoman government promised to make reforms in the places where the Armenians resided and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians (Gürün 1983:105-106 and Official Documents 1908:396).

Witnessing the Russian invasion of Kars, Ardahan, Batum and Bayezid, Britain feared that Russia was about to gain the control of the trade route from Black Sea to northern Iran and to advance down to the Tigris-Euphrate basin. Britain, together with the other European powers, resisted against the implementation of Ayastefanos and insisted on determining the post-war conditions at an international congress. Although the provisions of Treaty of Ayastefanos were never implemented due to the

⁸⁵ The 16th Article of Berlin Treaty: "As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians."; for the full text of the Treaty of Ayastefanos see, Official Documents (1908:387-401).

British resistance, the Armenian subject once emerged and was brought to the Berlin Congress of 1878. Instead of launching a war again against Britain, Russia accepted the idea of assembling an international conference at Berlin to define the new situation and to rearrange the recent changes the war had caused. Before coming to Berlin Congress Britain signed a secret treaty with the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul in return for protecting the Ottoman Empire against any possible Russian attack in the future and won a diplomatic victory over Russian irredentism through taking Cyprus ‘temporarily’ on 4 June 1878. Britain, by signing a treaty with the Ottomans and taking Cyprus before the congress, not only attained a military base in eastern Mediterranean but also had a protectorial right on east Anatolia and the Armenians. Thus, according to Enver Ziya Karal, the ‘Armenian Problem’ emerged not as Armenian’s own cause but as a political matter between Russia and Britain. As a result, the Ottoman-Russian conflict became once again a matter of European Concert (Karal 1983:136).

Watching closely the developments during the period between the Treaty of Ayastefanos and Berlin Congress, the Ottoman Armenians under the leadership of patriarch Nerses Vartabedian endeavored to take the attentions of European major powers to their demands. It is of great importance to show the Armenian political ambitions regarding their plans about eastern Anatolia that the Armenian patriarch visited the British Ambassador, Layard, on 17 March 1878. Patriarch Nerses expressed the Armenian demands as follows:

We had no complaints about the Ottoman administration but the situation was changed by the Russian victory. Now, we are looking forward the independence of Armenia. If you are not able to help us to realize this, we shall resort to Russia and continue our provocations

until Russia annexes [our homeland] into their territories (Gürün 1983:106).

In the meantime, when the Ambassador asked where he meant by Armenia, Nerses replied “it was composed of *Paşaliks* of Van and Sivas, Diyarbekir, and the territory of ancient Cilician Kingdom” (Gürün 1983:107). When Layard expressed that the majority of the population of this extensive territory was overwhelmingly Muslim; Nerses, after ratifying Layard’s statement, claimed that the Muslims were also disappointed with the Ottoman administration, so they would prefer a Christian government in the region (Gürün 1983:106-107). This conversation explicitly displays how the Ottoman Armenians were politicized and used by Russia for her colonialist ambitions.

When the Congress was assembled, the Armenian delegation, which had been sent to Europe by Patriarch Nerses under the leadership of Mıgırdıç Hırimyan to get the support of European major powers for their demands, came to Berlin on 13 June 1878 to participate in the negotiations and to submit their project⁸⁶ to the representatives of participant states. Although the Armenian delegation was not allowed to participate in deliberations and their demands of autonomy were not brought to negotiation, the 16th article of Treaty of Ayastefanos with some modifications under the guarantee of Britain and of the other signatories was decided to be inserted into the text of Berlin Treaty on 4 July 1878. The 61st provision of Berlin Treaty at the end was reserved for the Armenians:

The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application (The Treaty between Great Britain, Germany, Austria,

⁸⁶ For the detailed information about the project which was designed to establish an autonomous Armenia in east Anatolia, see Uras (1987:227-230).

France, Italy, Russia, and Turkey for the Settlement of Affairs in the East: Signed at Berlin, July 13, 1878).

Consequently, due to the Russian expansion towards the British overseas dominions, such as India, Britain following the Treaty of Berlin started to take more active part in 'Armenian question' by assuming the title of guarantor of the reforms the Ottoman government promised to make for the Armenians. The long British support for the application of the Armenian reforms lasting from 1878 to 1897 encouraged the Armenians to revolt against the Ottoman State in various parts of the Empire. While extending her sovereignty over east Anatolia and Middle East following the war of 1877-78, Russia strengthened her influence on the Armenian society; even though Britain continuously tried to prevent Russian expansionist policy. This can be discerned in ever-increasing Armenian nationalist activities supported by Russia along with the Ottoman-Russian border zones (İlter 1995:163 and Jorga 2005:506). The telegram which was sent to the Sublime Porte on 28 December 1880 (*11 Kanunievvel 1296*) upon the arrest of Armenian spies who tried to make provocations among the Armenian community in Van supports this argument.⁸⁷ The telegram also shows that Russia supported the Armenians not only logistically but also educationally.

⁸⁷ "İkisi Vanlı ve dördü veya beşi Rusyalı olmak üzere buraya Rusya'dan altı-yedi nefer Ermeni geldiği istihbâr olunub bunlardan Vanlı olanlar onbeş seneden berû Rusya'da bulunarak mektebe girmiş genç takımından oldukları ve Rusyalulardan genç ve mektebli bulunan iki neferin dahi câvid-i dûr mübâya'asiçün buraya geldiklerini ifâde eylemişlerdir. Diğerleri konsolos tarafından henüz hükûmete götürülmediği gibi bilâhare bulunamamış ve mezkûr Vanlıyla hareketlerini hafi tutmakta ise de diğerleri geçende konsolos Tarabya hanesinde Ermenilerden cem'iyetle birleşüb yedi-sekize kadar berâber bulundukları zâbitadan bijurnâl ifâde olunmuşdur. Vanlılarla bunların mektebli olmalarıyla berâber buraya gelişleri ifsâda mebni olacakları anlaşılmakda ise de asıl Rusyaluların taht-ı tevkifte bulunduracak derecede elde bir ser-rişte-i kavi olmadığına binâen o yola gidilse ticâretlerinden dolayı bir tākım tazminâta kalkışacakları ve Vanlıların def'ine kıyâm olursa onlar da memleketlerine geldiklerinden bahsile sezilenecekleri ma'mâfih burada durmalarının mahzûrî ise ma'rûz olduğundan ve keyfiyyet makâm-ı 'ali-i hariciyeye dahi bildirildiğinden Bâb-ı 'Alice sefâretle bilmuhâbere konsolos ma'rifetiyle cümlesinin buradan mahallerine iadesi veyâhud başka suretle mu'amele-i icrâsı emr buyurulur ise ona göre hareket olunmak üzere burada istizân ..." (BOA HR. SYS. 2768/6).

She began to put the goal of extending her area of influence down to the Middle East by using Armenians as pawns a few decades before.

Treaty of Berlin also affected the Kurds and their relations with the Armenians adversely. According to Nalbandian, after the retreat of Russian army from east Anatolia following the Treaty of Berlin, the Kurds took the advantage of the evacuation of the Russians and started again their pillaging. Possibility of retaliation by the Kurds forced thousands of Armenians to emigrate to Russia (1963:28 and BOA HR. SYS. 78/2⁸⁸ and Jorga 2005:505). This was partly because of the fact that the 61st article of the Treaty naturally annoyed the Kurds because their names with the Circassians were recorded as the enemy of the Armenians who were to be protected against them. More significant was that the article prescribed that various reforms should be “carried out, without further delay,”⁸⁹ to improve the conditions of the Armenians living in east Anatolia. These developments frustrated the Kurdish local landowners, tribal leaders and sheikhs who began to think that they might lose their lands, official titles and former prerogatives in case of establishment of an autonomous or independent Armenia; because what the Armenian nationalists assumed as the ‘historical Armenia’ overlapped the region where a considerable number of Muslims (Kurds and Turks) lived. The fear of the establishment of an autonomous or independent Armenian state in the region appears to have been one of the most influential reasons behind the sheikhs’ attempt to unite and mobilize the Kurds against the Armenians (Hannum 1996:182 and Olson 1989:5).

⁸⁸ For the original language of the document, see footnote 92.

⁸⁹ “Treaty between Great Britain, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Russia, and Turkey for the Settlement of Affairs in the East: Signed at Berlin, July 13, 1878”, *The American Journal of International Law*, II, No. 4, OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS ,October 1908, p. 422.

3.3. Uprising of Sheikh Ubeydullah

As indicated in the second chapter, dissolution of the Kurdish emirates by the Ottoman state in the first half of the 19th century led to the emergence of sheikhs as new communal leaders of the Ottoman Kurdish society. Among others, Ubeydullah was the most outstanding figure in the history of the Kurds because he was supposed to be a unifying figure for the fragmented Kurdish society and the initiator of Kurdish nationalism.⁹⁰

The conditions which paved the way for the rise of Ubeydullah to power among the Kurds was the spread of anarchy throughout the eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire because of the local tribal chiefs who had formerly been under the control of *emirs* but now pursued their own interests and feuds. This was due to the fact that the Ottoman government failed to institute central authority in the periphery. The lack of any secular individual who could re-assume the role of previous *emirs* was the other structural deficiency which promoted Ubeydullah to undertake the leadership. Furthermore, the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, which brought out an authority gap, the atmosphere of violence, devastation, famine, disease and banditry in east Anatolia, served as a good opportunity for Ubeydullah to declare his programme. The reason for Ubeydullah's declaration of independence was the 61st article of Berlin Treaty. Upon hearing 61st article of Berlin Treaty, the first reaction of Sheikh Ubeydullah was harsh. He said "What is this I hear; that the Armenians are going to

⁹⁰ The letter from Sheikh Ubeydullah to an American missionary named Cochran in 1880 displays his political ambition clearly: "The Kurdish nation is a people apart. Their religion is different [to that of others], and their laws and customs are distinct. They are known among all nations as mischievous and corrupt.... The chiefs and rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan [the Christians] one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on this way with the two governments, and necessarily something must be done so that the European governments having understood the matter shall enquire into our state... We want our affairs to be in our hands... Otherwise the whole of Kurdistan will take the matter into their own hands, as they are unable to put up with these continued evil deeds, and the oppression which they suffer at the hands of the two governments of impure intentions"; Ubeydullah to Dr. Cochran, 5 October 1880, in *Parliamentary Papers*, 5:47-48, cited in McDowall (2004:53), Olson (1989:5) and Özoğlu (2001:391).

have an independent state in Van, and the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves British subjects. I will never permit it, even if I have to arm the women.” (Olson 1989:5 and Özoğlu 2001:390).⁹¹ The reaction, according to Olson, proves that Sheikh Ubeydullah seemed more than ever determined to resist reforms that would lead to the establishment of an Armenian state (Olson 1989:4-5).

Needless to say, after the Treaty of Berlin (13 July 1878), the deteriorating Armenian-Kurdish relations entered into a new phase, not more favorable than the previous. The report, which was sent by the governor of Erzurum to the Sublime Porte on 5 December 1878 (23 *Teşrinisâni* 1294) upon the complaints of the Armenians owing to the malpractices of local Kurdish Beys (*ümerâ*), is a good example to the ever-worsening relations between the Armenians and Kurds (BOA HR. SYS. 78/2).⁹² Beside this, the report of British Vice Consul of Van, George Goschen that was sent to the British Embassy at Constantinople on 18 September 1880 well portrayed the complications spread out in the region:

Her Majesty's Embassy has on previous occasions had the honour to draw the attention of the Sublime Porte to the deplorable state of affairs which prevails in the district of Hakkiari and especially to the persecution which the Christian inhabitants [Armenians and

⁹¹ Quoted from the correspondence sent by Vice-Counsel Clayton to Major Trotter, Başkale, 11 July 1880, in *Parliamentary Papers*, 5:7.

⁹² The original language of the report was as follows: “Tereki nahiyesindeki ahâli-i mutîa’-i Müslime ile Ermenilerin memurin-i mahalli ve ümerâ-i Ekrâddan gördükleri mezâlîm ve taadiyâtın tahkiki için i’zâm olunan memurun ümerâ-i merkûme tarafından iğfâl edilmesinden ve ikincisi: oralarca ma’rûf olan bir şâkinin karyelerden birini yağma, garât ve iki Hristiyan kızını dahi derdest ederek alan, hanesinde saklanmakda olduğu halde şaki-i merkûmun ‘asâkir-i şâhâne tarafından derdestine kıyâm olunmuşken gûyâ taraf-ı Çakerânemden vuku’ bulan sahâbet ve himâyet üzerine bir memurin ta’yin edildiğinden ve üçüncüsü dahi: Erzincan’dan mezkûr Tereki’ye gönderilen Mihrâli Bey nâmında bir şaki-i ma’rûfun îkâ’ etmiş olduğu derce-i zulm ve taadisiyle beraber ahâli-i Hristiyanlardan birinin hayyen derisini yüzmeğe ibtidâr eylemesinden ve dördüncüsü: Erzurum ile havâlisi muhacirlerinin mesken ve me’vâlarına avdet etmek üzere Rusların buralardan çekilmelerini beklemekte ve Hristiyanları kılıçdan geçirmek tasavvur ve efkârında bulunmalarından, gasb-ı emvâl ve katl-i nüfus gibi ahvâl-i facia’nın gittikçe artmasından dolayı esbâb-ı emniyetin mefkûdiyyetinden ve Erzurum ve havâlisindeki Ermenilerin külliyyet üzere Rusya’ya hicrete mecbur olmalarından...” (BOA HR. SYS. 78/2).

Nestorians] there suffer at the hands of their Kurdish neighbours. Her Majesty's Embassy regrets to state that it has received a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Van dated the 9th instant from which it appears that within the last few days thirteen Christian villages in Hakkari have been entirely stuffed by the Kurds and their inhabitants reduced to a state of utter destitution. It is earnestly to be hoped that the Sublime Porte will at last take the necessary steps for the preservation of order in the district of Hakkari and for the protection of the Sultan's Christian and other subjects in those parts of Kurdistan against the depredations of the Kurds. Her Majesty's Embassy deeply deplores the apparent absence of power or determination on the part of the Ottoman authorities in these districts to put an end to the present state of affairs. Her Majesty's Embassy sees grave dangers in the continuance of a situation which seems of a character threatening alike to the security of the subjects of the Sultan and to the existence of regular government in those regions. The responsibility of the consequences will rest on the Ottoman Government (BOA HR. SYS. 22/1).

Ubeydullah, with his tribal forces, attacked to the northwestern territories of Iran in September 1880 with a hope of expanding his area of influence in the Persian territories. Nevertheless, he and his tribal forces consisting mainly of Kurdish tribesmen were defeated by the Iranians. Ubeydullah was arrested by the Ottoman authorities in July 1881 and sent to Istanbul as a result of the British and Russian pressure even though Abdulhamid showed great respect to him. A few months later, he escaped from Istanbul and turned back to Nehri where Ubeydullah revolted against the Sublime Porte and declared independence. It is very interesting that according to Jwaideh, before he declared his revolt against the Ottoman State, Sheikh Ubeydullah offered an alliance to the representatives of the Armenian *millet* administration in Van-Hakkari region to launch a big uprising against the Ottoman government in return for communal protection for the Armenian *millet*. Ubeydullah thought that if he undertook the role of protector of the Christians living in east Anatolia, the European powers would appreciate and give support to him against the Ottoman government. To do so, Ubeydullah planned to establish good relationships with Christians in his area of influence. What lies beneath his offer of

collaboration to the Armenians in Van-Hakkari region was to prevent the implementation of reforms for Christians (Jwaideh 1999:158-159). The refusal of his proposal by the Armenians angered Ubeydullah, so he began to think that the Armenians were not reliable neighbors. At the end, continuous European pressure due to the rumors about Ubeydullah's execution of Christians led the Sublime Porte to send a force against the sheikh. He was captured and exiled to Hijaz where he died in 1883 (Olson 1989:6-7).

The death of Ubeydullah neither put an end to Kurdish adversary treatment towards the Armenians, though there wasn't any serious Kurdish attack on Armenians between 1883 and 1890. The legacy of Sheikh Ubeydullah and his movement were undertaken by his son, Sheikh Abdulkadir after 1883. He sustained the mission of his father and strove to unite all Kurds under his flag (Sasuni 1986).

3.4. Armenian-Kurdish Relations during the Last two Decades of the 19th Century

With the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms and the foreign missionary activities, the Treaty of Berlin brought about a desire for independence within the Armenian society. Serbian and Greek independence, Bulgarian and Bosnian autonomy constituted attractive examples for the Armenians who then began to hope for independence (Lynch 1990:429). The Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia in 1877 was headed by the Russian officers and administrators of Armenian origin who had been absorbed in the Russian military since the invasion of the Caucasus during the early 19th century. They contacted with some of their brothers in the Ottoman Empire to secure their help against the sultan. The Russian encouragement led

most of the Armenian nationalists to hope for political achievements.⁹³ To be able to draw the attention of European powers to their demands for autonomy or even independence, they appealed to violence through establishing revolutionary societies⁹⁴ in the early 1880s. They were very active in Istanbul, Trabzon, Erzurum, Bitlis, Muş, and Van (BOA HR. SYS. 30/31; Gül 1997:139-144; Nalbandian 1963:151-179; Mazıcı 1987: and Shaw 2002:202-204). They did not only use weapons to be effective on the European public opinion but also published periodicals and newspapers in the major cities of Europe, Russia and even America (such as *Hayk*) (BOA HR. SYS. 64/8 and BOA HR. SYS. 30/31). The report which was sent from the Ottoman consulate at Braila to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 December 1881 (7 *Kânunievvel* 1294) about a secret Armenian committee which sought for munitions to violate people in east Anatolia was a good example (BOA HR. SYS. 2764/5).⁹⁵

In the mean time, the Kurds did not cease aggression towards the Armenians in the 1880s. Continuation of the Kurdish plundering of Armenian villages and lands, and persecutions of the Armenians naturally increased the tension between two communities.⁹⁶ It should be pointed out

⁹³ The imperial instruction from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Bitlis on 14 September 1889 (17 *Ağustos* 1305) warned the governor about the revolutionary activities. According to the instruction, those Armenians who were deceived by foreigners published detractive materials concerning the Ottoman government. They, through disguising in Kurdish clothes, tried to detract Islam and exaggerate the Kurdish aggression; cited in Mazıcı (1987:165-170).

⁹⁴ The imperial rescript which was sent from the Ottoman Ministry of Interior to that of Justice on 25 June 1883 (19 *Şaban* 1300) revealed the existence of a revolutionary committee in Yerevan: "Bu kere Erivan'da bir Ermeni ihtilâl komitesi meydâna çıkarıldığını..." (BOA HR. SYS. 2768/9).

⁹⁵ "Braila'dan Hâriciye Nezâret-i Celilesine Devletlû Efendim Hazretleri, Devlet-i 'Aliyenin İran'da bulunan Şehbender Efendi devlet-i 'Aliye teb'ası Asya Ermenistan 'âsilârsı komitesinin muhârebe içün hafiyen i'ane toplamakda bulunduğu ve gayret-i İslâmiye coşagelerek bittekrâr tahkik ve sıhhat-ı haberi alındıkda böyle hain devlet bulunduğundan sırrını ifşâ itmelik ve icya-i zamanımız bulunmağla tahrirde cür'et kılındı..." (BOA HR. SYS. 2764/5).

⁹⁶ The imperial order which was sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Bitlis on 18 January 1889 ordered the prevention of Kurdish attacks on the Armenians. This may be an

here that according to Lynch, one of the most important reasons for the continuous Kurdish attacks on Armenian villages and lands was the Kurdish jealousy of the fertile Armenian lands and the wealthier economic conditions of Armenian peoples comparing with the Kurds. The most fertile portion of eastern Anatolia was held by the Armenians. The beautiful region about Lake Van, the vast plains of Bulanık, of Muş, and of Harput were the principal habitats of the Armenian peasantry which was as prosperous as the Muslim peasantry. Another advantage of the Armenian people was their favourable geographical situation (1990:425 and Maunsell 1894:84).

The Armenian nationalists in order to keep their case alive in the minds of European powers shouted in every occasion that Muslims massacred the Christians. The imperial instruction which was sent to the province of Bitlis from the Sublime Porte on 14 September 1889 (29 *Muharrem* 1307) to be executed in Van, Bitlis and Erzurum proved the situation above. In this instruction, it was ordered that the Armenians, who were deceived by foreign instigators, were in the hope for establishing an Armenian government in the Kurdish populated areas. They were publishing mischievous things about the Ottoman government by the hands

indication of the continuation of the Kurdish oppression on Armenians in the 1880s; see Mazıcı (1987:162). Another example to the case was that according to the complaint of deputy of the Armenian millet in Muş, Nerses, some members of Kurdish Buzigânlı tribe killed a Christian named as Evi and plundered his properties. Moreover, the members of Buzigânlı and of Gûranlı tribes put the Christians up for sale like slaves and committed cruelties upon them. The document spoke as follows: “Buzigân kabilesinden bir cemiyet diğer tarafa mensub Hentek kariyesine giderek ahâlden Evi nâm Hristiyanı katl ve eşyasını yağma itdıklarına dair...Sason’a tâbi sekiz kariye Hristiyanları imzalarını havi bir şikâyetnâme verilmiş idi. Muş Ermeni murahhas vekili Nerses efendi tarafından mahremâne namıyla verilüb leffen kılınan takrirde Buzigânlı kabilesinden on ve Gûranlı kabilesinden nefer-i rüesa-i Ekrâd kabileleri derununda bulunan Hristiyanları kendilerine abd-i memlûk tanıyıp birbirine satmakda ve başka dürlü mezâlîme de devam itmekte oldukları... Sason’da bulunan arazinin hepsine mine’l-kadim Ekrâd kabileleri mutasarrıf olub şu arazi Hristiyanlar taraflarından murabılık suretiyle ziraat idilmektedir. Kürdlerin tarlalarını olvechile ziraat iden Hristiyanlar tarla sahibleri taraflarından kendü familyaları efrâdı gibi himaye ve muhafaza olduğu halde yed-i ziraatindeki tarlanın mutasarrıfı bulunan Kürd, o müteaddi aleyhinde öfkelenüb bu uğurda kanını dökmekden bile çekinmediği... bir tarlaya mutasarrıf olan bir Kürd o tarlayı başkasına fariğ olur ise o tarlaya murabılık suretiyle vaziyet-i ziraat itmekte olan Hristiyan üzerinde ziraate ve muhafazaya ta’allûk iden hukuk-ı muta’desi dahi mefrûğ lehine intikâl itmesi ‘adât-ı kadimeleri icâbâtındandır”, cited in Mazıcı (1987:171).

of the committees established by the Armenians long before. In addition to this, they were exaggerating some misdoings by Kurds and dressing Kurdish costumes to stain Islam. Therefore, to preserve the public security and to prevent the Armenian revolutionary activities, necessary measures had to be taken.⁹⁷

They, furthermore, used terror to force the Muslims to retaliation that would enforce Britain and Russia to intervene. They strove to undermine the sultan's faith in his Armenian officials by forcing the latter to support the national cause. The revolutionaries formed their own guerilla bands which attacked the Ottoman tax collectors, postmen and judges, and massacred the people in the villages, and also forced the Armenian peasants and merchants to collaborate (Shaw 2002:204-205). Continuous Armenian incitements distressed the Muslims especially the Kurds who were already ready for reprisal (McCarthy and McCarthy 1989:39-42; Mazııcı 1987:173-174). The telegram which was sent from the governor of Muş to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 June 1899 (*4 Safer 1317*) upon the Kurdish retaliation on Armenians around Muş due to the revolutionary activities of seven Armenian instigators who probably came from Russia supported this (BOA HR. SYS. 39/61).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ The original language of the instruction spoke as follows: "Van Bitlis ve Erzurum Vilâyetlerinde mer'i olmak üzere kaleme alınan ta'limât lâyihasıdır: Ermeniler bir zamandan berü bedhvâhân-ı ecânibin iğfâlâtına ferifte olarak Kürdistan'da bir Ermeni hükûmeti teşkili sevdâsına düşmüş olduklarından bu hulyâya hâdim olan Ermeniler öteden berü de tertib itmiş oldukları komiteler vâsıtasıyla idâre-i hükûmet-i seniyye hakkında neşriyât-ı muzirrede bulunmakla berâber arasına Kürdler tarafından sûret-i 'âdiyede vuku'a getirilen bazı teadiyâtı ve nehb ve katl gibi vuku'atı envâ-i mübâlağa ile büyülderek ve ba'zen kıyâfetlerini değışdirüb Kürd kıyâfetine girerek İslâmı lekedâr itmekde olduklarından bu makulelerin elde edildikçe kanunen lâzımgelen cezaya çarpılmaları için... Gerek muhafaza-i emniyet hususundaki vazife-i hükûmetin icrâsı ve gerek husûl-ü maksat için bir ihtilâl çıkarmak tasaddisinde bulunan Ermenilerin teşebbüsât-ı fesâdiyesinin neticesiz bırakılması..." cited in Mazııcı (1987:165-166).

⁹⁸ "Gazete der Frankfurt" gazetesi Muş sancağında geçen Mayıs'ın yedisi ile ondokuzu hilâlinde vuku'ı rivâyet olunan iğtişâsâta dair "Korrespondans Büro" nın virdüğü tafsilâtı Haziranın onikisi tarihli nüshâsına derc itmiştir. Mütâla'sından anlaşıldığına göre Rusya'dan gelmiş olmaları muhtemel olan yedi kadar Ermeni fesadatcısının tecâvüzât vak'ası sebebiyle "Sirug" kurbunda mücâdelât-ı hunrizâne vuku'bularak birçok köyler bazı 'aşâir-i

Another proof for the conspiratory intentions of the Armenian revolutionaries, who sought to benefit from the worsening relations between Armenians and Muslims (Kurds and Turks), was the following plan admitted by the revolutionaries:

Europeans in Turkey were agreed that the immediate aim of the agitators was to incite disorder, bring about inhuman reprisals, and so provoke the intervention of the powers. For that reason, it was said, they operated by preference in areas where the Armenians were a hopeless minority, so that reprisals would be certain. One of the revolutionaries told Dr. Hamlin, the founder of Robert College, that the Hentchak bands would “watch their opportunity to kill Turks and Koords, set fire to their villages, and then make their escape into the mountains. The enraged Moslems will then rise, and fall upon the defenseless Armenians and slaughter them with such barbarity that Russia will enter in the name of humanity and Christian civilization and take possession.” When the horrified missionary denounced the scheme as atrocious and infernal beyond anything ever known, he received this reply: “It appears so to you, no doubt; but we Armenians have determined to be free. Europe listened to the Bulgarian horrors and made Bulgaria free. She will listen to our cry when it goes up in the shrieks and blood of millions of women and children... We are desperate. We shall do it.” (McCarthy and McCarthy 1989:40).

Because of the results of the Treaty of Berlin, which separated the majority of the Ottoman non-Muslims from the Empire by virtual independence, Abdulhamid II was convinced that the policy of Ottomanism did not preserve the Ottoman social unity. Greek and Serbian independence, Bulgarian and Bosnian autonomy, and the Armenian revolutionary activities led Abdulhamid II to pursue the policy of Pan-Islamism which worked well in strengthening the ties of Muslim subjects of the Empire (Turks, Arabs, and the Kurds) to the Ottoman Sultan (Hourani 1974:68 and Ortaylı 2000:247-255).

The Hamidian regime for the Armenians and Kurds became identical with the *Hamidiye Alayları* (Hamidiye Regiments) which were derived mainly from the Kurdish nomads of the Bitlis, Erzurum and Diyarbakir districts.

Ekrâd tarafından rehin ve gâret ve sekenesi katl olunmuş ve külliye-tlü hayvanât iğtisâb idilmiş imiş. Bir de Kürdler bir manastıra biduhül kilise ruhânisini katl itmişler imiş...” (BOA HR. SYS. 39/61)

Hamidiye Alayları were designed by Abdulhamid II as an instrument for the achievement of his three major political objectives regarding east Anatolia: 1) preventing the Kurdish national awakening by granting them lands, certain fiscal exemptions and privileges;⁹⁹ 2) providing a Muslim defense against Russia¹⁰⁰; 3) preventing British intrigues which paved the way for non-conformist Armenian activities under revolutionary organizations such as *Hunchak* and *Dashnaksutiun* (Kodaman 1987:26-30; McCarthy and McCarthy 1989:38).

Although Abdulhamid planned to utilize them in preventing the activities of Armenian revolutionary committees which caused a permanent European pressure and intervention for reforms regarding the Armenians, the result was not complementary. Within a short time Hamidiye Regiments turned into a fugitive and more brutal weapon of terrorism which paved the way for ever-increasing European intervention (particularly the British) in Ottoman internal affairs on behalf of the Armenians. In addition, as a result of the raids of the Hamidiyeh regiments on peasants regardless of religion and nationality exacerbated also the existing social deviation between the settled and nomadic Kurds. Release of a number of well equipped and organized Kurdish cavalries (at least two thousand) brought fear and

⁹⁹ According to Kodaman, both Russia and the Great Britain planned to arm the Kurds in order to establish at least a semi-autonomous Kurdish state in east Anatolia to use it as a pawn against each other. Being aware of these policies, Abdulhamid II sought to integrate the Kurds into the Ottoman system by giving them military equipments (lands, horses, Martini rifles, bullets...etc.) and expensive gifts (1987:21-30).

¹⁰⁰ The Russian interest on the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia goes back to the beginning of the 19th century. The Russians, who made their first contacts with the Kurdish tribes in 1805, developed the relations between the Ottoman-Russian wars of 1828-29 and 1853-58. It is important to note here that the Russians organised one regiment from the Kurds in Ottoman-Russian War of 1829 and two in Crimean War of 1854. In the beginning of the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War the Kurdish tribes of Dersim (Tunceli) who contacted the Russian consulate in Erzurum declared that the tribes of Dersim would help the Russians during the battle. As a result, the Russians got the support of some tribes in Dersim, see Kurtcephe ve Akgül (1995:249).

devastation not only to the Armenians but also to sedentary Kurds and Turks. Lynch portrayed the situation as follows:

The great plains from Pasin to Lake Van were being raided by bands of Kurds... Erzerum was full of accounts of their open attacks upon the industrious peasantry; and even the Mussulmans, as, for instance, at Hasan Kala in Pasin, were petitioning Government for protection. It is true they did not dare to call their assailants to book as Kurds, but described them merely as brigands. It was well known that these bands were led by officers in Hamidiyeh regiments-*tenekelis*, or tin-plate men, as they are called by the populace, from the brass badges they wear in their caps. The frightened officials, obliged to report such occurrences, take refuge behind the amusing euphemism of such a phrase as "brigands, disguised as soldiers." The scourge had almost exhausted the Armenian population, and was now commencing to sit heavy upon the Mussulmans. The Armenians were emigrating as fast as they could. The Russian Consul informed me that he had been obliged to issue no less than 3,500 passports to Armenians during the current year. The Russians did not want them; but what were they to do? I learnt from another source that in the caza of Khinis alone 1000 Armenians had left their homes, the majority in abject poverty, and had taken refuge across the frontier (1990:219).

The Hamidiye Regiments exacerbated the deterioration of the Armenian-Kurdish relations but it is difficult to say that these regiments initiated the process of deterioration. These regiments had only furthering affects on ever-worsening relations in 1890s. For instance, the Sason uprising of 1894 took place as a result of the provocations of Armenian revolutionary committees who intended to cause a social catastrophe by provoking the members of Kurdish tribes for retaliation. Some members of Behranlı and Zadyanlı tribes were assassinated by the Armenian revolutionaries in expectation of reprisals that would certainly cause the European intervention. The assassination of the Kurds resulted in armed conflicts between the revolutionaries and Kurdish tribes (McCarthy and McCarthy 1989:42). More significant was that the uprising explicitly reveals how far the of Armenian-Kurdish relations deteriorated before the coming of the Hamidiye Regiments to Sason where both communities had co-existed in peace for centuries. The article written in an Armenian newspaper (titled

as *Hayk*) on 7 March 1895 narrated that during the uprising, the Armenians of Sason murdered 2000 Kurds before the arrival of governmental forces at Sason (BOA HR. SYS. 64/8).

The deterioration of the Armenian-Kurdish relations, in the 1890s, was also furthered by the territorial question which stemmed from the settlement of Kurdish nomads in the former Armenian areas. It is significant to underline that during and after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 a considerable number of the Armenians of east Anatolia left their lands and immigrated to Russia. Thus, numerous Kurds had an easier access to the abandoned Armenian lands. The lands of Armenian farmers in the provinces of Diyarbekir, Bitlis and Van were occupied by the Kurds. When the Armenian immigrants returned to their lands after peace and security was reinstituted in the region, a social turmoil inevitably occurred between the Kurds and Armenians (Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:18-19 and Jorga 2005:505). According to Sonyel, Russia perpetually made use of the land disputes between the Armenians and Kurds during and after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78. He asserted that “the Russians, at first, incited the Kurds to attack the Armenians in order to make their position precarious in the Ottoman Empire, and to cause to bring pressure to bear upon the Ottoman government for Russian intervention in the internal affairs of Turkey. The Russian Consul Cherkov at Hoy (*Khoi*) was encouraging the Kurdish chiefs to rebel against the Ottoman government in order to increase Armenian discontent and to diminish Turkish authority.” (1993:392).

Under these circumstances, it is not necessary to say that friendly relations between the Armenians and Kurds were never established throughout the nineteenth century, even though Dashnak revolutionaries

tried hard to obtain the support of the Kurds. Only a few Kurds¹⁰¹ or Kurdish groups, who were sent to exile, disapproved the hostile attitudes of their people against the Armenians and strove to find the means of collaboration with the Armenian nationalists for the sake of a possible Kurdish independence in the future; however nothing could be done (Uras 1987:540-541). The Kurds remained for the most part hostile or xenophobic due to the continuous reform projects for the improvement of the conditions of the Armenians living in the eastern part of the Empire. They were always terrorized by the idea of Armenian independence which would overturn their socio-economic status and prerogatives.

¹⁰¹ The only Kurd who publicly supported any possible solidarity and collaboration between both races was Abdurrahman, a son of Bedir Khan, who resided in Geneva and published a newspaper *Kurdistan* (Hofmann and Koutcharian 1986:19 and Nalbandian 1963:175). For a detailed Armenian propaganda among the Kurds see, Uras (1987:540-541).

CONCLUSION

Due to the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms, the Ottoman Armenian and Kurdish communities were not same with the situation before the *Tanzimat* Era because the *Tanzimat* changed the social and political structures of these communities fundamentally. To begin with, the reforms gave social, religious and judicial rights to the Ottoman non-Muslims. Together with the other non-Muslims (Jews, the Orthodox Christians...etc.) the Armenians were guaranteed in terms of their lives, properties and honours. In addition to freedom of worship, they were granted the freedom of changing their religion or sect. Joint tribunals/mixed courts were established for the non-Muslims whose testimony started to be accepted against the Muslims. The Penal Code of 1840, which abolished death penalty, introduced the principle of equality to all of the Ottoman subjects before the laws; thus the inferior status of the non-Muslims changed and they became equal with the Muslims. The Armenians were freed from the arbitrary and exploitative administration of Gregorian Patriarchate by preparing new regulations. These regulations prearranged a communal assembly composed of fourteen religious and twenty lay members who started to take part in the central administration of Armenian *millet*. The lay members were among the Armenian *amira* and guilds. In addition, establishment of provincial assemblies restricted the authority of the Armenian religious leaders in the provinces. Moreover the establishment of the Armenian Judicial Council, by taking the example of *Deavî Nezareti*, limited the judicial authority of Armenian religious leaders by the participation of the lay members.

One of the most transformative effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms and institutions on the Armenian *millet* came with the establishment of the Armenian Educational Council because it was established by taking the example of *Meclis-i Maarif-i Umûmî*. This council was composed of fourteen members all of whom were graduates of European universities. This council, in order to make the archaic Armenian language comprehensible for all Armenians, reformed it by purifying the Armenian language from the influence of other languages. By doing so, the Armenian pupils were taught to understand the ancient works in archaic Armenian language. Therefore, they started to learn their ancient history and literature which were very crucial to become conscious about their roots.

The most important effect of the *Tanzimat* on the Ottoman Armenian community and the administration of Armenian *millet* was the promulgation of the *Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi* (1863) which signified the end of the supremacy of the Armenian religious groups over the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire, and the other groups (traders, artists, craftsmen, artisans, doctors, teachers and other officials in the service of the Ottoman state) started to take part in administration of Armenian *millet*. Therefore, it can be assumed that the the Armenian constitutionalism and the popular administration of the Armenian *millet* started and developed with the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms and institutions.

The *Tanzimat* era was period of freedom which not only allowed the Ottoman non-Muslim subjects to act freely but also presented a room for manoeuvre to the foreign missionaries whose influence on the Ottoman non-Muslims, especially the Armenians, were very deep indeed. The Catholic and Protestant missions, benefiting from the adventagous conditions of the *Tanzimat* era, spread their ideas among the Ottoman non-

Muslims. Both the evangelical activities of the Catholic and Protestant missionaries caused the disintegration of the Gregorian Armenian *millet*. The spread of Catholicism and Protestantism among the Armenians opened doors of the west to the Gregorian Armenians who had the opportunity of going to Europe and meeting western cultures and ideas. Many Ottoman Armenians went to universities in Europe and closely witnessed the political and intellectual developments in the European countries. When they returned to the Ottoman Empire, they conveyed their impressions about the European cultural, social, political and educational institutions. The Ottoman Armenians were also acquainted with western cultures, especially the Anglo-Saxon way of life, through philanthropic institutions such as Sunday schools, colleges, adult classes, medical centers, orphanages founded by the Protestant American Missionaries. The American missionaries used these institutions to spread their beliefs, ideas and lifestyle among all of the Ottoman subjects because almost all Ottoman subjects were in need for better education and medical care. Comparing with the state schools, the missionary schools were very modern and more scientific in their curriculum while the missionary medical centers, in which surgeries could be realized, were well equipped. These institutions presented their services to all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religion and community. Although their activities and institutions seemed philanthropic, the foreign missionaries, especially the American Protestants, were intellectually and politically very influential on the Ottoman Armenians who were gradually politicized by the activities of missionaries. Many Armenians either entered the missionary services or became adherents of the foreign missions.

Foreign missionaries also led the increase of European intervention in the Ottoman internal affairs on behalf of the Catholic and Protestant Armenians. While France and Austria assumed the protectorate over the Catholic Armenians, Britain and the United States over the Protestant Armenians who benefited also from economic capitulations given to the European major powers and the United States. Under foreign protection, they acted freely and under the influence of western ideas, such as nationalism, the Armenians began revolutionary activities towards the end of the 19th century. In their revolutionary activities, they were not alone because the Protestant missionaries helped, supported and protected the Armenians. The propagation of the ideas of nationalism, autonomy and even independence by the missionaries among Armenians resulted in a radical change in Ottoman social balance in eastern and southeastern Anatolia by triggering the Armenian national awakening. Besides socio-political transformation, intellectual and mental transformation took place within the Ottoman Armenian community due to the effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms and missionaries which led the Ottoman Armenians to think that they were socially, religiously, linguistically different people. Therefore, the *Tanzimat* period was the beginning of a transition for the Armenians from being Ottoman *teb'a* to a separate identity. In addition to this, the policies of European Great Powers on the Ottoman Armenians and the results of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 accelerated the Armenian national movements.

The effects of the *Tanzimat* reforms were also very decisive on the social and political structures of the Ottoman Kurdish community. First, the Ottoman state policy of centralization brought dissolution of the traditional political organizations of the Kurdish community in Eastern

Anatolia. Strong Kurdish tribal formations, such as those which were led by Bedirhan and Muhammed Paşa of Rewanduz, were disbanded and the tribal leaders were eliminated from the Ottoman provincial administration. As a result, the Ottoman Kurdish community was fragmented and several small tribes emerged. These tribes (generally semi-nomadic ones) caused serious social and economic problems by plundering not only the lands populated by the Kurds but also neighboring lands and villages populated by the Turks and Armenians. Therefore, many Armenians and Turks migrated to urban centers and many rural areas in eastern and southeastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire were depopulated. The Ottoman state could not institute the state authority and was not able to prevent insecure occurrences caused by the Kurdish tribes. Under these circumstances, the tribal sheikhs succeeded in gathering various Kurdish tribes around their religious charisma and emerged as the new communal and political leaders in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. The Ottoman state tolerated the rise of the sheikhs because the religious character of the sheikhs conformed to the policy of Islamism in the last quarter of the 19th century. Moreover, the sheikhs were very successful in getting various refractory Kurdish tribes under their authority which re-instated the public security relatively in the eastern part of the Empire.

The second effect of the *Tanzimat* era on the Kurdish community came with the Land Reform of 1858 which, in the long run, resulted in usurpation of lands in the eastern and southeastern provinces Anatolia by the Kurdish notables (mostly the sheikhs and *ağas*). The Land Reform of 1858 was actually designed by the Ottoman statesmen in order to distribute the rural lands to their real owners, the peasants. Nonetheless, the Kurdish notables (*sheikhs* and *ağas*) succeeded in getting the title-deeds (*tapu*) of the

lands on which the Kurdish, Turkish and Armenian peasants lived. These developments constituted the important part of the land disputes and one of the reasons for deterioration of the relations between the Armenians and Kurds during the last two decades of the 19th century.

The turning point in the history of the Ottoman Armenian and Kurdish communal relations was the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 from two aspects. First, this war caused a mass Armenian emigration to Russia. After a considerable number of the Armenians emigrated to Russia during and after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, the Kurdish notables accommodated the semi-nomadic Kurds in abandoned lands. When the negative atmosphere of the Ottoman-Russian War disappeared, a number of the Armenians, who had abandoned their lands, came back to lands on which the Kurds were settled. Therefore, serious land disputes took place between the Kurds and Armenians in relation to questions of the land property. Second, the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 fostered the Armenian revolutionary activities which led the neighbouring Kurds think that their Christian neighbours were non-reliable. Under the religious authority of the sheikhs, the religious and “national” sentiments of the Ottoman Kurds were exacerbated due to the collaboration of Armenian revolutionary committees with Russia and the attacks of the Armenian committees to the Muslim population.

The process of the rise of sheikhs in Kurdish communities coincided with the development of Armenian national movements. This coincidence gave rise to awakening of the Kurdish religious and national sentiments. As indicated above, the Kurds of eastern Anatolia began to consider the Armenians as a non-reliable neighbour. This apprehension clearly reflected itself during the rebellion of Sheikh Ubeydullah in 1880 in southeastern

Anatolia. Sheikh Ubeydullah's letter to Cochran (an American Protestant missionary) in 1880 and the Ottoman archival documents regarding the conflict between the Armenian and Kurdish communities give some clues about the awakening of "national" sentiments among the Kurds, at least among the Kurdish notables. After that time, peaceful co-existence of the two communities turned into friction independent from the capital, Istanbul. Because of the 61st article of the Berlin Treaty, the Kurds conceived the possibility of the creation of an independent, at least semi-autonomous, Armenian state which would include their lands.

The Kurds were troubled by the developments after the Treaty of Berlin, because they began to think that their socio-political and economic status went under jeopardy. As a matter of fact, the fears of Kurds were not baseless, as the Armenian Patriarch Nerses conversed with the Russian commander in-chief, Grand Duke Nicholas, at Ayastefanos and demanded a provision (16th article of Ayastefanos Treaty) providing reforms for the Armenians living in eastern Anatolia. Later, he sent him a letter with Mıgirdiç Hrimyan and requested the establishment of an independent Armenian state in the eastern provinces of Turkey, or a semi-autonomous one dominated by Russia. It is important to note here that these requests were renewed in the Berlin Congress. All of these circumstances compelled the Kurdish notables to unite within themselves and prevent the implementation of reforms for the Armenians. That is why the number of the Kurdish attacks on Armenians increased especially after the Treaty of Berlin. The Sason uprisings, the first in 1894 and the second in 1896 were the clear examples for the contemplation of Kurdish endeavors for the prevention of Armenian national cause.

By this thesis, it was aimed to make a distinct study, through analyzing some Ottoman archival documents and some reports of the foreign consulates, which to some extent crystallizes for the Kurds the roots of the transformation of the Armenians from the Christian neighbour to the 'other' as a consequence of Armenian national movements. The Armenian national and revolutionary movements ultimately prepared the grounds for social and political frictions between the Armenians and Kurds in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Besides this, the thesis puts forward the assumption that the 61st provision of Berlin Treaty, acceleration of the Armenian national movements and the activities of Armenian revolutionary organizations led the awakening of the Kurdish religious and "national" sentiments.

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80	48	31.10.1851
2821	12	30.10.1853
2821	28	02.06.1854
2821	40	24.05.1855
2821	44	17.07.1855
2821	45	21.10.1855
2821	46	08.11.1855
51	29	27.05.1868
2819	6	26.02.1868
2819	7	13.05.1875
78	2	05.12.1878
2768	6	28.12.1880
2764	5	19.12.1881
78	5	25.09.1882
2768	9	25.06.1883
60	2	21.01.1890
60	16	01.07.1890
60	29	05.09.1890
216	8	07.06.1890
61	6	10.08.1891
61	10	06.10.1891
61	13	21.12.1891
27	24	05.04.1894
27	28	17.04.1894
63	28	04.10.1894
30	31	12.03.1895
64	8	13.05.1895
32	57	19.07.1895
33	57	28.08.1895
189	38	29.08.1895
33	76	03.09.1895
34	5	06.09.1895
35	47	28.11.1895
36	24	30.12.1895

37	9	06.06.1896
38	9	19.11.1896
39	33	03.06.1899
194	79	13.06.1899
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APPENDICES

A. Tables Showing the Numbers of the Protestant Missionary Schools and of the Students Attending to These Schools

Table I. Protestant Schools in Anatolia and the Numbers of the Students Attending to Them, 1840-1870 (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:343).

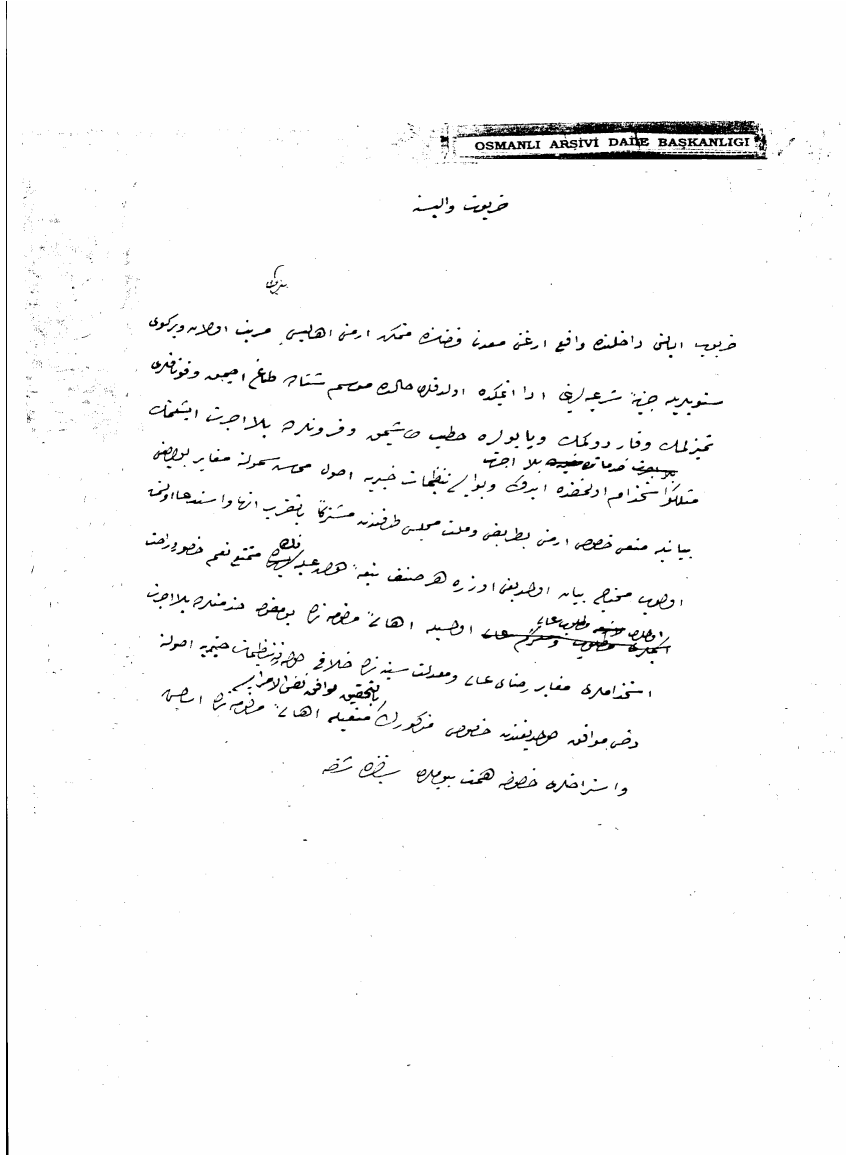
Number of the Schools and Students	1840	1846	1855	1860	1865	1870
Theological Schools						
Number of the Schools	-	1	1	3	2	4
Number of the Students	-	25	40	76	21	74
Male Boarding Schools						
Number of the Schools	1	-	2	1	-	-
Number of the Students	7	-	15	17	-	-
Female Boarding Schools						
Number of the Schools	1	1	1	2	3	9
Number of the Students	3	22	25	30	70	189
Primary Schools						
Number of the Schools	4	5	43	64	47	220
Number of the Students	74	178	1.136	2.305	1.361	5.617
TOTAL						
Number of the Schools	6	7	47	70	52	233
Number of the Students	84	225	1.216	2.428	1.452	5.880

Table II. Protestant Schools in Anatolia and the Numbers of Students Attending to Them, 1870-1900 (Kocabaşoğlu 1999:344).

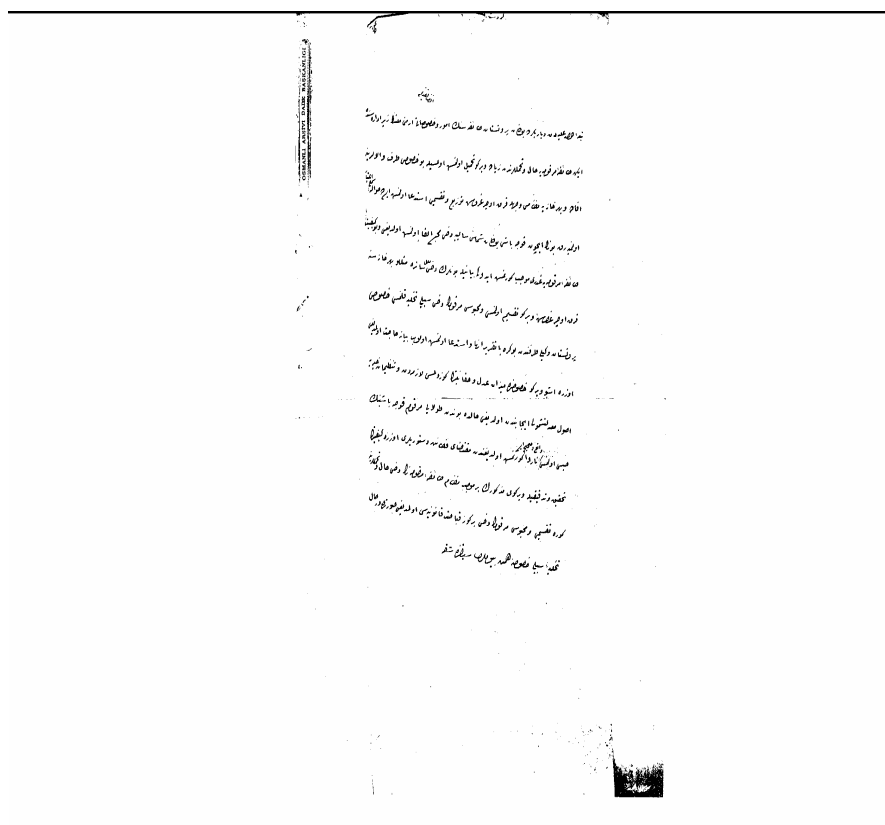
Schools	1870	1900
Primary Schools		
Number of the Schools	220	378
Number of the Students	5.617	14.414
Secondary and High Schools		
Number of the Schools	9	33
Number of the Students	189	2.600
Theological Schools		
Number of the Schools	4	3
Number of the Students	74	22
Colleges		
Number of the Schools	-	3
Number of the Students	-	520
TOTAL		
Number of the Schools	233	417
Number of the Students	5.880	17.556

B. Copies of Miscellaneous Ottoman Archival Documents

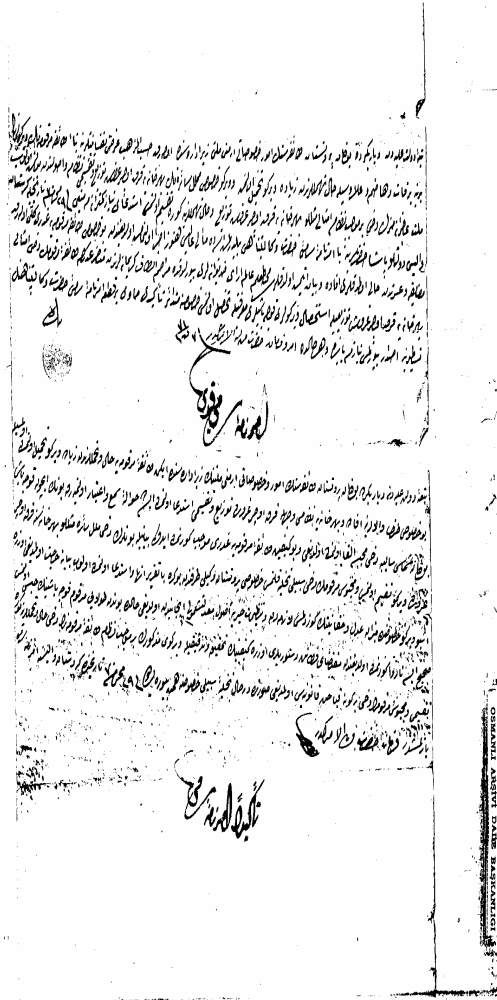
BOA HR. SYS. 80/29



- Imperial Order sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Harput province, 4 November 1851 (9 Muharrem 1268)



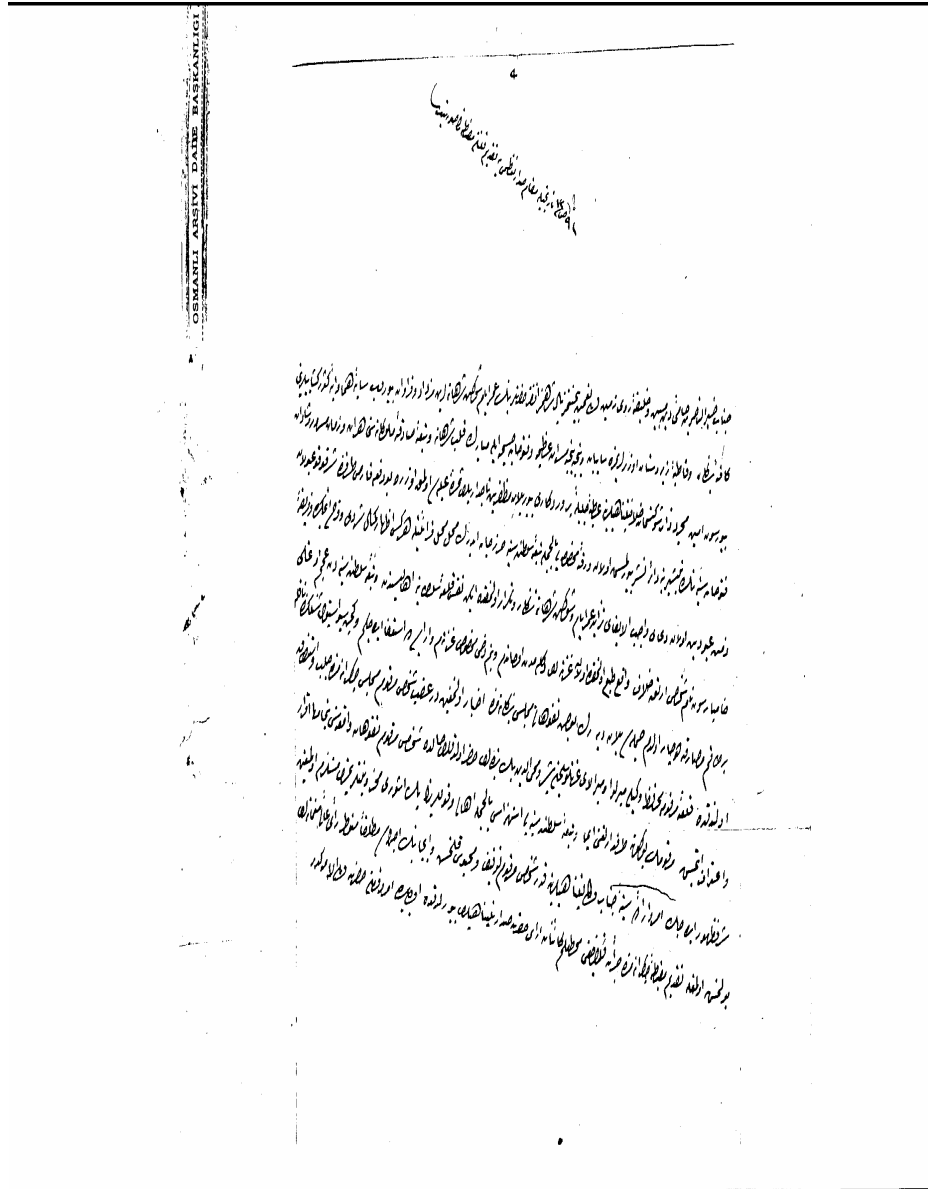
- Imperial decree sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Diyarbekir, 30 October 1853.



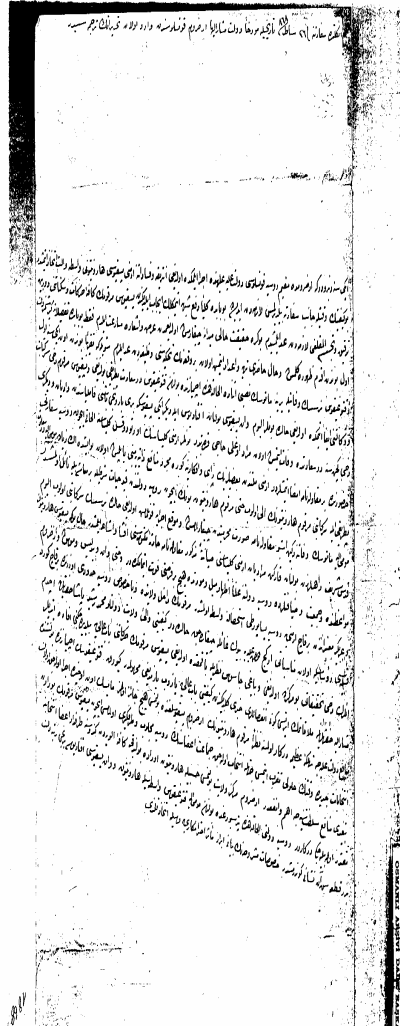
- Imperial decree sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Diyarbekir, 24 May 1855 (7 Ramazan 1271).



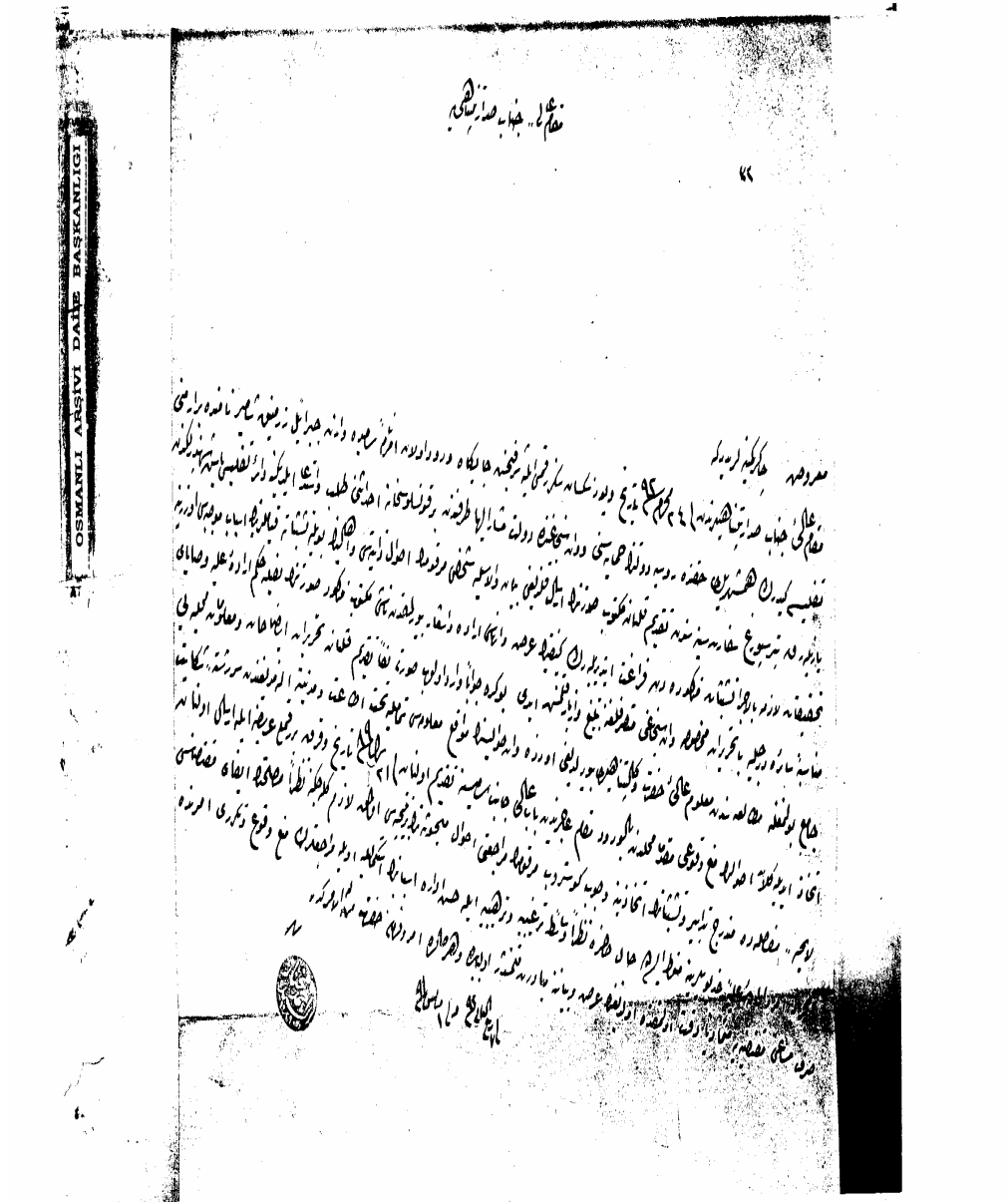
- Petition sent by the members of the Protestant parish in Tekirdağ to the Sublime Porte, 17 July 1855/2 *Zilkade* 1271).



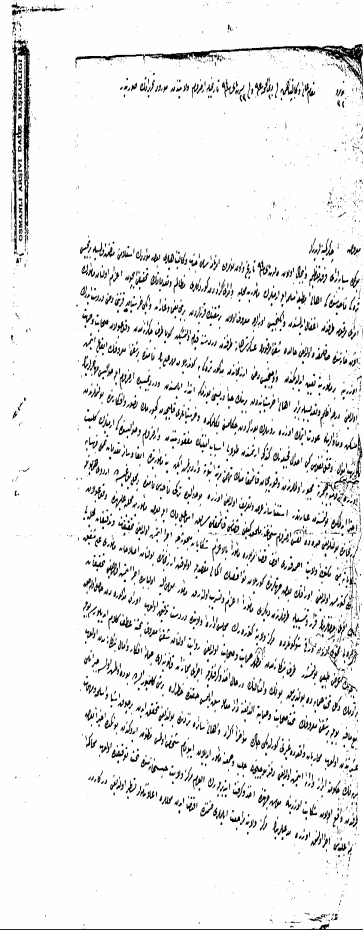
- Correspondence sent by the deputy of the governor of Kala-i Sultaniye to the Sublime Porte, 21 October 1855 (9 Safer 1272).



- Imperial order sent from the Sublime Porte to the governor of Erzurum, 26 February 1868.



- Report sent from the Ottoman Embassy in Petersburg to the Sublime Porte, 13 May 1875 (7 Rebiülahir 1292).



- Report sent by the governor of Erzurum to the Sublime Porte, 5 December 1878, (23 Teşrinisâni 1294).

Thrapia

Note Verbale September 18. 1880.

N^o 247.

Her Majesty's Embassy has on previous occasions had the honour to draw the attention of the Sublime Porte to the deplorable state of affairs which prevails in the district of Hakkari and especially to the persecutions which the Christian inhabitants there suffer at the hands of their Kurdish neighbours. Her Majesty's Embassy regrets to state that it has received a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Van dated the 9th instant from which it appears that within the last few

The Sublime Porte

- Correspondence from George Goschen (British Consul of Van) to the British Embassy in Constantinople, 18 September 1880.

for days. Winter Christian villages
in Hakiki have been entirely
stripped by the Kurds and their
inhabitants reduced to a state of utter
destitution.

It is earnestly to be hoped that
the Sublime Porte will at last take
the necessary steps for the preservation
of order in the district of Hakiki
and for the protection of the Sultan's
Christian and other subjects in
these parts of Kurdistan against
the depredations of the Kurds.

Her Majesty's Embassy deeply
regrets the apparent absence of
power or determination on the
part of the Ottoman authorities in
these districts to put an end to



OSMANLI ARŞIVI DAİRE BAŞKANLIĞI

to the present state of affairs. Her Majesty's Embassy sees grave dangers in the continuance of a situation which seems of a character threatening alike to the security of the Subjects of the Sultan and to the existence of regular government in those regions. The responsibility of the consequences will rest on the Ottoman Government.

Georgios

OSMANLI ARSIVI DARE HASKANLIGI

Constantinople

February 19, 1881.

Note Verbale

No 24

Her Majesty's Embassy does itself the honour of inclosing for the information of the Imperial Government an extract from a letter which it has received from Van on the state of affairs in that province.

Georgefford

The Sublime Porte