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Sheikh Ubeydullah's role in 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War

In the beginning of 1877, the political problems in the Balkan region caused Ottoman Empire to come across an inevitable military conflict with the Russia. The empire was continuously pressed for reforms for her Christian subjects and much of the unrest in the Balkan province was supported by Russia. Under the disguise of reforms the Russia was following her Panslavist interest and reckoning the suitable opportunity for the revenge of 1854 Crimean war. Just before of the famous Ottoman-Russian war, the empire's armies was on the move in Balkan territories in order to eliminate the unrest.

As for the Eastern side, the Russia had been pursuing her restless conquering policies through Transcaucasia, which had naturally brought out a Russian Armenia. The policies of Czarist imperialism changed demographic ratios of the whole region and left local populations to the detrimental results of local hatred. According to Hovannisian, "In 1838, however, after the influx of immigrants from Persia and Turkey, the Armenians constituted one-half of the province's (i.e. Armenian oblast) 165 000 inhabitants. Moreover, in the remainder of Transcaucasia lived more than 200 000 Armenians, some of whom, moving subsequently to Erivan-Nakhichevan, contributed to the reestablishment of a Christian majority in the province"¹ Since some majority in one place made the others minority; often in a way of forced immigration after wars and due to lack of confidence for the central authority, the depressed minorities simply resorted to flee; the growing tensions among the populace of Transcaucasia found a natural base among the mutual hatred of local people. During the 1877

¹ Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence* p.10

campaigns and previous events, the use of local Christians on Russian side had been a significant policy for creating hegemony and influence of Czarist Empire on them.

The representatives of European States attended the “Shipyard” conference held on 23 December 1876 in the assembly of Ministry of Navy. The former proposal of Austrian representative Count Andrassy became the agenda of conference again, which had been put forward after the Ottoman movement toward Belgrad and Çetine on October 29. The conference was held, because the Ottoman Empire considered the proposal to be unacceptable and asked for the arbitrary help of the European powers. Strangely enough just on the same day that the conference was held, the Constitutional Monarchy was declared.

The constitutional establishment was very new and insufficient for finding any reliable solution and preventing the war by means of forcing the reforms in the Balkan provinces. Despite the declaration of constitutional monarchy, the representatives of the provisioned assembly were not elected. So in order to decide on the proposals of “shipyard” conference a temporary General Assembly met on 18 January 1877, which consisted of 180 Muslim and 60 non-Muslim members. The decisions of this assembly were affective in determining to enter the war and its atmosphere seemed to reflect the new burden put on the shoulders of Ottoman subjects by enlisting themselves in the assembly. When the conference of Istanbul interrupted, it was initiated again in London. But the conclusion of London protocol was refused by the General Assembly. Soon Russia retaliated by passing through the borders on 24 April 1877.

Thus the Ottoman army entered the war in two fronts. Other than the western frontier in Balkans, the eastern frontier was established at the Erzurum Province, which was one of the greatest province of the empire and contained Van, Muş, Erzincan, Bayezid, Kars and Oltu cities; nearly most of the areas of nowadays Republic’s Eastern Anatolia. The Russian Army selected Erzurum and Van as the main districts to occupy and targeted Ardahan, Kars and Beyazid as secondary places to reach their aims. The Erzurum province had already been the

center of the 4. Army and was considered to be the last resort to be defended and the only barrier in front of the enemy in order to prevent the whole invasion of the Anatolia by Russians. Since the Russian army was on attack and passed the border, the whole of the region was affected by the maneuvers of both armies. In the long run this can be considered at the root of the economic and social crisis felt at the region long after the end of war.

When the commander of Anatolian General Army; Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa arrived to Erzurum, he had been informed by the general staff that Kurt İsmail Paşa, who was the governor of Erzurum collected 32 rows of soldiers from his province and also from Hakkari; and Sheikh Ubeydullah would come with 50 000 cavalry and Colonel Circassian Musa Paşa would arrive with his four regiments of cavalries conscripted from the Caucasian immigrants around Samsun province. According to commander of general staff, 100 rows were assigned for the 4. Army. But when Ahmet Muhtar Paşa investigated the situation, he found the sum to be 57 560 soldiers and most of them were not trained enough. After he calculated the ills and supply services behind the front, he concluded that he was obliged to defend and guard this war area which had a frontier more than 300 kilometers only with 48 000 soldiers.²

In fact the Ottomans was unprepared both financially and logistically for the war. The empire was continuously borrowing after the Crimean War of 1854. The roads were inadequate to transfer human and material to the material was main obstacle in front of the Ottoman Empire. The insufficiency of the cavalries and other means for transportation was

² Gazi Muhtar Paşa, *Anadoluda Rus Muharebeleri*, p. 24 and Dr. Rifat Uçarol, *Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa*, p. 72. My information about the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war mainly derived from the memoirs written after the war, especially the Gazi Muhtar Paşa's and Mehmet Arif's. Muhtar Paşa had been the commander of 4. Army, published his memoirs at first under the title "Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın Cild-i Evveli", where he gave a general information about his life. Later he published "Anadolu'da Rus Muharebesi 1876-1877" in which he tried to write the history of The Anotolian War. The authors of both memoirs tried to get rid of the accusations of defeat. Some commanders were sentenced for their faults after the war. The defeat had been good reason to blame the opposite faction among the various cliques in the army. Their information about the general quantities of the army seemed accurate because both of them held official positions and could provide documents for their information. Yet they both had a negative attitude towards the "irregulars". Both of Arif's and Muhtar's memoirs have subjective aspects, since after the war everyone looked for a scapegoat to put the blame on.

continuously stressed in the memoirs of Mehmet Arif, who had been executive secretary of Gazi Muhtar Paşa.

The war region was a mountainous terrain and the long winter and spring conditions of the area made the maneuvers for Ottoman Army much harder. When compared to Russia, there were less soldiers and cavalries on the Ottoman side. Most of the irregulars and conscripted soldiers from the Anatolia could not be transferred to the frontier on time. Therefore the empire inevitably resorted to irregular soldiers and cavalries knowing well their side effects. The movement of canons and necessary provisions to the army was another difficulty that made cavalries indispensable. The continuous maneuvers of both armies at this mountainous part of the Anatolia made the cavalries much more essential. The help of nearby citizens and especially the promise of notables therefore became vital.

The administrative weakness of the empire curtailed the military efforts at this vital time. The tax farming practices were not completely eliminated during the Abdulhamid's reign despite his serious efforts to create a strong bureaucracy. Many of the civil offices were still linked to military positions. Most of the positions in bureaucracy and army were attained by means other than the merit. The huge public debt and continuous borrowing of the empire after the second half of the nineteenth century had weakened the financial base. This further obstructed any reformations in terms of administration. After the centralization movement of Mahmud II, the insufficiency of the administration was much more felt in the eastern regions of the empire, where the bureaucracy was nearly inexistent. Just as the taxes were farmed to those who made the highest bid, the administrative offices were given to those who provided the greatest expectations. Before the onslaught of Russia, the civil positions were at the hand of those who promised the greatest conscript of soldiers. For example Muhtar Paşa mentions Erzurum governor Kurt İsmail Paşa's so called promise of 32 regiments of auxiliary

conscripts among the Kurds and the others.³ Mehmet Arif mentions nizamiye askeriye Miralay Ahmed Bey who had been assigned for organizing the irregular cavalries at the Eleşgirt but he did not come to this task and was not asked for responsibility,⁴ who might be one of the Bedirhani's son.⁵ Anyway these events were some examples among many for the affect of insufficient bureaucracy, when there was a vital need for it.

Ahmed Muhtar Paşa mentioned in his first memoirs the arrest of 13 Kurds with the help of Nafiz Paşa who was governor of Muş. The event occurred when he was appointed as the commander of 4th Army together with governorship of Erzurum. At first he wanted to exile them due to their torture on local Christians, but they were not found guilty because the victims were afraid to witness on them. Only one of them forced to settle in the city of Erzurum under guarantee of his family and the other were arrested during his governorship. Then he mentioned the collecting of tithes in the city of Kars. Strategically he also insisted that year's (1875) tax to be collected in kind rather than in money and that the collected tithes should be stored in the citadel of Kars. Then the Russian consulate Ignatiev gave a guarantee and the need for cash forced the Ottoman government to accept taxes as payment. Critics on the use of taxes in kind generally focused on arbitrariness and abuse of by the collectors. On 5 December 1875 he was appointed as general commander of Bosna and Hersek.⁶ Later when Sami Paşa was commander of 4th Army and governor of Erzurum, these grains were sold to Russians with permission. When Muhtar Paşa appointed as the commander of Anatolian General Army, Sami Paşa was moved to Greece. Sami Paşa would later get a leading role as the commander of 4th army in establishing order during Sheikh Ubeydullah movement.

Garo Sasuni mentions that the Kurds entered the war at the Ottoman side under the command of Sheikh Cemalettin, Sheikh Ubeydullah and Sheikh Ubeydullah little son Sheikh

³ Gazi Muhtar Paşa, *Anadoluda Rus Muharebeleri*, p. 25

⁴ Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler*, p.396

⁵ Malmisanij, *Cizre Botanlı Bedirhaniler*, p.99

⁶ Gazi Muhtar Paşa, *Sergüzeşt-I Hayatımın Cild-i Evveli*, p. 105

Abdulkadir with 50 000 soldiers. These forces were centered on the Beyazid. According to him in the previous two wars (1854 Crimean and 1828 Ottoman-Russian War), the Kurds realizing the opportunities for the independence openly allied themselves with Russians. He also says that the new governor of Van who got the order from Abdulhamid poisoned Sheikh Celalettin and Sheikh Ubeydullah was sent to pilgrimage to Mekke after the defeat at Beyazid.⁷

Muzaffer İlhan Erdost mentioned Seyid İslam Geylani's claim that he entered together with Sheikh Ubeydullah to Russian War with 40.000 cavalries, which were recruited from Diyarbakır, Rızaiye (Urmiye) Süleymaniye and Van.⁸ He seems to collect this information by his personal interview with Geylani himself. In his petition to Sultan, Sheikh Ubeydullah mentioned that he collected at least 40 000 cavalry and auxiliary soldiers and entered the war without any provision and payment for seven months.⁹

Gazi Muhtar Paşa did not give any detailed contribution of the irregular soldiers during the war in his memoirs. But he mentioned that “ these [İsmail Hakkı and the others] were only able to collect a force of 15 000 soldiers ten days after the war. But when the enemy attacked Ardahan, all of them fled.¹⁰ But Avreyanov mentioned İsmail Hakkı to be the most industrious one, who tried to influence the Kurds and derived his power from harsh and cruel methods. İsmail Hakkı was strictly devoted to Sultan and showed little mercy when dealing with Kurds. He was famous among Kurds because he was also a formidable Kurd from Kars and former governor of Diyarbekir. His fame became widespread while his conduct with the local uprisings in the Egil, Ahcankent, Bohtan and Cezire.¹¹ Whereas Arif claimed that İsmail

⁷ Garo Sasuni, *15 yy.da Günümüze Kürt Ermeni İlişkileri*, p.150

⁸ Muzaffer İlhan Erdost *Şemdinli Röportajı*, p.40

⁹ Y. PRK. AZJ. 4/96 12 October 1881

¹⁰ Gazi Muhtar Paşa, *Anadoluda Rus Muharebeleri*, p. 49

¹¹ Averyanof *19. Asırda Rusya, Türkiye İran Muharebeleri*, P.87

Paşa's family had a big influence among Karapapakhs due to his father stay in Şüregel district, therefore attributing him a different ethnic origin.¹²

Such methods in a way seem to cause Kurds not to respond Marshal Sami Paşa's call from the Van, Bidlis and Muş provinces in December 1876. The tribes regarded themselves exempted from military services and do not even send previously trained soldiers nor they complied for the levy of irregular auxiliaries.¹³ The Sultan saw in addressing the hearts of believers a better alternative than to conscript soldiers among the depressed tribes by his oppressive commanders.

Avreyanof mentioned Abdulhamid's declaration of holy war under the green flag of the prophet and considers it to be affective to a certain extent, despite Kurds knew well that Sultan was not real Caliphate. This was a natural result since most of the Kurdish Sheiks had already claimed to be descendants of the prophet. The author gave the evidence of Kurds of Botan to keep an Abbasian flag claiming themselves to be the real inheritors of Abbasian dynasty and used it in their rebellion of Yezdanşir. This information of the author seems not to comply fully with real facts, when he claimed the Sheikh Ubeydullah to be the descendant of Hazret-i Halid who was the nephew of prophet and the leader of small Oramar tribe of Hakkari.¹⁴ Consequently the author also mentioned Russians resort to Kurdish cavalries.

According to Avreyanov Sheikh himself entered the war by 300 followers (murid) from his tekke after he considered his act not to defend the Caliphate but Islam.¹⁵ Avreyanov considered this call affective among the Muslim Kurds for the defense of Islam. On the other hand the call for holy war seemed ineffective among Kurds of Dersim, who followed the heterodox Kızılbaş sect. In general the call was affective despite the reluctance of tribes contributions. The Kurds considered the military contribution as a good opportunity for a

¹² Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler*, p.171

¹³ Avreyanof *19. Asırda Rusya, Türkiye İran Muharebeleri* p.89

¹⁴ *ib.id.* p. 89-90

¹⁵ *ib.id.* p. 91

probable general amnesty. Therefore the Kurds of Botan postponed their search of vengeance for their defeat of Yezdanşir rebellion.

Yezdanşir was the nephew of famous Kurdish emir, Bedirhan. He retreated to Ottoman side during the Bedirhan rebellion, which began 1843 and his act caused final defeat and arrest of Bedirhan in Eruh castle on 20 July 1847.¹⁶ After that Yezdanşir came to power together with promises for a general governorship. When he was forced to settle in Cezire and the Ottoman-Russian War began in 1854, he decided to collaborate with Russians against Ottomans. He soon united tribes of Hakkari and Botan, and occupied the city of Bidlis and Musul. In the spring of 1855, the rebellion had a tendency to spread a region between Van and Bağdad. Then British saw that further events would damage their interests and weaken Ottoman alliance against Russians, because Yezdanşir continuously sought to unify his forces with the Russian regiments, British Colonel Lihoti and the Ottoman governor (paşa) arrested him while he was promised for negotiating with. When Yezdanşir was exiled, the groups around him dispersed. The continuous military actions for implementing central policies and administrative reorganizations deprived local privileges. Their way of implementation still being alive in the memoirs, were at the root of the region disobedience to call for arms. Since the tribes were most affected by the process, they replied the call of 1877 by remembering their military exemption, which they enjoyed at the old times.

As for the conscripts of Sheikh Ubeydullah, a telegram was sent to Ahmet Muhtar Paşa from the Commander-in-chief Mustafa pointing the need of supporting the Anatolian army in order to prevent the Russian onslaught after the Alacadağ defeat. Such help was seen under spiritual charisma of Sheikh Ubeydullah spreading from Süleymaniye to Bayezid. He was asked to provide at least 6 000 auxiliary cavalries and send them to a certain place which would be determined by Muhtar Paşa. Therefore Mustafa Paşa asked Muhtar Paşa to reward the Sheikh

¹⁶ *Kurdistan Tarihi*, p132

and make a declaration to him with a suitable tone. He further demanded that the conscripted and arriving armies should be behaved accordingly. Muhtar Paşa replied to this telegraph saying that these auxiliary troops arrived without any provisions and this worsened the situation. And he asked the necessary provisions from the center. After the telegraph given in his memoirs and dated 24th November ¹⁷, Muhtar Paşa commented that he did not specifically mentioned Sheikh Ubeydullah in the telegraph, because before that telegraph, many telegraphs were also taken and necessary replies were given. Even in one of them he had pointed that the followers of Sheikh loved him more while he was sitting in his lodge (tekke). “From the beginning of the conflict Sheikh informed to Istanbul about his promise to come together with 50 000 cavalries by the way of governor. Despite he came to the service around 1500 cavalries, it was witnessed that he caused damage rather than benefit. And later Sheikh put forward the unrespectable attitudes towards him and the little care shown to his soldiers as a pretext and then he left off. After he realized that he was given importance by the mentioned telegrams, Sheikh declared his intentions to pass to Persian side, since income of the many villages and counties were assigned to him as a privilege (arpalık) by the Iran State and he wrote to the Van governor that he must be informed whether it was demanded from him to defer this act.”¹⁸

Avreyanov also gave detailed information about Sheik’s role after he described the secondary role given to Kurdish auxiliaries conscripted at the Van in order to block Russia’s Erivan forces in case of their onslaught. These forces were under the command of Faik Paşa. The notables of these forces were Sheikh Abdullah (Siirt), Sheikh Hamza (Siirt), Muslih Efendi (Erzincan) and Mehmet Efendi (Bitlis) and the other Kurdish chiefs and notables. The most important role was at the hand of Sheikh Ubeydullah Efendi. Whether Kurds will help sincerely to Ottoman government became ambiguous after a short time. “At the January of

¹⁷ Gazi Muhtar Paşa gave the date in old calendar in *Anadoluda Rus Muharebeleri*, p 141

¹⁸*ib.id* p.142

1877, Sheikh was moved to province of Van. Although he began to conscript all the Kurds in Van district, when Faik Paşa came to Van two and half month after; that is at 9 April 1877, he could not find any Kurdish cavalries. Even though Faik Paşa tried to get some precautions by sending his officers and sergeants, the formation of Van forces become very lose and the success was very weak. During the whole war the forces of Faik Paşa only approached to 11 000 and 12 000 men. Other than sergeants and officers under cadre, most of his forces consisted of Kurds. Therefore Faik Paşa could not have his regular Ottoman units and have to be satisfied with them.”¹⁹

He attributed this failure due to inability of establishing and supplying a war center at Van on time and making necessary provisions and payments to Kurd militias. “Each cavalry promised to be given 300 piastre (18 Russian ruble), which they could not get. Faik Paşa was lazy and not able to use stick policy as good as İsmail Hakkı Paşa, which in turn promoted negative and rebellious behaviors of Kurds. The most important reason of all was that; Kurds were reluctant to enter the war before it began, since they would not be able to seizure and pillage. Their army center was far away from the Russian frontier, so they could not have time for pillaging because soon after their attacks they had to carry the goods to their homes. The regular soldiers were near them, therefore there was no way open for them to realize the seizures in their country”.²⁰

These ideas of the Russian officer reflected a sharp contrast with the Ottoman officer Arif, who said that the auxiliary forces could not be collected on time, because it was hard to supply and transfer them even the war had not occurred, and the problem of provisions would have been a great burden.²¹ Mehmet Arif said that Sheikh entered with 1000-2000 auxiliary

¹⁹ Averyanof *19. Asırda Rusya, Türkiye İran Muharebeleri*, p.97-98

²⁰ *ib.id*, p. 98

²¹ Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler*, p. 172

cavalries and soldiers to the Eleşgirt regiment after he heard that the Ottoman army entered Russian frontier from Beyazid and this was two month later than the expected.²²

Avreyanov also mentioned the same difficult position of Ottoman forces by referring one of the telegrams of Faik Paşa to Ahmet Muhtar Paşa. These events reached to the attention of the government and they asked exact condition of the army and why the Sheikh did not keep his promises. Faik Paşa replied that the demands of the Sheikh were not achieved and according to his information militias were on the way from various regions. Even some of them arrived under continuous pressure of Faik Paşa. In the month of April, Faik Paşa moved to Bargiri (Muradiye) by the order of Ahmed Muhtar Paşa. And according to Faik Paşa's report on 20 May to Ahmed Paşa, the promised militias of the Sheikh had not arrived: "On 10 May Faik Paşa had 500 Kurdish cavalries, and on 20 May this force reached to 1000. On 25 May it was 5000 and on May 27 it was understood that a force of 7000-8000 men were collected. Later this force reached to 12 000 men. Despite this fact their attacks were very weak. The leading units were only able to reach Aladağ passes on 30 May "²³

On 30 April, Russian Erivan forces had conquered Beyazid without confrontation. Beyazid was at the intersection of Russian and Iran frontiers and its geographical situation made it hard to defend. Ottoman forces receded to Bargiri without carrying general goods. The Russian occupied Beyazid with around 1500 soldiers. When the Ottoman forces at Eleşgirt attacked Russian on the way of Diyadin, Ahmed Paşa ordered Faik Paşa to move towards Beyazid. He arrived with his two regiments and with 3000 irregulars soldiers and untidy cavalries, which he was able to collect since beginning of war.²⁴ Avreyanov gave the total as 15 000.²⁵ In the center of the town two regiments of Russian soldiers had remained in one of barracks. After some negotiations the soldiers agreed to leave their guns and become

²² ib.id. p.236

²³ Avreyanof 19. *Asırda Rusya, Türkiye İran Muharebeleri*, p. 99

²⁴ Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler* p.376

²⁵ Avreyanof 19. *Asırda Rusya, Türkiye İran Muharebeleri* p 104

prisoners. But when they were leaving the barracks in order to give their guns, the Kurds attacked and killed most of the Russians. Faik Paşa tried to prevent the torture with the help of their leaders. Seeing the inevitable treatment they had to face, the remaining soldiers ran back to barracks and refused to submit. Seventy of the surrendered soldiers were robbed. Later these soldiers were dressed and sent to Istanbul by the way of Halep.

Faik Paşa then left his two battalions of regulars under command of Colonel Mehmet Münip Paşa. Later by the insistence of Sheik Ubeydullah, three canons were brought to these battalions. The Russian soldiers remained under continuous fire for thirty days. At 13 June, Russian sent a help of 1500 cavalries and soldiers, but they retreated after leaving forty dead. These soldiers were only saved after general Ter Gukasov entered the city of Beyazid and retreated again on 2 July.²⁶ Later Faik Paşa was laid off due to this affair.

Arif mentioned Kurds opening the graves of Russian soldiers who were killed at Halyaz battle in order to rob their clothes.²⁷ In general he criticized Circassian and Kurdish cavalries abuse and mistreatments towards the local peasants, especially on Armenians. Even the regulars were not supplied with enough foods and clothes during the war. Not surprisingly serious epidemics hit the population and necessary medical treatments were scarce. Charles Ryan gave his witness of dogs eating human flesh in Erzurum, where he served as doctor under Red Crescent.²⁸

All the above information brings to mind much-neglected role of Sheikh Ubeydullah in the Ottoman-Russian war. He was among others to play an important role in the war, which brought him a base that he would use later in his movement of 1880. How Sheikh Ubeydullah used his influence on the other sheiks is hard to detect, since their thoughts to enter the war were not determined. Anyway, one can expect Sheikh Ubeydullah to resort his spiritual charisma by occupying a leading position in the Nakşibendi-Halidi order. One of the main

²⁶ Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler*, p.378

²⁷ *ib.id.* p 378

²⁸ Charles R. Ryan, *Kızılay Emri Altında Plevne ve Erzurum'da*, p.200

reasons of the war had been the difference of religion, which created a realm for the sheikh for using power.

The spread of diseases and famines due to war was not less affective than the Naksibendi sufi order thoughts. The poverty struck local population easily gathered around the Sheikh in his campaigns toward Tebriz and Urmiye. The defeated Ottoman soldiers left most of their guns in the field. Some of the guns were directly distributed to the conscripted cavalries. Arif mentioned that the cavalries also demanded Henry Martini rifles, which were at the hands of soldiers. These were long and hard to use on the horse. When the benefit of their longer range realized in one of the cavalry confrontation, some Henry Martini rifles were brought from the store of Kars and distributed to cavalries. The cavalries were using Winchesters, which had a shorter fire range than the Russian Berdan rifles.²⁹ It is easier to detect the affects of these rifles in the hands of Kurds than to determine the teachings of Mevlana Halid among the hearts of sincere believers. Thus Iskender Quryans³⁰ pointed how these guns were changed hands after the defeat and the role of the Sheikh: “ During the Russian and Ottoman war, Sheikh Ubeydullah as the wolf saw the prey and hunting place in the mist clearly, with his son Sheikh Sadık and with some other sheikhs fought and made conquest in Beyazid on behalf of Ottoman concern. After that they promised the governor of Van to collect fifty thousand Kurdish units at his order and to fight with Russians. The Ottoman State asked them to the capital city, but each of them sent their spokesmen to Istanbul instead. Sheikh also appointed Reşid Beğ at his place. These envoys reached to İstanbul, they gave many inconsistent and unattainable promises and they took some honorary medals and returned. When Sheikh was at Van, the governor of Van said him that it was necessary for him to stay in Van, so that when

²⁹ Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler* p 417

³⁰ Iskender Quryans, *Kiyam-e Şeyh Ubeydullah der Kurdistan*, p.24 about His book is an important source that gives detailed information about the Sheik's movement toward İran published in Ramazan 1298 in persian. He was Armenian under Russian citizenship and lived in the city of Sawjbulak, and he had prejudices against the Sheikh .A brief survey of the work will show that it is a summary of the “Tarih ve Cografya-i Daru'S-Saltanat-e Tebriz” of Prince Nadir Mirza, in fact in prince's book a special chapter is devoted to the movement of Sheikh. İb.id. p.11 and *Tarih Cografya-i Daru'S-Saltanat-i Tebriz* p 304- 352

they would confront with Russian attack, the siege of Van would not happen. But the Sheikh knew that he did not have reliable men to oppose the enemy orderly at the time of war. He was afraid of his evil and fatigue nature and did not listen the words of the governor. He returned to his place and after that, he asked permission from the Porte to go Caucasia and make war with the Russian but the government did not permit. Sheikh and his followers, the brigand Kurds, were never at same mood with the Ottoman government nor did they have the complete obedience. As seen in the last Russian and Ottoman war, the group of Sheikh followers at first with the hope of loot and booty united in heaps with the Başıbozüks during the war, but when the defeat of Ottoman soldiers was eminent, the first to pillage the Ottoman army were themselves. They took expensive guns, among them Henry Martini rifles, from the hands of fleeing soldiers and brought them and sold cheaply at the frontier of Iran.” He also mentioned the militias under command of Sheikh plundering the fifty Armenian villages around Başkale and turned their military installation places like a desert at Eleşgirt. They sacked the tomb of Saint Barthelomy and razed it with the help of son of Ali Han Şikaki. It was an important pilgrimage place among the local Armenians. Quryans claimed later son of Sheikh come to dispute over the booty and some of them were killed.³¹ Here Quryans seemed to confuse the conflict between Ali Khan Şikaki’s Son, named Maşe and sheikh’s son Abdulkadir. The conflict between them did not arise from the old dispute over the distribution of the pillages as Quryans claimed, but rather it originated differently. According to Celile Celil the governor of Urumiye asked Abdulkadir, the son of Sheikh Ubeydullah, to collect the taxes of Somai district and bring to government in the beginning of July 1880. Abdulkadir refused the task. Then the governor resorted to another notable Kurdish leader in the region in order to apply his divide and rule policy. Therefore Ali Khan sent his son to Somai district. Sheikh Ubeydullah made preparations to send military help to Abdulkadir. Ali Khan

³¹ ib.id. p 25

frightened when he realized these preparations, so he avoided the execution of the governors orders. His son Maşe visited the Sheikh in order to show his loyalty. Ali Khan informed the governor that he did not have any opportunity to perform the assigned task due to the possibility of a clash with the Sheikh.³²

When the Beyazid city was captured on between 9th and 11th June, the Kurds confiscated the properties indiscriminating between the Muslim and Christians. The leaders paid lip services to these injustices because they could not keep their promises of stipend payments and such acts of militias were considered inevitable accordingly. After a short time, they scattered to Beyazid plain and began to plunder even the Kurdish villages around. Averyanof mentioned invasion of Surp Ohannes, an Armenian Church by Kurdish militias on 13th June. But Russian army major, Karapivi made an unexpected attack, while there was a military unit at the monastery. He set fire to the monastery and as a result 37 men was burned. Avreyanof claimed that most of them were important tribe leaders and sheikhs.³³

Basil Nikitine also points to the importance of these rifles in the initial confrontation of the Sheikh with the governor of Azerbaijan. He gives the tribal conscripts of Ubeydullah to be 70 000 in the war who were encamped around Van and Başkale. They returned from the war empty handed much to their disappointment. But they were able to procure many military materials, Henry Martini rifles with cartridges. This make the frontier region attractive and there had been many incursions towards the frontier zone. In these times Ahmed Mirza Mu'in Devle was assigned to the governorship of Urmiye in order to administer and completely regulate the frontier affairs. When Major İkbalu'd Devle assigned to same post after him, he immediately prepared a rapport on the dangerous intentions of Sheikh³⁴. This rapport did not get the necessary attention. When Seyit Abdulkadir (son of Sheikh Ubeydullah) invaded the

³² Celile Celil, 1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması, p.89 Later Ali Han Şikak with Timur Paşa committed excesses to oppress the villagers. Y. Prk Ask. 5/70

³³ Averyanof, ib id. p. 106

³⁴ Basil Nikitine, "Les Afsars D'Urumiyeh" in , p 99

Mergaver district with Hamza Ağa Mangur, and they attacked to Sawjbulak (Mahabad) district with important powers, his brother rushed to Somai Baradost with 4 000 cavalries and soldiers. Ikbal Devle left Urumiyeh with the 9th regiment of Khoy together with the 7th and 8th Afşar regiments of Muhacir and Karacadağ. At that time, most of the new Afşar regiments under the command of Mehmed Bagir Han Suca Devle were at Horasan in order to protect the frontier, and the others were at Şiraz under the command of Bagir Han Sertip. The guns of the officers were ancient model; there were only 400-500 rifles of new system. When Ikbal Devle met Sheikh Sıddık forces near the Kasalar and Badilbu region, there had been important casualties and loses.³⁵

International Conditions

A brief outline of international conditions will be useful in order to comprehend how the movement of the Sheikh in Iran became a source of worry between powers. The 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War ended with the catastrophic defeat of Ottoman forces and with the appearance of Russian army was at the vicinity of Istanbul. When the British fleet appeared at the Dardanelle Straits, it had been clear that much of the conditions would be determined by Russia and England. In this context a weak Ottoman Empire served the common interest of England and Russia, since the collapse of the Empire would cause a big problem on the issue of partition. Russian existence in the Eastern Mediterranean was unacceptable for England due to the importance of her Indian waterway via the Suez Canal. A weak state on the Straits also meant postponement of Russian vital blow until she would acquire the necessary power to realize her ambitions on the Constantinople. Throughout the century the continuous threat of Russia against European concert had been checked by the coalitions initiated by England. In this struggle Near East and especially Ottoman Empire was the foci of tensions. In the Crimean war Russian witnessed her military incompetence and this proved that her

³⁵ ib.id. p 101

expansionist policies were not without cost. The monarchic empire was incompetent in dealing continuous internal tensions and rather than suppressing reform demands in the continent, she had to face her domestic problems. Whereas keeping the *statue quo* had been the classic international policy of Russian Empire, after the Crimean defeat this policy turned from protecting and establishing reactionary monarchies in the Continent towards the basis of supporting newly arising national states. Moreover realizing that Near East was blocked, Russia found a new frontier to expand in the Middle and Far East. Between 1865-1876 the petty khanates like, Taskent, Bokhara, Samarkand and Khiva, Kokand in the Middle East was annexed to Russian territory.³⁶ In this period Russian tried to strengthen his position in Transcaucassia and her central concern in foreign policies shifted to Iran rather than the Ottoman Empire.

The insecure and mal-administration in Persia created an unstable balance that could open way for the foreign interventions. When Persia occupied Herat in 1856, England retaliated by landing an expeditionary force to Bushire. Persia was forced to evacuate Herat, but the event showed that it was not impossible for Russia to establish a puppet government in Tehran by means of supporting a possible prince with her troops. When Nasireddin Shah realized that foreign intervention could not be prevented, he adopted of a policy encouraging foreign powers to invest in Persia in the hope that they would contribute for the development and prosperity. Nasreddin Shah had made three voyages to Europe, which can be an evidence for his westernization inclination, but the disunity of Persian society and rivalry of powers and factions for the confessions and monopolies were the causes of his policies' failure.³⁷

During the Balkan crisis a small frontier problem occurred between Ottoman and Persia that indicated the potential for the future movement of the Sheikh. In this event some Persians attacked the village of Kaşkabulak at the frontier. When villagers called for help from the

³⁶ Barbara Jelavich, A century of Russian Foreign policy p.169

³⁷ Ann K. S. Lambton, Kajar Persia, p.24

nearby station and a Captain named Ahmed Ağa went with ten soldiers to guard the village. During the clashes one Ottoman soldier was killed and some were wounded, because Persian soldiers were more than the Ottomans. The seven captive soldiers and the captain were taken to the city of Khoy. On the other hand Ottomans also captured a Persian captain and seven soldiers. The Persian ministry declared that some Ottomans attacked the Persian border during which the captain and seven soldiers were captured, and claimed that when some Ottoman soldiers in the Khotour region had heard this, they invited some Persian officers in order to make a breakfast, and then they captured the captain and the seven soldiers. It will be useful to remember that the indefinite frontier and lack of communication at that time made such maneuvers possible for both sides, but the ratio between captives make the Persian tale more credible. The Ottoman ambassador after stressing the military power of the empire said that although empire faced a crisis in Balkan region, the other parts were in peace and the Erzurum and Baghdad Armies were not affected by the existing war. The Persian side after giving some diplomatic assurances pointed that such acts of them occur in order keep the border secure and prevent aggression of some Ottoman tribes and they insisted that the reason for dispatching soldiers to the frontier was due to the Ushnu affair and the provocation of the Sheikh Ubeydullah. Erzurum governorship denied these claims and claimed that Sheikh prevented the disorder on the contrary.³⁸

Not only Sheikh's charisma permeated through the weak border between Ottoman and Iran. The holy places of Necef and Kerbela were the utmost concern of Şia sect. These places increasingly interested Iran government during the last quarter of the 19th century. Through their control the Persian State tried to get the popular support. The holy shrines of the İmams are an important component of the Şia İslam. Together with the incursions of unsettled tribes on both side of the border, the holy places and Şia minority in Iraq put relations between two

³⁸ Y.A. Res 1,1 from Ottoman Tehran Embassy to Ministry of External Affairs 1293-9-21

empires in danger. The tribes passed the unsettled borders either because their traditional ways to pasture land forced them doing so, or they simply wanted to benefit from the lubricant trade or pillage that would contribute to their subsistence level. In this case the central governments paying lip services to the disorder acts of their subject tribes exasperated the opposite government that retaliated other side's offence.

The Persians followed a policy that arose the attention of the Porte. One of the important and competent commanders of chief of Iran, Shahzade (prince) Husame Sultane, who was the uncle of Shah, already declared his intentions to occupy Bağdad if he was to be assigned to the task. While he wanted to make pilgrimage to Mecca with his quarter, he stated that such a task would be very easy and worth to die for, pointing to the best opportunity realized during the empire dealing with the crisis in Balkans. Same correspondence also informed that 10 000 kiyye bullet were ordered from Qazvin to Tebriz for the purpose of sending to the troops placed around border and at those days Persian government assigned a special commission in order to buy artillery from America and they chose the same Henry Martini rifles which the Ottoman Army had. More serious was that Shah consulted his court and decided to take back Kerbela at the first opportunity. The Ottoman Ambassador gave his information that Shah found it useful to prepare troops and conscript soldiers from various provinces amounting to 40 000 for that purpose.³⁹

Ironically the reason that Shah omitted Istanbul in his route to Petersburg had been attributed to the existence of 1877-1878 war, when the Shah preferred to travel via Petersburg in order to visit the international exhibition at Paris. Ottoman ambassador was noting the implicit and explicit enjoyment felt among the court of Iran, when Kars fell to the Russians and the Ottoman army retreated to Erzurum. Although they always stressed the general solidarity of Islam, Shah met with a Russian general who had been previously at Kars and their meeting

³⁹ same document

took place just the day after he reached to Tehran, which could be considered unusual as such normal meetings occurred after two or three day delays. The Ottoman ambassador also warned that if Ottoman army would get some blows in the beginning of spring season, the Persians might march towards Van and Baghdad. The fact that Russian influence was increasingly felt in Persia can be also seen from the same correspondence of Ottoman ambassador from Tehran; this time informing about another general called Frankini, who after his six-seven month stay in Tehran returned Tiflis via Tebriz. Meanwhile he contributed to military reforms and arranged the artillery in his six and seven month stay in Tehran.⁴⁰

Eastern Question

After the 1870 Franco-Prussian War the foundation of Three Emperor League had to be modified under newly unified Germany. Russia began to follow her privileges in the Balkans under the pretext of Pan-Slavism rather than the protection of Orthodox Christians. The direct emphasis on the nationality rather than religion was a more devastating policy against the Ottomans. The freedom of Southern Slavs from Muslim rule under the leadership of Russia was the main aim of Panslavism. In general Balkan population exposed to nationalist agitation more. Panslavism also got popular support among the influential individuals in the Russian court and society⁴¹. The 1875 Bosnia -Herzegovina crisis and 1876 Bulgarian rebellion had caused a European reaction against Ottomans, which Russia manipulated easily in the international diplomatic arena. These crises lessened Russo phobia felt in Europe, and also helped to get Austrian content for a Russian military campaign in the Balkans, since Panslavist propaganda had also implication for the Slavs under Habsburg yoke. The Ottoman Empire was unable to implement necessary reforms for her Christian subjects, and the Russian declared war on Ottomans when she was totally alienated.

⁴⁰ Y.A.Hus. 1,30 from Ottoman Tehran Embassy to Ministry of External Affairs 1295-3-7

⁴¹Barbara Jelavich, A century of Russian Foreign policy p 174

When the possibility of Russian occupation of Istanbul emerged, the Britain moved her fleet through Dardanelle in February. The negotiations between 19th February and 3rd March ended with the Treaty of San Stefano. The Russian acquisitions in Asia Minor and further possibility of advancing through Armenia to Mediterranean Sea were alarming for England. Batum port could become a suitable naval base attacks on Istanbul. On 27 March, Disraeli persuaded the cabinet to call out the reserve and to have troops moved from India to Malta with the secret purpose of seizing a military installation in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴² On June 4 England offered her protection to the Istanbul against further Russian encroachments in exchange of her occupation of Cyprus. Although a naval base at Cyprus and a fleet in Aegean Sea can offset a Russian threat through Straits and keep the statue quo for the benefit of Britain holding the superior naval power, the new Russian acquisitions in Eastern Anatolia and her influence on local Christians would give her an opportunity to expanse overland to Mediterranean or to Basra that Britain would hardly check. When the Great Powers assembled on the Berlin Congress on June 13 a new dimension was added to the Eastern Question.

The complicated nature of the Armenian problem and the ambiguity of the provisioned reforms remained to be solved during the decade after the war. Sheikh's movement in the region by carrying instable potentials contributed to the insolvency and the alarming international recognition that his movement got can be evaluated in this context.

According to the Article LX of Berlin Treaty: "The valley of Alaschard and the town of Bayazid, ceded to Russia by article XIX of the Treaty of San Stefano, are restored to Turkey. The Sublime Porte cedes to Persia the town and territory of Khotour, as fixed by the mixed Anglo-Russian Commission for the delimitation of the frontiers of Turkey and of Persia."

⁴²Kenneth Bourne, The foreign policy of Victorian England p.131

A brief evaluation of Article LX would be simple. By taking strategically important valley of Alascherd, further possible Russian encroachment against Ottomans on land was prevented and Russian massive gains in land in a sense compensated. But the cessation of Khotour territory to Persia would be the next issue between the empires by being an important pass to Urmiye from Van. Whereas the Article LXI of the treaty stipulated that " 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 to 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." ⁴³

The ambiguous essence of Article LXI was obvious since the means for the Sublime Porte to realize the implementation of mentioned reforms after such a defeat remained obscure. In fact the Porte continuously proposed her insufficient administrative and financial conditions as a pretext for deferring reforms or at least it delayed them after solving the urgent problems of Montenegro and Thessaly. As for the demanders of reforms, the military consuls assigned to the region added nothing more than to increase the number of petitions that remained to be unsolved. ⁴⁴ Moreover these military consuls also changed places of many governors who were considered to retard the reforms. The consuls there, in the eyes of Muslims and Christians alike were " continual reminder of the overshadowing power of the Christian kingdom of the West. They were a sign to the people, an omen of the future, 'casting out devils' in a literal sense, for a where a Mohammedan governor was found by them oppressive beyond the average, his deposition followed." ⁴⁵

⁴³ American Journal of International Law, Volume 2, Issue 4, Supplement: Official Documents (Oct. 1908), 401-424

⁴⁴ Garo Sasuni claimed that between 1860 and 1870 Armenian Patriarchate formulated 529 of decrees to the attention of Porte. 144 of them were directly related to Kurds, p. 149

⁴⁵ John Joseph, The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbors, p 104 quotation from Charles W. Watson, The life of Major General Sir Charles Watson (London, 1909) p. 106

The Circassians and the Kurds were seen as the sole problem makers. Their remove from the offices strictly recommended by the consuls. Having their prejudices of them as being completely illiterate and nomad, they were excluded from the entire initiatives of reform, so the local Muslim majority became a part of the problem rather than being the part of the solution. The reforms did not suffice to realize the desires of local people, both Muslim and Christian alike. Although they were implemented as a British containment policy against the Russian expansion in the Asiatic provinces, soon Armenians began to prepare for revolt, where they calculated the Russian assistance in achieving their aims. The British fear of “Armenians thrown into the arms of Russians” was occurring in the first stage of British consular policy until Czar Alexander II assassination by a nihilist in March 1881. Afterwards Russian policy became more restrictive against the nationalist affairs of her Armenian subjects.

The movement of Sheikh in the extent of bringing Russian intervention on behalf of Armenians was alarming for the British consuls, on December 29 when a Persian general arrived to Van demanding the punishment of the Sheikh and surrender to the Persian authorities of Kurds who have fled across the frontier. It is reported that Russians have 40 000 men, with forty or fifty guns, near Nachdsehewan, and that there is a bridge train at Erivan and other equipments for taking the field. It is supposed that this concentration of troops is in view of giving assistance to Persia in case of necessity.⁴⁶

The Russian involvement in the affair was detrimental to the weak balance established at the region and caused Britain to put more pressure on the Porte to settle the dispute. On February 25, Consul of Van, Captain Clayton informed Major Trotter about the 150 000 Armenians ready to cross the frontier to give assistance and Russian government had encouraged them and had sold them arms for a quarter of the cost price. Captain Clayton relied on his

⁴⁶ .from Bilal N. Şimşir, British Documents on Ottoman Armenians, p 192 document inclosure 3 in No58 FO 424/122 p.60 No. 35/3 the Persian governor was Sipahsalar Y.A Res. 10/3 16 december sipahsalar asked return of fugitives and serip mirza rıza han send for coordination and arrest of responsible and subject of Ottomans and especially the sheikh and his son.

interview with Mr. Barnum, the American missionary who founded his information on two Armenians from Tiflis sent there, by their committees. These two Armenians have told Mr. Barnum that all preparations had been made to come the assistance of the Turkish Armenians in the autumn, as when Sheikh Ubeydullah first began to move. At first it was supposed that he was coming down to massacre the Christians, but that when it was seen where he was going, the movement was postponed. The consul thought if the Sheikh should rise again it made the signal for movement among the Armenians also and according to him “ there seems to be very little doubt that he is making great preparations for a fresh rising in the spring. From all sides reports come in of drilling among the Kurds, and it is said that the Sheikh is paying his troops, giving 2 liras a-month to the officers, and a medjidie a-month to the men. The British consuls saw Turkish authorities, however, profess to place no credit in these reports of preparations.”⁴⁷ This complied with the Persian view that Ottomans were provoking a revolt among her Kurdish subjects. On March 17, 1881 Mr. Goschen informed Earl Granville relying on the report of the consul of Van that Sheikh Ubeydullah was preparing for a fresh rising.

The British authorities were expecting a revolt among the Armenians with Russian assistance at the time. Their existence in the region was to prevent the occurrence of such events. They considered the reforms as the only remedy against feelings of revolt and inclination of local Armenians towards Russia. The possibility of Sheikh’s movement to turn against the Armenians and the need to protect them militarily would have left the British consular policy vague and would have eased the Russian intervention. As for the implementation of reforms, Ottoman State naturally remained indifferent, since she knew that they would bring new cessation of lands from her previous experiences in Balkans. How the Christian populations of Balkans turned her enemies under the banner of reforms was not a long time ago to forget.

⁴⁷ ib.id. Inclosure in No 62 FO 424/122 pp. 84-85 No. 53/1

Even if the empire wished to adopt necessary policies, in those fragile and depressed times, she could not achieve against the constraints she had to face in financial and administrative terms.

In general British consular policy of enforcing the reforms and peace was secondary with respect to her containment policy against possible Russian expansion. The “big game” between Russia and Britain at the time caused different and sometimes conflicting results with respect to the imperial policies. In order to curtail Russian expansion in Asia, the tribal and semi-state structures existed in a wide sketch from Afghanistan to Transcaucasia had been subject to continuous shaping according to imperial needs. It is not surprising that same imperial policy might imply different views in such a vast region. For example, when the Russian border between Persia was closed gradually during the last quarter of nineteenth century, the nomadic tribes of Shahsevan were devastatingly affected. In order to check the increasing influence of Russia in Mogan basin and colonization, the Britain stressed the crucial contribute of these tribes for the Persian economy and military. Therefore, the British consuls had put forward these reasons and tried to convict the Persian side with her possible loses if the Russian settlement policy realized. The pass through the borders was vital for Shahseven tribes, which by their nomadic way of life totally depended on the travel between the pastures on both side of the border. The Russian settlement policy gradually resulted by the closure of the border for these tribes.⁴⁸ By contrast the Eastern Anatolia almost the same tribal structures were retarding the implementation of the reforms that were backed by the British interest in pursuit of containment policy. These tribes were seen at the root of disobedience to law and order in the region, and the reforms envisioned new judiciary and administrative organs, in which equal representation of Christians together with Muslims was

⁴⁸ For a more detailed history of Shahseven, Richard Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran*

a precondition. Such a view complied with the western empathy towards their harnessed coreligionist living under a cruelty and there was no authority to protect them.

The consular policy not only discriminated against the local people but also among the order of existing administration. As a result, the Ottoman administrative staff's sphere of execution intersected with consuls' sphere of influence in a usually conflicting way. Although the Porte always wanted to see these consuls completely isolated from intervening internal affairs, the big defeat of the empire gave them an important space to maneuver. Almost whole of the existing Ottoman administration were considered incompatible according to the reformation program. The existing power in the hands of administration was not checked or balanced in the modern sense. Moreover the war and the big problems aftermath revealed the implicit cruelty in the governing mechanism. One of the most unwanted was Kurt İsmail Paşa, who was criticized due to his abuse of Christians besides his other offenses. Avreyanof referred to Kurdish militias, who were sacking and plundering the war region and he claimed that İsmail Paşa always defended those committers, despite Ahmed Muhtar Paşa ordered him to punish and hang them⁴⁹. Such events can give the intense of power at the disposal of an administrator under such conditions when power was naturally used in an arbitrary manner. Since the security of local Christians was the utmost concern, the establishment of gendarmerie was an important step in the reforms. The head of reform commission was Abidin Pasha, who got the British admiration for his harsh measures against the local notables. Stephen Duguid stresses his rely on local urban notables in order to eliminate their rivals, the "aghas" in the countryside. He had no other alternative other than to depend the recommendations of those urban notables since he was an Albanian and a stranger to the area. The city was controlled by them and with their influence among the local population, they had already achieved to eliminate the old governor and discredit the local government in the process. The only choice

⁴⁹ Avreyanof, ib id p. 108

of the governor was drastically came into effect, when he filled the vacant and new positions in the administrative and judiciary positions according to the advise of urban notables. They in turn interested in their own self-interest and became more advantageous against their rivals, the Kurds and representatives from the central government. As a result, “He invited a hundred of them (aghas) to Diarbekir, ostensibly to discuss the problems of the vilayet, and then had them arrested and exiled from the area. The Aghas were to be sent to Albania but owing to interference from the Constantinople never got farther than Aleppo.”⁵⁰

This remark of Duguid may reflect the difficulties of a possible candidate for reforms and impediments in front of the renovations. Moreover the chance of any reform was limited seriously by the budget constraint, when Constantinople forbad any change that would increase the budget of vilayets.

A short review and pursuit of the same case aftermath would reflect the potential gap between crime and punishment and the injustice originated thereof. An important document of the Ottoman archive provides us with this opportunity.⁵¹ The turmoil of the judiciary process was a natural outcome of the situation in which the convicts and suspects were far away from their legal proceedings. As the conclusion of a judgment delayed, the petitions to the Porte increased, pointing to the arbitrariness of the procedure and the resulting disasters on their crowded families. Aziz Paşa governor of Mamurat’il Aziz (Elazığ), who was assigned to the task of investigating, divides the convicts into three groups from notoriously bad to smooth criminals. Although he considered the harsh measures against the first two groups as necessary, he thought that the last group’s proceedings should had been faster and been dealt on the spot. But the Armenian problem and increasing complaints of local Christians via their patriarchies in Istanbul, and by the foreigners made their verdict of exile to be sensitive to the political preliminaries. The legal procedure was highly under the influence of international

⁵⁰ Stephen Duguid, *The polcies of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia*, in *Middle Eastern Studies*, p 145

⁵¹ Y. Res 9/61 1298-2-3

pressure and in that depressed period of the empire they cannot be sent back to Diyarbekir to complete their adjudication. Even some like Seyfeddin's fled and there were gossips that the others would also soon be released. The local Christians became more anxious under the fear of possible retaliation if they appear around again. The remaining relatives of captives increased their oppressions towards the Christians, since they were seen the instigators of the catastrophe by their continuous complaints against the captives. Moreover some files informs interesting event of the flee of Eyüp Begzade Halil and Heri'e and Milli tribe leaders like İbrahim, Mehmed, and Ali from Sivas, while they were going to bath (hamam) under the control of officers. They were not the only ones to flee; the notorious Musto Kotu was also successful with the others like İsmail Viridi, Şabo and Anter. The central government realized the possibility of such events to occur in Aleppo more easily, where much crowded convicts were just kept in a military barrack rather than in a prison, making the problem worse once the number of soldiers and the servants of notables added up to the convicts. İzzet Paşa also pointed to corrupt officials in the Diarbekir and their control in the administrative apparatus during the special conditions enjoyed last twenty years and therefore he cannot be unaware of the local intrigues like Abedin Pasha. Soon after the exile of those aghas, Abedin Paşa was assigned to another post first as a governor to Sivas and then to Salonica.

Gradually the Ottoman public opinion turned against the reforms once the threat to eastern regions was better comprehended. Although the determined attitude of England caused some Russian concessions in her land gains of Erzurum, Beyazit and Eleşkirt and internal side of the Batum province, it was not so affective to prevent Russia to hold Batum, Ardahan and Kars. The Ottoman public opinion turned against the European powers even more, because of the recent warfare. The British occupation of Egypt and the foreign controls in the administration of Rumeli and Bosnia under the disguise of impartiality and recognizing the sovereignty of Sultan there, made Porte to suspect the British Cyprus convention as a prelude

to occupation. The financial condition of the empire had deteriorated drastically on 3rd October 1880, when the empire announced her lenders for a meeting to settle the debts and paved the way for a public debt administration established after famous Muharrem decree of 1881. The Ottoman government was highly offended by refusal of her offer to extend the British financial aids. According to Jwaideh the empire was ready to sacrifice anything necessary in compensation of such a financial aid. But Britain refused continuously the Sultan's credit demands and this further offended the Ottoman government. As British influence significantly exhausted and relationships with Britain deteriorated, the number of reform opponents among the Ottomans increased. The manner of such circles against the reforms helped Ottoman Empire's tolerant attitude towards Sheikh Ubeydullah.⁵²

The Religious Order and The Tribal Basis

The title of "Nehri" of him suggests Sheikh Ubeydullah was from the Sadat-e Nehri. This old dynasty was residing in the Nehri village of Shemdinan. Through time, this family had important religious roles that much affected the region and surroundings. The family claimed to be descendants of the prophet Mohammed ('sadat' is the plural of seyid in Arabic and means the descendants of the prophet) and more significantly the sheikh was holding an important position in the Naqshbandiyya-Halidiyya religious order. An analysis of the tribal structures of the region and the religious order can give us an understanding of the big influence that the sheikh held when he mobilized them.

Any researcher dealing with a tribe has a serious problem of documentation in his or her task. This difficult task is much more felt in history, since most of the tribes did not leave serious documents describing their own roles in the important events. The available documents do not belong directly to these social structures, the others outside of the tribe produced them: like government officials, travelers, etc, generally did such an act. This fact can explain their

⁵² Wadie Jwaideh, Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi p 192

frequent recognition in the catastrophic events; unless they did not take role in any turmoil, their existence in history is not so clearly perceptible by an historian. Modern contemporary studies tried to overcome this difficulty of documentation by relying on anthropology and area studies. But the results of these studies are what a historian should beware of. A simple transformation of such modern concepts would naturally contain serious defaults in their old contexts.

Most of the studies dealing with these structures emphasized the external political factors that determined the tribal unit and following power distribution within the unit. Other factors like the economy and the culture are also important in such analyses, but once these factors are carefully studied, they remain external to any tribe in the sense that, a tribe cannot determine their outcomes. A tribe can just survive as long as it could adopt itself to changing conditions rather than to change them. Even the studies stressing the nomadic way of life in order to define the economic factors of tribes, also stressed their habituation to a hardly controlled geographic region. Most of the time, the tribal formations subordinated to their environment in many ways; culturally, they did not have the sufficient institutions to produce a dominant culture and geographically they were in harsh conditions that they must submit. Under this condition, they were cultural importers by borrowing from their more centralized neighbors to a large extent, and such a transaction caused more resemblance of the tribe to the state. Here one can accept the definition of Gellner, in which the tribes described as political units whose members jointly help maintain order internally and defend the unit externally.⁵³ As this research tries to explain the political events, such a simple definition can be sufficient. In this definition the state is the main external variable to the model, together with other factors like the culture and economy.

⁵³ Ernest Gellner, "The Tribal Society and its Enemies," in *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Richard Tapper. London: Croom Helm, 1983, p. 438.

In the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah, the extent of conflict found its expression in terms of religion as well. A big cultural discrepancy between the followers of Sheikh and Iran Empire may point to the frequent secondary roles played by the cultural differences. Even if some aspects of Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement can be attributed to these cultural factors, their outcomes had been largely shaped by international political factors that were more alien to his influence.

The classical Kurdish emirates of the Ottoman Empire lost their independences during the centralization process witnessed in the beginning of nineteenth century. The political gap emerged afterwards expected to cause more conflict in those regions where tribal structures were dominant. The geographical barriers like the mountainous terrain caused the region hard to be controlled and integrated into the political structure of the empire, therefore these regions had accrued a special political status of autonomy and the tribal structures constituted the main parts of social organization and power regulation. The new political equilibrium after defeat of semi-autonomous emirates could not be stabilized due to intense rivalries between the tribal units that constituted former emirates. The central administration could not integrate and assimilate these tribes into its organization. In terms of implementing its central policies, the state succeeded at most just to delegate the authority among the competing units, thus intensifying the struggle among them. The increasing conflict further destabilized the political gap by obstructing the attainment of any kind of new equilibrium. The most advantageous position of the sheikhs gave them the potentials to increase their influences. This, they achieved by resorting to their arbitrariness roles and by being outside the tribal realm. At the end this potential might explain their rise to power, but to held that power in full compliance with the classical roles emirates played, was the main difficulty that these sheikhs faced.

The classical emirates had inherited a role that got the external recognition of the empire. A tribal leader might have other roles that can be recognized by the center as well. But it was the military duties that remained his primary obligation through out the time. This military obligation had also found its expression in the tribal unit as his armed retinue and his position need to be verified by the center, despite the various transformations the Empire witnessed. For most of the sheikhs, these armed retinues were something to be acquired after a difficult process. Keeping a military force at disposal was a very different role to be played by a sheikh to be played in front of his disciples. The fact that ultimate power of Sheikh Ubeydullah was expressed in terms of his armed retinue, not in numbers of his disciplines may give a clear idea for the extent of such a transformation.

The existence of military obligations of the emirates to the empire determined the form of power delegation by the center. The tribes held the military power in term of armed retinue. Therefore within a tribe, being a leader was largely determined by having an armed retinue besides having an economic power. The leader of a tribe continuously checked the power situation of consisting units. In his affairs to keep the order, his control over the armed retinue was crucial both in peace and wartime. This continuous control was something that sheikhs lacked and explain their failures.

The centralization movement of the empire coincided with important military reformations. The existing Yeniceri order was abolished in 1826. The central government had to rely on auxiliaries to large extent. The mobilization of conscripts was another obstacle that made the state's task more difficult in the military maneuvers for implementing centralization policies. The state resorted to manipulate the conflicts between the tribes. The means determined the ends, and such policies were insufficient to deal with long-term problems. They aimed specific cases and had to be implemented in a short period. The state had to count the power

of a tribe in a temporary solution. In this calculation, once the opponent tribe was determined, the state added the power of that tribe's enemy on its side.

The Basil Nikitin gave a brief of outline of the Sadat-e Nehri, who was the Russian consul at the Urmiya during the years 1915-1918. Here he met Said Qazi among the war refugees from Turkey, who was a Kurdish molla from Nehri and had been a religious teacher there during the days of Ubeydullah's son Mohammed Siddik.⁵⁴ The Sadat-e Nehri family claimed to descend from Abdulqadir Geylani. His son Abdulaziz came to Aqra (northeast of Musul) in order to spread the teachings of Qadiri religious order. He died here and his grave became an important pilgrimage place afterwards. Abdulaziz's son Ebubekir went to Herki region and settled at Stuni village. After his death, his son Sheikh Haydar and three or four generations after him also stayed in the same village. At the time of Molla Hacı, the family moved to Meleyan village in the Humaro region. Several generations leaved this village and in Demane Sufla village until the time of Molla Salih. Molla Salih moved his to the village of Nehri, together with his sons Abdullah and Ahmed. Until that the family was teaching the Qadiriya order, then his sons decided to leave the Qadiri order in favor of Naqshbandiyya-Halidiyya.⁵⁵ Mevlana Ziyaeddin Halid was a common Kurd from Jaf tribe in Şehrizer region, born in 1776. After completing his education in the classical 'medrese's in Sanandaj, Suleymaniye and Bağdad, he became a molla in Suleymaniye and gave lectures there. After a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1805 he decided to go to Delhi. He got full permission to be the follower (khalifa) of Shah Gulam Ali of Delhi after one year of stay in his lodge. In 1811, he returned to Suleymaniye again in order to transmit the teaching of the Naqshbandiyya order. Thereafter he established his own branch of the order giving his name to the Naqshbandiyya-Halidiyya.

⁵⁴ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The role of Religion in Kurdish Society*, p.199. Here Bruinessen points that Molla Said became Nikitine's Kurdish tutor and wrote at his request a series of texts on the social and religious life Central Kurdistan, which Nikitine later published in translation.

⁵⁵ Basil Nikitin, *Kürtler*, p.373

Among various Muslim mystical orders, Naqshbandiyya distinguished itself by strict adherence to the orthodoxy. Unlike followers of many other paths, this order stressed Ebubekir, the first caliph in the transmission of their spiritual reality rather than fourth caliphate Ali. This change in the chain reflected their opposition against the heterodoxy of the other orders that legitimized their positions in the personality of Ali. According to Algar the explicit Shiite hostility of the order derived from the fact that the first diffusions of the Naqshbandiyya in the Sunni world coincided with the rise of a militant Shiite state in Iran and inauguration of centuries of sectarian warfare between Shiite Iran and its Sunni neighbors.⁵⁶ They tried to consolidate the sheri'a (the rule) in terms of the behaviors of the prophet (sunnet). The order through its history had been very affective in shaping the socio-political views of the Muslim societies in which it existed. The scope of this analysis makes difficult to trace the interaction of the order's views within the existing socio-political structure through such a long period. Yet one can easily say that in formulating such views the order was always very keen to preserve the sheri'a and sunnet, and this active receptivity to its historical context made the order as one of the most effective among the other mystical paths and also explains its long-duration and political orientation.

The order first originated from the Central Asia and owed its name to Bahaeddin Naqshband (1318-1389). Although the order had been transformed by many leading sheiks, it retained the name of Naqshband after Sheikh Bahaeddin. In the time of Ahmet Sirhindi, its area of influence centered to India, where the order tried to cope with Hindu influences in Islam. Struggle with anything alien to Islam had long become the peculiarity of Naqshbandiyya order, when Mevlana Halid decided to be the disciple of Dehlevi. After Sirhindi, the need for renewal in order to deal with the changing conditions of the Muslim societies was more to be felt. This gave way to important reformations in the order that characterized its later political

⁵⁶ Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandi order" in Naqshbandiyya p. 5

reactive and interventionist attitude. It was not surprising that Naqshabandiyya initiated many struggles against western penetration and colonialism. After Sirhindi the order began to be called Muceddidiya: stressing the “renovation” witnessed in it, and causing to be the most diffused and dynamic Sufi orders in Islam. Although such characteristics are the main determinants in its big influence and long duration, they were the main obstacles in front of an historian. Even at a certain time, there was not a collectively supported unique thought that could be identified among the various branches of the order. Due to discrepancies of factors that affected such a widespread order and lack of communication facilities, the existence of different views defended by the various branches of the order was not unusual.

Martin Van Bruinessen explains the rapid spread of Naqshabandiyya- Halidiyya by two factors; the characteristics peculiar to this order, especially those that distinguish it from the Qadiri order. Second factor was the particular situation of the region at the time of introduction of the order.⁵⁷

In fact, Halidiyya differed significantly from the existing Qadiri order, which can be tested by their different religious comprehensions well reflected in rituals. Qadiri’s order ecstatic methods that were applied in their rituals highly contradicted with the silent *zikir* of Nakshabandiyya. The most significant difference for this analysis originated from their organization pattern. Qadiri order was more prone to preserve its established organization. The khalifas of Qadiri order was restricted by a limit of lineage that accepted to be descendants of the prophet, i.e. seyyids. Whereas the Naqshabandiyya had a more dynamic pattern of organization, in which a certain khalifa can assign his khalifas, which was not a practice witnessed in the Qadiri order. This can explain the rapid expansion of the order during the short life of Mevlana Khalid. He had appointed more than sixty- five disciples and

⁵⁷ Martin Van Bruinessen, Agha, Shaikh and State, p.224

had 12 000 disciples during his life.⁵⁸ This swift spread of the order caused a different perception on some basic tenets of the order during the time of Mevlana Halid. A disciple could generally enter the order's path after an initiation period called "*suhba*". In this period the candidate associated and accompanied a perfect sheikh who taught him the rituals of the order and lead him on the way of knowing God. In this process absolute loyalty of the disciple to his Sheikh was strengthened by means of a linkage called "rabita". There had been important changes in both principles during the time of Mevlana Halid. Instead of a longer initiation process, Mevlana Halid adopted a more practical and faster method called *khalva erbainiyya* (forty days of retreat) in Halidi practice. By means of this practice the disciple could enter his spiritual training earlier. Thus Mevlana Halid eased the burden of a long time of initiation in favor of a more intensive training under his control or under another appointed khalifa of him. This time saving and more rational method helped him significantly to spread the order quickly in a short time span of sixteen years. Besides time efficiency, the method also had the advantage of keeping the accommodation costs of the disciples at low level.⁵⁹

Rabita was the bond between the disciple and his spiritual guide, the sheikh. A sheikh could instruct his disciples to link with his image. By this way the loss of consciousness of this world and absolute loyalty to the preceptor was achieved. As Manneh describes, the stage of non-existence and unawareness of the world is reached at, " by evoking the image of the preceptor in to the imagination and then transmitting it to the heart followed by the surrender of will. The more one is dominated by this state the more he losses awareness of this world."⁶⁰

During Mevlana Halid, this rather mandatory practice was more frequently used and took a more spiritual function. He demanded from his deputies that they and their own disciples and

⁵⁸ The number of khalifas or and disciples varies between the resources. This number I got from the book of Martin Van Bruinessen, who got the number of disciples from Rich (1836) and of khalifas from Hakim.(1983).In my personal interview with Gyasedddin Emre, who is a former depute of Muş and had Naqshabandi ancestors, he gave number of khalifas to be 482 besides a lot of disciples.

⁵⁹ B. abu Manneh, "*Khalidi Suborder*" in Naqshabandiyya, p. 291.

⁶⁰ Ib.id. p.293

deputies should directly link with him, not with their direct preceptors. Physical descriptions of the master were provided for the disciples in order to perceive their master better. Although this aroused many objections even during life of Mevlana Halid, it was very affective to attain the loyalty of disciples and deputies to their masters.

How Mevlana Khalid decided and entered to Naqshabandiyya order gives important clues about the social situation of the time. One of the mystical interpretations mentions an incident during his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1805. There he encountered a dervish, who was sitting his back to Ka'ba. The dervish explained his strange behavior by the superiority of the God's servant to the Ka'ba and then told him that he was destined for greatness and should seek spiritual instruction from his preceptor in India. After his return to Suleymaniya, he decided to travel India by one of the disciples of Shah Ghulam Ali, named Mirza Rahim Allah Azimabadi.⁶¹ Van Bruinessen points to fact that Halid had no previous Naqshabandi connections, but on his way to India or maybe shortly before he spent a period at the feet of Sheikh Abdullah, who accepted him into the Qadiri path.⁶² After Abdullah and his brother accepted the Naqshabandi order, the whole Sadate Nehri family began to follow the path. This initial acquaintance and early conversion explains the prominence of the Sadate order among various Halidi ranks. They were later affective in spreading order by appointing new deputies and disciples. Somehow similar initiation in terms of former acquaintances can explain another influential Siraj-ed-dini Sheiks at Hawraman.⁶³

The increasing sensitive attitude towards keeping the sharia (the religious rules) and preserving the essential structure of the Muslim society against the increasing threads of the West gave the order a socio-political concern that was also shared by Mevlana Halid. For him,

⁶¹ D.W. Damrel, spread of political thought, p 283

⁶² Agha Sheikh and State p. 223

⁶³ According to Ferhad Shakely: "Sheikh Uthman Sirajeddin I (1781-1867) was the most important figure among Mevlana Halid's disciples even while Mevlana was still living in either Kurdistan or Baghdad. The two men know each other as students of Islamic sciences, and they met once again in Baghdad in 1811 during Mevlana's five month short stay in the Mosque of Sheikh Abdulkadir Geylani, shortly after his return from India." *The Naqshabandi Sheikhs of Hawraman and the Heritage Khalidiyya-Mujaddidiyya in Kurdistan* in Naqshabandis p. 92.

the Ottoman state was the guarantor of the victorious existence of Islam unless it clung to the shari'a as source of its vigor and durability. ⁶⁴He added his prayer for the well being of Ottoman State and cursed the infidel Christians and apostate Persians.

With the abolition of Janissaries, Ottoman State began to confiscate many Bektashi lodges. Important centers of Bektashis were turned over to the Naqshabandi administration.⁶⁵ The religious orders were realizing important functions besides the religion in the Ottoman society. The order benefited from the moderate attitude of the Ottoman State until Tanzimat era, which was an important component in its diffusion in Ottoman lands. Its opposition to Wahabism, a political and religious movement with many harmful affects on the Ottoman rule in Arab lands, could be also evaluated in this context.

There is not so much information about Sheikh Seyid Taha, who was the father of Sheikh Ubeydullah and held an important position in the order after his uncle, Sheikh Abdullah. It seems that he also had his disciples and appointed his deputies among them his brother Sheikh Salih. Some of them later held important positions in sociopolitical life of Turkey, like the Sebgetullah Arvasi Geydali (who was the grandfather of Kamuran İnan), Sheikh Fehim Arvasi, Sheikh Muhammed Kufrevi and Sheikh Mella Ahmed-i Meczip. Other distinguished (disciples) deputies were Mella Taha (alias köse khalifa due to his sparse beard), Sheikh Taha el-Harici, Sheikh Islam u'l Kerkuki, Sheikh Haji el-Hakkari (his graveyard is in Nehri), Sheikh Süleyman Bradosti and Sheikh Abdullah Neyniqi (a village in Bulanık district of Mush and he was the grandfather of Gıyaseddin Emre).⁶⁶

Sheikh Taha attained a spiritual power by holding an important position in Naqshabandi order among the border tribes of Ottoman and Iran. The Russian southward expansion in

⁶⁴ Algar, *Political Aspects*, p, 138

⁶⁵ İlbey Ortaylı, *The policy of Sublime Porte towards Naqshabandis and Other Tariqas during the Tanzimat period, in Naqshabandis*

⁶⁶ This information I owe to Gıyaseddin Emre. He gave the names of many important naqshabandi sheiks of the Halidi order depending on the resource "Mecdid-I Talid fi menakibi Şeyh Halid" published by İbrahim Fesih Efendi who was one of the members of Education Council in Bagdad, pages 29 to 50. For the deputies of Sheikh Taha his resource was "Barakati Kelimat fi menakibi bazi sadat" in page 13 by Muhammed Asım, who was the son of Sheikh Muhammed Alaeddin.

Transcaucasia made his control over them more important. We know that Sheikh Taha sent some warriors to Sheikh Şamil to help his resistance against the Russians in Caucassia , and he had a correspondence with him. For this correspondence the Russian Consulate in Tebriz reported in 1848 that Sheikh Şamil had many disciples among the Kurds who were sharing the same Şafi sect. Sheikh Şamil sent gifts to Seyid Taha and Kerim Khan of Rewanduz. The deputy of Sheikh Şamil named Hasan and also called as Haji Murteza with Sheik's permit made visits to Kurd inhabited areas of Uşnu and Piraman. At the same time Russia was also doing its best to prevent these warm relations.⁶⁷

Yalçın-Hekmann claimed that Sheikh Taha also actively participated in 1854-56 Crimean War, but there is another contradicting information in Avreyanof, who claimed that initially Ottomans tried to incite Persian Kurds rather than hers through the influence of bigoted Seyyid Taha. For that purpose Turkish and British Consulates at Tebriz had sent their officers to every part of the Persian Kurdistan. Confirming his relations with Sheikh Shamil, he added that he died before the beginning of war. "His brother, Sheikh Salih then succeeded his position and was sitting at Berdesor. He was sending his deputies to Kurds in order to invite them to holy war against Russian. He also collected warriors among Persian Kurds and make preparations to attack Russia. The Russian State asked from Persia arresting of the Sheikh and calming down the Kurds who obeyed him with their armed units. Persia did not give any definite reply due to her hypocritical diplomacy. In order to solve this important event, Russia sent a military delegation to Iran from Caucasia under the presidency of General Sankvoski. The delegation conveyed the demands of Russian side. Persian State accepted them and removed the Sheikh from her lands and put her military units at the border regions in order to control Persian Kurds.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Halfin V.N. p 55, Van Bruinessen, "The Sâdatê Nehrî or Gîlânîzâde of Central Kurdistan" , Muctebi Berzui Evzah-e Siyasi Kurdistan p.53

⁶⁸ avreyanof, ib id p. 50

The Ottomans and Persians had entered to war with Russians twice during the first half of nineteenth century. The Persian prince Abbas Mirza relied extensively on Kurdish conscripts in his campaigns against the Russians. According to Avreyanof two thirds of his 50 000 soldiers were recruited from Kurds in the campaigns of 1804-1813 and in 1826-28 consisted half of his total 88.000 army.⁶⁹ Thus, Sheikh Taha had an important influence at the court of Kajarian Muhammed Şah, and the extent of this influence is witnessed from the memoirs of Abbas Mirza: “Taha was one of the greatest Sufis of Naqshabandiyya and the deceased Muhammed Şah, may God increase his salvation, gradually kept his advises and assigned some villages as tuyul and soyurghal to his hanagah. And every year he sent gifts and presents to him and all Kurdistan area obeyed him. At those days he sent many visitors to me wishing my health and care. My mother was his disciple in the order.”⁷⁰ The influence of Sheikh Taha in Kajarian court had other dimensions besides the religion. Kajarians were well aware that he had so many disciples and the order’s strong relations with the Ottoman Empire and a center very near to their borders inhabited by many tribes obeying his words, he was holding an important power base that could be turned against them. Such a granting of land can be evaluated in this context. The tribes that shared his influence situated at both side of the border and there was no barrier to impede their relations with Naqshabandiyya order’s deputies. Ali Kajar pointed to his influence in the court when he mentioned Sheikh visits to Tehran and Tebriz sometimes. Muhammed Shah under the affect of his servants gave him 500 toman as a permanent payment, and assigned him five villages from the Mergaver district as tuyul. By this means, he made the Sheikh depending on the state. He never replied this favor ungratefully and by the same way the mystics of the state always took the attention of following his model.⁷¹ The Southward expansions of Russia over Caucassia made Sheikh

⁶⁹ Avreyanof referred to a French captain named Gaspar Drovil at the service of Abbas Mirza., p 10. and p 19.

⁷⁰ Berzui quotates from “Şerhe Hale Abbas Mirza Mulkara” ba mukaddime Aştiyani be koşiş Doktor Abdulhuseyn Nevai, Tehran, İntişaret-e Babek, 1361 p. 121, in his book p.52

⁷¹ Berzui quotation from Risalei Şoreşi Şeyh Ubeydullah zeyle Tarihe Afşar p. 529, p. 53

Taha's religious influence something to be seriously regarded by the Persian and Ottoman authorities. During the centralization policies of the Ottoman, unlike the emirates, Sheikh Taha consolidated his power base.

The British excavator and later ambassador Layard noted a local sheikh's hatred towards Christians when he was returning from his visit to the Tiyari district that was largely inhabited by Nestorians. He decided to make a short trip for a cooler climate at Tiyari Mountains in summer of 1846 during his excavations at Musul region. He mentioned in his famous memoirs a nearly blind Sheikh with bigot manners, when he was around a village named Kuremi. Layard claimed that "he had been the chief cause of massacres of the unfortunate Christians; and that, at that moment *his son Sheikh Tahar* was urging Beder Khan Bey prove his religious zeal by shedding anew blood of the Chaldeans."⁷² The immense influence of the sheikh held and his blindness that Layard noted can be good evidences to distinguish him as Sheikh Taha. He had an important eye-disease that can explain his accustom to throw a veil over his face rather than his worry of purity from Christian sights.

The rapid Russian expansion and increasing European missionaries might be at the root of Sheikh Taha's alleged hate towards Christians. Whether he agitated the Nestorian massacres remains obscure, but it is for certain that he became arbitrator between the Ottoman State and fugitive Nurullah Beğ who was the last Hakkari emirate and fled to Berdesor Castle in Iran after Ottoman attempts to establish order and to prevent the massacres of Christians in 1848⁷³.

The border problem

The arrangement of a long territorial border between the Ottoman and Persian Empires remained problematic. Each part continued to propose conflicting claims and try to realize them. Persian annexed the Zohab and Ahverik that Ottoman had claims on. As a retaliation in 1837, Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Ali Rıza Paşa invaded and destroyed Mahmere at

⁷² Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and its remains*, p.183

⁷³ Nazni Sevgen, *Türk Beylikleri*, p. 165-170

Persian border. In 1842 Kerbela province was occupied by Persian troops trying to benefit the weak position of the Ottoman at eastern parts. Ali Rıza Paşa soon retaliated and forced Persian troops to retreat with many casualties on local helpers. In 13 May 1847, Erzurum Treaty was signed between Iran and Ottoman Empire. Various committees of border detection were assigned for the task through the time and even the last decisions in Erzurum had been resigned under pressures of Russian and British services. Although it was not explicitly stipulated in the Erzurum agreement, the region belonged to Iran until the occupation of the Khotour valley in 1848 by the military units under command of Derviş Paşa. The valley had a geopolitical advantage in case of a military onslaught to Tebriz and Erivan. This time another committee assigned for the determining the border. Persian side tried to face Derviş Paşa's endeavor to get the content of the tribes for the arrangement of border by appointing an official named Mirza Cafer Khan. The districts related to Khotur, Egridağ, Çehrik were at the foci of tension. In the letter addressed by the Çehrik people to Cafer Khan, Derviş Paşa was accused for attempting to use unjust means like bribing and unconfined promises. Abdulhadi local governor of Başkale and Ömer Ağa of Rezki sent envoys to the surroundings and incited the villagers of Çehrik. The villagers were deceived by a promise of ten-year tax exemption. The provincial governor (kaymakam) of Khotur, named Abdulkadir tried to persuade the villagers of Derik, Eşbatal and Şepiran to come and claim that their villages had always belonged to Ottomans and sign papers for being an Ottoman subject. By the same way the governor of Başkale tried to persuade Molla Mehmed of Şepirvan to come and give petitions to declare that they had been Ottoman subjects and Iran had taken and recorded the Maha by force.⁷⁴ At last Derviş Paşa succeeded to include a tribal leader named Maksut Ağa besides three other elders in the border committee as witnesses. When Ottoman's claims were backed by England and the Persian side had to retreat their troops in order to deal with Babai

⁷⁴ from Berzui quotation pg 98 from the "inquiry of the borders" by Mirza Seyid Cafer Han Mühendisbaşı (intesharat-e Bunyad Ferheng-e Iran) p, 170 and 171.

rebellions in 1848-1852, the de facto solution confirmed Ottoman's advantageous position. The committee continued its studies but the Crimean War of 1854 retarded them. After Crimean war England began to support Ottoman's claims against Iran more openly. And as a confrontation to British policies, Persian claims were naturally backed by Russia. In 1865, British topographers printed the maps of disputed territories with the participation of Russians. In 1869, after the discussions and studies of a committee together with the representatives of both empires, the decisions were formulated as an agreement to be signed later. British consulate in Bagdad Mr. Conbil and Mr. Zeynofi Russian military attaché in Istanbul participated to the committee assigned to determine the borders of disputed lands.⁷⁵

In 1870, Ottomans closed the border to Celali tribe that had their winter quarters in Avacek and Maku districts of Iran. The Ottomans informed Persian side about the closure and asked it to prevent Celali's to come their summer pastures. Iran ignored Ottoman warning and the resulting clashes between the military units and the tribe caused serious loses for both parties. A similar event resulted when policies implemented by Iran in 1872 caused Jaf tribe of Shehrizor region not to be allowed to pass the border in order to go their summer pastures.⁷⁶

The increasing influence of Sheikh was alarming for the Persian authorities. Unlike the Erdelan province, the governors of the Mukri region at the west and south of lake Urmiye began to be chosen largely from Azeris. The heavy taxation and unjust means to implement them exacerbate the local conflict between the governors and people. This conflict soon exerted itself on a well-found basis of cultural differences and socio-economic instabilities. The Sunni and Shia difference between the ruling elite and the continuous warfare in the first half of the century made the taxes a big burden on the peasants. Besides Iran owned an important amount of war indemnity to Russia increasing further the onerous Persian taxes.

⁷⁵ Halfin p.54 and p.66

⁷⁶ ib.id. p.69

In 1873 the governor of Urmiye Yusuf Han Şuca devle wanted to collect the taxes directly from the villages belonged to Sheikh Ubeydullah, which had been assigned to his father as tuyul. The villagers insisted to recognize the Sheikh Ubeydullah as the legitimate owner and continued to pay the demanded taxes to him. The governor set fire to the villages causing forty-eight dead and a looting worth of fifty thousand tomans. At first Sheikh Ubeydullah sent his delegate Seyid Hasan from Sawjbulak to Tehran in order to inform about the event and plead for justice. The attempts of the Sheikh to find a peaceful solution failed. The Persian authorities in Tehran ignored the rights of the Sheikh, although they told that the villages at the south of lake Urmiye were assigned as the property of Seyid Taha and their villagers were exempt from the taxes only during the time of Mehmed Shah.⁷⁷

This act provoked a big movement among the local tribes that lead to Ushnu affair. Consequently, Ottoman tribes had infringed the border and sacked the Ushnu. Each side put a diplomatic pressure on the other for the compensation. There were already mutual accusations going on and the stress on the border had been intense over the harms done by the incursions of Hertuş tribe and Milan. In March 1874 Persian government sent the officer Mirza Sadık in order to investigate region. In his reply to central government, he confirmed the legitimate claims of the Sheikh. Yusufhan had some corrupt intentions when he confiscated some villages of Sheikh. Accordingly, he collected some soldiers and Kurds from Ushnu and send them over the Sheikh's villages to destroy and then pillage. Mirza Sadık pointed Yusufhan's later land purchases in such a short time and it was not capacity of any official in Iran to buy so many land holdings.⁷⁸ The mutual accusations continued leaving the problem unsolved. Iran claimed that a total of 7 000 cavalries cannot pass the border without a content of the Ottoman officers.⁷⁹ Whereas Ottomans pointed to the cruel methods applied on local peasants were at the root of the problem and they could not do anything to prevent the results after

⁷⁷ Kajarian Documents on Persian and Ottoman relations # document 599, p 741-742

⁷⁸ kajarian documents #562 p.608

⁷⁹ kajarian documents # 568,p 622

such provoking acts of the Persian officials. Moreover Ottomans accused the Persian side by previous instigation of her subject tribes into Ottoman lands. These brought the search of their vengeance at Persian lands. Throughout the debate Ottomans based their arguments on the just case of Sheikh Ubeydullah and that he should be compensated. Although he had been victimized by the cruelty of Persian officials, he had shown an excellent forbearance and looked for peaceful means for asking compensation. Iran retaliated Ottomans demands for reparations of Sheikh right by reminding that the recent damage done on Persian soil by two years of Hertushi attacks had amounted to 50-60 000 tuman alone and the commission arranged for its instigation had not brought a conclusion yet. After one-year debate Iran refused Sheikh's right over the lands by claiming that his papers were either fraud or incomplete to prove that those lands were transferred him as tax exempt tuyul, and either because of ignorance and delay of expose those documents, he retarded the working of the commission. Rather than giving him compensation, Iran asked from the Sheikh last three years' tax accrual.⁸⁰

The Khotur region became increasingly a problematic issue between both empires. Ottomans were not able to get the content of the Britain against Persia so easy, when the problems in the Balkan region turned to crisis at 1875. Britain feared that Iran could follow the example of Balkans and side with Russia; therefore her policy began to avoid open support to the Ottomans on the border issue. Iran had initiated some engagements to declare an open warfare against the Ottomans with Russians. But such an offer of union was postponed by the Russia. Because Russia had considered the Persian contribution in a common possible campaign would be weak. An open collaboration with Iran could also threaten the British and enforce her support towards Ottomans more openly. Besides under a direct British attack, Persians couldn't defend themselves easily.⁸¹ In Berlin treaty by supporting Persian claims on Khoutur

⁸⁰ kajarian documents #565 p. 615

⁸¹ Halfin p.70-71

valley the Russians had also the advantage to solve their problem about the Tekin valley with Persians. Leaving a border problem between Persians and Ottomans, Berlin Treaty also helped Russians to consolidate their status quo after the war. In Berlin Treaty, the valley of Alascherd and the city of Beyazid left to Ottomans under the condition that Khotur valley would be given to Iran. On 16 July 1880, Khotur valley was finally left to Iran.

The beginning of the Sheikh's movement

The war brought many disasters on the local population. The productive labor was conscripted to front. The population was hit once more by the famines after the war. The bad harvest of 1879 brought them near to starvation and even some people died of hunger.⁸² In Diyarbekir people made demonstrations against the inexistence of bread in bakeries and high prices.⁸³ Similar complaints aroused also from Van.⁸⁴ Many soldiers fled from the Ottoman army after the defeat. The fugitives enforced to contraband activities. The chaotic situation increased the social unrest. Under such depressed conditions more crime and violation was expected to occur. The peace was not costless and the taxes aftermath the war was a complete disaster over the poverty stricken people. Security was another side affect of the instable peace beside the high inflation and scarcity.

The rebellion of Osman and Hüseyin Bedirhan brothers could be evaluated in that context. An analysis of the event is crucial in order to understand the dynamics of Sheikh's Ubeydullah movement and Ottoman State first reaction towards it. The short movement of two brothers just after the defeat was alarming for the Ottoman central government. In 1878, the sons of former Botan emirate fled to the region. When he arrived to the region he was met with 2000-armed men. This group contained the later suspects of Abidin Paşa and interrogated by İzzet Paşa, who resorted to banditry especially on local Christians. The number of the group was

⁸² celile celil gave a news from "Times" dated 12.3.1880 Dr Lanuani sent to the region for researching the famine. In Hakkari more than 10 000 people was dead. P. 54

⁸³ Y. A. Hus 164/199

⁸⁴ Y. A. Hus. 164/122 and 165/40

not serious against the central government. The government knew very well that such a group could be scattered by a simple military maneuver. The central government at first sent a telegram through Siirt and ordered that such an act of them would be evaluated as a rebellion if they did not submit when they got the telegraph. In his reply Osman declared that and he should not be treated as if he was a rebel or bandit. He claimed that those groups just gathered around him to demonstrate their love and respect. He had no other choice but to stay in his native lands due to both insistence of his companion and he felt that he had nothing to do anywhere. He had just planned to visit the Cizre city and he was not there to instigate an armed rebellion. He emphasized that he did not hesitate to provide any sacrifice to his government. He had provided many important services to the government and but got nothing back. He reminded that during the war according to the command of İsmail Paşa, he had called 4140 soldiers into military service and confronted against common great enemy.⁸⁵

He criticized that the old emirate system was not applied in Kurdistan. He pointed to oppression by officers and the popular support he got. If some kind of government position had been assigned to him, he would have served the state interest better. He frequently pointed to the glory of his family and the desperate conditions in which he fell. He said that he could do nothing if soldiers would be dispatched over him, and he had nothing to lose. The last word in the letter “the decision belongs to God” (hukmlillah) left his intentions ambiguous according to the governor. Abdurahman Paşa of Diyarbekir interpreted the last word as a good evidence of his rebel intentions. The governor put the road permit issued by Osman that contained the seal “Osman Bedirhan emirate of Bohtan” as another evidence of their evil designs. The governor interpreted the reluctance of rebels cutting the telegraph lines and keeping the communication was due to gain time to consolidate their power. The center government strictly recommended his prevention from entering Cizre, because the fear that

⁸⁵ Y. PRK BŞK. 1/58 his telegraph dated 11 teşrinsani 94 (27 november)

the important influence he held there would spread. When he entered Cizre, Abdurrahman Paşa could interview with him with the help of telegraph machine. He asked him what kind of office he was exactly looking for and suggested him a position in the new established Malatya district. Abdurrahman Paşa added that realization of such an offer required significant administrative preparations later and should only be evaluated as a suggestion. Osman Bedirhani replied that he had already heard many empty promises. Since he knew how a new arrangement of the existing offices meant unemployment of some, he wanted to stay at his homeland. His demand of an office there also found a good support among the local population.⁸⁶ The administrative council of the town of Cizre sent a signed telegraph to Istanbul. In their petition to Istanbul, they pointed that the taxes were high and could not be collected properly and Osman Nureddin Beğ would be a good candidate for realization of such a task. Meanwhile Ottoman government had intended to gain time by resorting these interviews. The necessary military units had already been dispatched from the nearby towns. Three battalions of Musul under the command of Said Paşa was on the way to winter in Mamuratu'l Aziz to be added to organized campaign. The auxillaries conscripted from Şırnak and Midyat was set on the road to Zaho in order to prevent conveyance of aid to Cizre and also another battalion from Musul ordered to situate there. From Bitlis two battalions were ordered to help the two others in Siirt. Three reserve battalions were dispatched from Tercan and Bayburd to Muş as a reserve force. Soon a group of two hundred men was scattered after the initial confrontation by the three battalions dispatched from Siirt. The easiness of the dispersion could be attributed their lack of organization around a concrete aim.⁸⁷

At a very critique time, such a rebellion worried the central state. It showed the central state could not rely on military forces on time and on point. Therefore the state had to rely on the regular soldiers from relatively distant cities nearby. There was not any organized security

⁸⁶ ib.id 24 november 1878

⁸⁷ ib id 28 teşrin sani 1294 (10 December 1298)

forces on the point at first instance. The reforms and petitions about the incursions against the Christians made it difficult to resort to auxiliaries or organize new units from local conscripts, because the situations of the Christians were occupying the agenda at that moment. In this critical point the central state found it difficult to decide on such an important matter that would later had important repercussions. In case of such a drastic decision, the international interest would further destabilize the political and financial disequilibria of the empire. Abidin Paşa would later arrest the leaders and notables of the groups gathered around two brothers under his task of implementing British supported reform policies.

While the Ottoman State tried to gain time by interviewing with Osman Bedirhani, some of the relatives of him tried to arbitrate with him. Ahmed Hulusi persuaded him that he was pursuing a useless goal and his acts would damage the unity of nation and religion. He recommended him not to trust Kurds who were notoriously betrayers and who cannot distinguish between good and evil. Later Bahri Beg intervened by sending another telegraph addressed to his brothers. He reminded him while his father misguided he had more accompanies but he was able to resist only for two days. His father had later been regretful for his rebellious acts and advised his sons to be respectful and to obey the Sultan as a request from his sons. The big brother Bahri guaranteed them safety in case they would submit. He was affective in their submission and getting back to Istanbul. Abdurahman Paşa was strictly against appointment of the Bahri Beğ for bringing two brothers back. He pointed to his injustice acts over Christians when he was at the region one year before and he had been removed from there after many protests and efforts. Izzet Paşa was also against the dispatching of two brothers to Istanbul via Halep on 25 January 1878 with a military envoy that contained also Bahri Beg⁸⁸ He would again take a similar arbitrator role later in the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah.

⁸⁸ Y.A. Hus. 160/18

Osman Bedirhani also sent a letter to his relatives in Damascus with a trader.⁸⁹ The letter was caught and opened in Diyarbekir, in which he ordered one of his brothers Bedri to bring his mother. Bedri Beğ's nephew Mehmet Salih referred to the arrest of his father Mahmut İzzet Azizi and the uncle in his memoirs⁹⁰. The Ottoman state recognized that Bedirhan brothers derived their power from the family ties and acted accordingly. As a probable act from a state still inheriting imperial legal remnants and in the process of territorial definition, dealing on a family basis rather than individual basis was natural. The fact that the trader was trusted and was given a letter and after an interrogation his confession of carrying a letter can give a better understanding about the Osman Bedirhani might well intended to prove the government that his principal aim was his family's well being alone. When Sheikh Ubeydullah became a rebel with his two sons, a similar case brought a richer combination in that respect. The power of the opponents vested in their family ties and being such the state held them on a family basis. The family status became a *modus operandi* both by the state and the opponents.

After 1293 war, new provinces and administrative centers were established due to land cessations. Van had been subdivision of the Erzurum province and then it became a new province with Hakkari (Çolemerik) attached. Similarly Mamurat u'l Aziz had been separated from Diyarbekir and became an independent province with Malatya and Dersim as subprovinces. The new administrative regulation was complete, when Bitlis subdistrict of the Muş city became a new province containing Bitlis, Muş, Siirt and Genç subdistricts in January 1880. In holding administrative positions in these new arranged cities, it would not be coincidental that the influential notables of the region demanding the same positions appointed by the center. The case of Osman Bedirhan was a good example in that respect.

The central state had evaluated the influence of Sheikh Ubeydullah in the same manner as it had dealt with the affair of two brothers. In fact holding a larger power than the Bedirhan's

⁸⁹ Y. PRK BŞK 1/58 zi'lhicce 1295, 26 November 1878

⁹⁰ Malmisanij quotes in « Cizre Botanlı Bedirhaniler » p.164 and p.184,

sons, the Sheikh would be a possible threat to the center if such rivalry occurred between the sheikh and central state. The new situation while decreasing the central state's power had increased the new candidates. The rifles thrown by the fleeing soldiers of the Ottoman army were already in the hands of Sheikh. Whereas Osman Nureddin Bedirhan complained their family's fading glory during their being away from their homeland, Sheikh Ubeydullah held a more dangerous power if turned against the Porte.

The influence of the sheikh had already indicated a conflict with the central administration before. In the Nestorian inhabited regions of Çolemerik and Herki tribe of the Shemdinan district, tobacco cultivation was an important source of income. All previous efforts to collect these taxes had been useless. Here the government recognized the fact that the region was at the border and their people did not used to the order and such a tax could only be achieved through forced intervention. Moreover the Nestorian villagers openly threatened to flee if such a tax levied on them, whereas the state was relatively optimistic about the loyalty of Muslim tribes. A total amount of 70 piaster load was in arrears due to other taxes accrued during last 30 years for the whole region. When the government recognized that it was impossible for it to collect the tobacco tax, it delegated responsibility to Sheikh Ubeydullah by means of auction. Since the region had a border to Iran, the villagers found more profitable to sell their products to Iran and therefore Sheikh claimed that he failed in his task.⁹¹

In 1875 the matter got a new dimension, when the center recognized that the influence of Mar Shemun on Nestorians and Ubeydullah on the tribes were the main obstacles in front of evaluation and collection of tax. Now considering the situation, the Van and Erzurum provinces suggested the center that it would be useful to deport the Sheikh from the region. They might give him a suitable task around the Hicaz, since he was a Naqshabandi. This was a better alternative than a military intervention. As a supporting evidence for their claims they

⁹¹ A. MKT. MHM. 480/66

also provided a letter from Sheikh Ubeydullah's son in law named Muhammed Emin. He suggested the governor of Van that deporting the sheikh would be a good choice and promised to collect the accrued taxes. By this way he informed the failure of Sheik in his previous task and what Ubeydullah was doing in fact when he collected the tobaccos and sold them to Persian traders for his benefit. That contradicted from the previous declaration of sheikh that he could not evaluate and collect the tobacco tax. Muhammed Emin declared in his letter written Persian and signed by himself that:

“Since obedience and obey to Sublime State deeply in deeds and words is an obligation, I am writing sincerely that the agriculture of the Şemdinan and Herki mostly depends on tobacco. Approximately 100 yük and each 50 of yearly allowance are produced. And half of that which consist 1 yük at freight of five belongs to Şeyh Ubeydullah himself and the other part he buys from the people of two districts with cheap prices and sells dearly for the Persian traders. By this way he prevents (kills) the application of the tax and does not allow to be registered in the accounts of the sublime state. If the state does not deport him, it must completely take its hand from two districts because God prevents he can deceive the people in a betraying way, but by the way of deporting the mentioned sheikh, I would promise that I collect the taxes completely together with sheep tax and the tithes of barley and whatever had been unsuccessful to be collected in case the government assigns us to the task. The decree always belongs to the order owner.”⁹²

The letter was a good example how the government could find allies in a tribal structure. The center government could even exert its influence at a relatively political free area originating from a tax. Besides this phenomena there had been other events pointing to the flexibility of the tribal relations. Sheikh Ubeydullah tried to build a unity depending on such basis.

⁹² same file dated 12 October 1875, the photocopy of the letter is in the appendix.

The idea of deportation or removing the sheikh from his place was not alien to the Ottoman center. In general the Ottoman Empire might expect to apply such policies to those once their influence become problematic. But in this situation the influence of Sheikh was greater than a normal case and the sheikh's influence had more related to his staying place.

Towards the end of summer of 1879, the local tribes had a dispute with the regular soldiers dispatched from the Musul to the İmadiye region. The soldiers were accused to pillage and violate the villagers. The soldiers had an armed confrontation with the tribes and consequently a military division of Ottoman army was captured. The sheikh's son, Abdulkadir was also involved in the affair. The Ottoman government became very suspicious about the sheikh's intentions after the event, especially when the empire was continuously under pressure of reform demand. The Ottoman government recognized well that sheikh was holding an enormous power at his disposal.

The government seemed to be reluctant to have an open confrontation with the sheikh, yet it took the necessary steps in order to pursue the father and the son. At first the government urgently asked them either to come Van or Istanbul together⁹³. Besides some arbitrators, the government assigned officially Sami Paşa from the fourth army to investigate the situation. Sheikh Rıza was also dispatched to Sheikh Ubeydullah from Musul. Sheikh quickly ordered his son Abdulkadir near him when he recognized that the events of İmadiye inflamed the government's attention so crucially. On 7th September 1879, Sheikh Rıza brought with him the captives together with their captain Kamil Efendi. He reported that he was just there while the two sons of Ubeydullah brought the captives. The rebels were thinking to execute the soldiers as a vengeance for the loses during their clashes, but he persuaded them not to kill. He also added that he personally saw the cutting of the regional state tax officer's finger who betrayed the Sheikh by providing some information to governors of Van⁹⁴ The demonstrative

⁹³ Y. A. HUS. 162/28

⁹⁴ Y.A Hus.162/24, 7 September, 1879

acts like the punishing publicly might be the power expose of the sheikh on purpose. What Sheikh Rıza provided was not only an account of his impressions but was also an evidence for the extent of fear caused by his colleague. He claimed that the group agglomerated around the sheikh because of fear. Moreover Ubeydullah was declaring that he would either unite Kurdistan to transform it to the previously emirate like Montenegro and Serbia or die on behalf of this aim and save his soul. Another informant like Fuad Beğ, who was the former chief of Bradost tribe pointed that the group had already begun to disperse due to lack of food supply.⁹⁵

Such informants and the sheikh's propensity of negotiation caused the government to release the strict measures against the Sheikh. Obviously the population was under a great socio-economic crisis after the great defeat, and a harsh measure would naturally excite them. The government found it more suitable to invite the sheikh rather than compel him. Meanwhile Sheikh declared to government that he was ready to submit his son. The events at the region calmed down. Evaluating the situation the government suddenly ordered him to stay at Nehri village rather than to come Van, because the government decided to dispatch special envoys and understood that he might better stay at his place.⁹⁶ Moreover, the mufti of Van and Sheikh Fehim, who was his father caliphate were also dispatched to the Sheikh to give the telegraphs sent from Istanbul.⁹⁷ They would be accompanied with the Mehmed Said who had been in Van for keeping the contact on behalf of the Sheikh.

Sheikh claimed in his petition that his son had been around Imadiye to help villagers for their request of arbitrary help between them and government and to prevent any compulsions. His enemies and foreigners created such accusations against his son and distorted the exact process of events. The free soldiers could witness that his son had saved them. He regretted to be compensated by such a pursuit after so many services of him in the war. He said that

⁹⁵. Y.A Hus 162/36

⁹⁶Y. A. Hus. 162/28, 10 September, 1879

⁹⁷ Y. A.. Hus. 162/32, 11 September 1879

hearing the events he became very upset and ordered his son to near him. He added that under this condition his stay in Şemdinan became unbearable without a guarantee from the Ottoman State, therefore he had to move and settle at the border of Iran. In that case the whole region from Erzurum to Bagdad would get into turmoil. Sheikh inclined for a negotiation but the minimum requirement was a guarantee from the government.⁹⁸

The government was planning to bring him to Van and then to persuade him to remove from the region. Realizing the threat of the sheikh to order, the government had planned to send him to one of the Holy Cities under the pretext of a religious task. That would in fact more rational solution than entering to such a mountainous region, especially when the empire was militarily so weak. Therefore the government became very careful in its attitude towards Sheikh. Each part showed the mutual respect to the other in their written communications. On 26 September the envoys that sent to Ubeydullah returned back, after they had given him the necessary assurances because of his old and long obey to the State. He was granted the mercy of Sultan and the special aide-de-camps envoys established relations with the local tribes. The tribes regretted their rebellious acts and attributed them to foreign deception, after they were granted the government mercy. A commission from Van was formed and sent to the region look their demands and to investigate the related affairs of Herki and Dostki tribes. The policies were affective in bringing the tranquility of the tribes.⁹⁹

Whereas the Governor of Van had positive attitude towards the Sheikh, on 29 September the governor of Musul was more critical towards the guarantee and negotiation process. He pointed that Sheikh Ubeydullah began to spread the gossips that two major and mufti of Van sent specially to him, so that he was given the responsibility of whole area. He began to propagate that the army around the Imadiye would disperse soon. In that respect the governor of Musul had a different view than Van and warned that Sheikh was trying to gain time by

⁹⁸ Y.A Hus 162/23, 162/36, 162/73 15 September

⁹⁹Y.A Hus 162/36 (9)

initiating negotiations. Further, Ağa of Zibar was near Edhem Paşa and tried to conscript rifle-using units at the region, but the group refused his envoys. That could be interpreted that the group still had the inclination to rebel.¹⁰⁰ The government adhered its policy to persuade sheikh to come and stay in Van. In that regard the great son of Ubeydullah, Mehmed Sıdık was accepted to royal robe of aide-de-general because of his former services at Beyazid frontier as miralay during the war. Sheikh Ubeydullah sent one member from his family, Mehmet Said as his deputy to the city of Van.¹⁰¹ On 13th October sheikh's son Abdulkadir attended the commission established at Gevar (Yüksekova).

Fourth Army commander Sami Paşa dispatched the major Necip Beğ with the special envoys sent to the Sheikh. The Royal aide-de-camp Bahri Beğ was assigned with Ahmed Ratip Beğ to give the rewards and gratitude of the Sultan.¹⁰² During the meeting Ahmet Ratip received very special messages from the Sheikh written and addressed to the Sultan. The letter was signed by the Sheikh and specially confided in Ahmed Beğ. The letter was dated 17 October but seemed to reach Istanbul after a delay since sheikh strictly warned himself not to give the letter anyone other than the Sultan. Ahmed Ratip was also given the advice to demolish it in case of danger. He found the way he received the letter remarkable and thought that sheikh behaved so according to the special orders he received from the Sultan.¹⁰³

In the letter Sheikh explained that the disorder in the cities of Van, Erzurum and Van appeared due to the tribes and the corrupt officials trying to benefit from the opportunity. This disorder caused the unrest and even immigration of some subjects. Secondly, he criticized Mar Şemun who was the leader of the Christians at the city of Çolemerik. Although he did not

¹⁰⁰ Y.A Hus 162/36(13)

¹⁰¹ Y.A Hus162/65, 9 October

¹⁰² Y.A Hus. 162/73, 15 October

¹⁰³ Y.A Hus 162/36(16), Y. PRK. Bşk. 4/18 In his telegraph of 28 November from Erzurum, Ahmed Beğ informed that he received the special letter and some confided oral messages

have enough power even to confront with a sole battalion of the state, he increased his oppression because of the neglect and carelessness of the local officers. This aroused the local people's distrust towards the government, who were watching the process culminated to the last year's event when he attacked and burned twelve villages around the castle of İmadiye, as a result five Muslims were murdered and one of the Seyids was thrown into fire alive. The officials benefited from the rise of Mar Şemun at the cost of insulting the Muslims and fuelling Christian animosity. This provocation from the officers reached to unbearable level to be suffered by the local Muslims.

Thirdly, he rejected the later developments in the province of Van. It would be annexed as a province of Armenia, where the Christians were only one twentieth of the population. Therefore the population assumed to be totally Muslim and such a decision would be very harmful for the Muslim majority and accordingly could not be accepted by them, except only 10-15 ruined people from the town of Van, called Timuroğlu who were notorious for their mischief.

Fourthly he supported annulment of some articles of the constitution "kanun-i esasi", because he believed that the whole affairs about Islam should be under the direct control of the caliphate of Islam.

Fifthly he pointed the importance of religion. He thought that religious affairs to be in vogue and having precedence were essential for advance of the state. More keen officials on that respect should be assigned to the tasks and state should give more concern on religious matters.

Sixthly he pointed to the border problem. When the foreign subjects attacked the Ottoman subjects, the officers did not pay the necessary attention to the cases of those infringements, whereas Ottoman subjects' retaliation to the foreigners was met by strict measures. At that time, the same officers caught and arrested the suspects. Their pillages were confiscated and

turned back to foreigners. Such disregard on the half of their subjects caused further discredit for the government and the cause of their oppression. He regretted the position that the subjects of the State became the victim of the oppression of foreigners because of the neglect of their own egoistic officers. Although only the governor of Van, Hasan Paşa had significant endeavors, the others do not.

Seventhly he put forth the expense of his tekke for consideration. The tekke was at the Ottoman land. It had at least five-thousand piastre (kuruş) for daily expenses in a year, which was met by the contributions from Iran side. This case could not be appropriate for a tekke, which the Sultan also belonged. Majesty's servants could also witness the crowd of the tekke's visitors and followers.

Lastly, some of the followers of the order existed in Ottoman lands and some others in Iran. Those that lived in Iran had state support, whereas those in Ottoman lands had not. He asked their exemption from some state taxes called "tekalif-i miriye".

Sheikh Ubeydullah was continuously pressed to stay in Van. In order to avoid such a conclusion, he provided many excuses and many alternatives at each offer. On 6 November his son Abdulkadir came to near Sami Paşa and submitted. During the autumn, the Ottoman State still kept contact with the sheikh. On 10 November Ahmed Ratip moved from Van in order to deliver royal decree. Sami Paşa informed that the military unit accepted well by the public and the whole Hakkari region was in order. This situation was confirmed by the news from Musul as well.¹⁰⁴ Despite this pleasant news, sheikh refused to come to Van again, providing his health condition as an excuse. Sami Paşa pointed that further calling him and giving guarantees would be useless, because the seasonal conditions would better justify the sheikh's former apologies. Rather he suggested postponing the same plan to the beginning of spring.

¹⁰⁴ Y.A. Hus. 162/126, 14 November

The winter passed relatively quiet. The council of ministers held a special meeting and considered the settlement of Kurds. The government was anxious that the incursions of Kurds would cause the local Christians to apply for the protection by the Russia and Britain, which would become a serious problem in the long run. Therefore the schedule was assigned to Sami Paşa until the end of that year's summer in coordination with the help of the commission. Besides, the nomadic tribes of the border were inclined towards Iran by recent endeavors, and their settlement should be decided according to the conciliation with the tribes' notables and leaders. The Nestorian inhabited region had the future potentate to become Kurdistan's Montenegro and the bishop acted as their religious leaders recently inclined towards the Tiflis, therefore, the government had to settle these tribes with the help of Sheikh Ubeydullah's influence after giving him the esteem and deference. It can be seen that the decisions of the council were touching some important issues in the Sheikh proposals of his aforementioned petition.¹⁰⁵

The commission at the region suggested that in Humaro district, near to the residence of the sheikh, a small settlement and barracks for a two-battalion unit should be built. It was decided that the plan as necessary for the district's development and would help keeping the order and security. Existence of a military unit would also prevent the tribes' seizure, where the recent figures of sheep usurping reached to 40 000 sheep in Hakkari district alone.¹⁰⁶

In the March of 1880 the famine hit the population and attracted attention to the region. The Christian charity tried to send help to their brothers in the region. The famine increased the Kurdish incursions against Armenians according to the Armenian Patriarchy's petition dated 19th May. The government replied that an aid commission had been established for relief and the recovery already began due to arrival of spring. As for criminal allegations, the

¹⁰⁵ Y. A. Res 5/17, 19 January

¹⁰⁶ Y. A. Res. 5 /29 9 February. Y.A.Hus. 163/92 3 February

government declared that they could not be evaluated abnormal beyond the random expectance of such occurrences in every society.¹⁰⁷

In the beginning of June, Britain was not satisfied with the proceedings of the Ottoman Empire in terms of implementing the reform programs. After diplomatic maneuvers, Britain succeed to get the international content and gave a note to Ottoman government to fulfill the requirements of the 61st article of the Berlin treaty.¹⁰⁸ At this critical turn point, bringing Sheikh Ubeydullah to Istanbul became more crucial for the government. Bahri Beg met with the sheikh again on 26 June. The royal aide de camp delivered the royal gratitude from the Sultan and Sami Paşa gave him some orders and suggestions related to nation and state. The sheikh replied that although he wished to reply these honorable grants and last years' by coming personally to Istanbul, his health problems prevented. He noted that the messages of Bahri Beğ's and his endeavors caused extraordinary influence among the tribes and initiated them to disregard every danger for the sacrifice of Muslim's leader. He always thought to win the favor of the Sultan as one of the holiest task.¹⁰⁹ Sheikh Ubeydullah decided to send his cousin and caliphate to Van instead.

As a result Mehmet Said came to city of Van. On 4 July, Sami Paşa reported from Van that the sheikh abstained from the invite to Istanbul due to the intrigues against him and that the sheikh was loyal to the Sultan as evident from his oath on the Holy Scripture and reports of some officers. Sheikh declared that if the confided demands in his son were listened, he had already begun preparations to send his son Abdulkadir to Istanbul with Mehmed Said. The appointment of his cousin as a delegate to Van might be attributed as a first step for negotiations and the need of a better communication.

Sami Paşa meet the deputy of the Sheikh who declared that all of them were determined to oppose in case Armenians were granted privileges and they need further assurance on that

¹⁰⁷ Y Prk. Bsk. 3/15 26 may

¹⁰⁸ 11 June Şaşmaz, Musa the British Policy and the Application of Reforms, p.84

¹⁰⁹ y prk azj 3/87, 26 June

matter. There were sayings that three thousand of the ten thousand guns arrived and distributed among Nestorians and Armenians, whereas Muslim did not get armed. Mar Şemun in his return to Van saw the British and Russian consuls and his offer of an independent government under his lead and paying a fixed tax to Ottomans was only accepted by Russians. The sheikh warned Mar Şemun privately that he would issue a religious decree in such a case.

As a reply Sami Paşa recommended them to give up the idea of any sort of disturbances because the government had the power to suppress any upheaval from them, and the government never gave the Nestorians or Armenians any promise. Sami Paşa delivered him an ornamented box and a golden watch from the Sultan and pointed that the gift and grants were good example that the gossips had been void. Mehmed Said also mentioned the Persian Shah's letter sent to the sheikh with a two-mule load gift, in the letter shah declared his good intention about the sheikh's lodge since it was established by his ancestors and warned sheikh from Ottoman conspiracies and gave him permission to come and settle.

Sami Paşa pointed to the possibility that sheikh could be brought by giving guarantees. Sheikh reluctance and the gossips about Armenians were due to the propagations from the Persian side and the leaders of the tribes took a common oath to oppose at such a case. Other than the last Persian Shekak tribe's incursion, there was no problem in the region. After evaluating the situation government insisted on bringing the Sheikh and realizing his inclination towards the Port, besides implementing the necessary measures against the Persian instigation of the tribes.¹¹⁰

The case of Sheikh Ubeydullah began to take attention of other powers besides the Ottoman government. On 9 July the British consul at Van went to visit Şemdinan according to the orders he took from the general consul who had been in Van for a while. He met the Mar

¹¹⁰ Y. A. Hus 165/45, 6 July , A. MKT. MHM 485/82, 15 July.

Şemun during his return.¹¹¹ The more interesting note about Sheikh's activity during this period belonged to the report written by the Russian Van Consul, Gamsarakan. He had been the head of police force during the occupation of Erzurum and of Armenian origin. In his report he claimed that at the end of June, a general meeting held by the participation of many Kurdish leaders from a wide area. This had been interpreted as the basis of Sheikh Ubeydullah's intention of mobilizing the Kurdish population around a nationalist aim.¹¹² On 18 July sheikh rejected again the call for Istanbul by the same excuse and he regretted that there were hearsays to distort his intention towards the government, although the result of his four years of endeavors with the Vali of Van to establish the order had been successful.

At last Sheikh thanked for the gifts and gratitude he received from the Ottoman government and declared that he accepted the invitation and was ready to act in compliance with the official notifications. After this conclusion, Bahri beğ asked the permission to leave since everything was in order and his further stay would be interpreted as lack of confidence.¹¹³ The long tension seemed to be settled.

The Attack on Urmiye and Sawjbulak

At this initial phase before the movement towards Urmiye plain, the compromise between the government and sheikh remained ambiguous. Even a simple invitation offer from the government had provided the sheikh many alternatives of delay. A new invitation offer or another kind of meeting arrangement at that moment could have been the cause of further demands from the sheikh.

Meanwhile there had been new developments in Iran. The local governor of Sawjbulak, named Lutfali Mirza, was already notorious by his abuse of local notables like Feyzullah and

¹¹¹ Y. A. Hus. 165/45, 18 July

¹¹² there are many reference to Gamsarakan work which had been an important source for the Russian authors. Garo Sasuni claimed that an Armenian trader of walnut trunk accompanied the English consulate in his voyage to Nehri. Later the trader named Çilingiryan published his memoirs in an Armenian daily newspaper called "Murç", Garo Sasuni p 153-155. The numbers of delegates were 136, consisting of 5 sheikhs, 21 caliphates, 42 notables and 68 aghas Avreyanof p 125.

¹¹³ Y. PRK. Ask 4/28 2 september

Mina Aga, son of Kadir Aga. Hamza Aga had previously fled to Ottoman lands two years before and he returned to his land by the amnesty. The governor wanted to levy taxes on Kadir and Hamza Aga in terms of assigning them some duties. Kadir Aga got a permit to leave for his village in order to evade, whereas Hamza Aga left the city without permit despite the advices. The governor first arrested an acquaintance of Kadir Aga who was released after a negotiation. This time a friend of Hamza Aga named Aziz Agai Fettah was arrested. Hamza Aga decided to go to city in order to release him and account the arrears. The governor ordered him to his mansion one night in order to arrest him, but Hamza Aga was also expecting such a trick. When the servants tried to put him chains he stabbed them, and then grasping the rifle from one of the servants, he ran outside. He had his accompanies waiting outside and they had clashes with the servants. They utilized the night and were able to leave the city.¹¹⁴

Such an event created a big discontent among the people. The governor Sawjbulak asked the help of Tebriz, Mehmet Hüseyin Man with 20 cavalries and Mehmed Sadık Han of Bahtiyari and Rahim Han Çelebyanlu with 80 cavalries was sent to the city to arrest Hamza Agha. The initial plan of acting together with the local notables, like Kadir Agha and Feyzullah Beg was doomed to failure in the mountainous resort of Hamza Aga. Meanwhile Hamza Agha also resorted to collaborate with other dissidents of the government. He found good allies among his nephew Suwar Aga of Zudi tribe and Mamend Aga of Piran tribe. These two tribes were near to Ottoman border. His brother Kakallah initially adopted a precautionary policy of neutrality at the beginning in order not to lose the complete control of the Mengur tribe if they could not able to confront the Persian army. The previous governor of Urmiye, Şehzade Ahmed Mirza, had seriously oppressed Abdullhah Han and İbrahim Han in Ushnu. These two brothers were the disciples of Sheikh Ubeydullah and leaders of Zirza tribe. They had already

¹¹⁴ Quryans p 16

tried the help in their former search of compensation that ended in vain. But the most important ally of Hamza Aga would become Sheikh Ubeydullah. He went to ask his help with one of the sheikh deputies named Kemal.¹¹⁵

On 21 September 1880 Sheikh Abdulkadir went to the Ushnu with Hamza Aga. Hearing the event, the Piran, Mangur and Aku tribes also joined them. In his letter to the leader of the Balek tribe of Revanduz, Abdulkadir declared that their existence there were due to progress of the religion and demanded their contributions to the movement by joining. Since Hamza knew the region better, he got a leading position in the movement. During the movement, he was leading together with the Abdulkadir.¹¹⁶ When the news that sheikh would involve in the affair and begin to gather men for an offence, there was a big panic in Sawjbulak and on 29th September they entered city where the local governor fled two days ago. They delivered a sermon on Friday pray in mosque intoning the name of Abdulhamid as the caliphate and cursing the cruelty of Persian officials.¹¹⁷

The remaining tribes of Mukriyan region evaluated to the situation and acted bilaterally. For example, Mehmed Aga of Mameş tribe had conflict with the Sheikh over the control of Ushnu, which was recently left to Sheikh Ubeydullah depriving his privileges there. When the amount of Sheikh power became evident and the fact that Karapapak tribe was subjected to plunder because they confronted the sheikh, Mehmed Aga decided to participate to the gathered forces. Yet throughout the movement, he sought every opportunity to evade with his tribal levies. Whereas Kadir Aga played the best example of pretense, he hesitated from open

¹¹⁵ quryans p, 22 and p.26 According to Quryans Sheikh had former correspondences with the Sheikh.

¹¹⁶ After the defeat and spread of the group, Hamza Aga went to Merge. A telegraph from the Musul governor informed that Hamza Aga and the refugees at the Merge and Ranya went together with the Ottoman tribe leaders to Erbil city and meet Ahmed Ratip there. He warned that such acts could damage the internal order and attract the attention of foreign officers at the city. (Y. PRK. A... 3/6, 8 March 1881) On 4th August of 1881, the representative of the governor of Musul informed the murder of Hamza Aga with his seven companions together with two sons of his brother and a brother in the tent by the governor Fuad in Sawjbulak. They fled from Merge after trusting his guarantee. Their cut heads were sent to Tehran (Y. PRK. UM. 4/66, Celile celil gave the document dated 26 July, Schulevsky from Tebriz to Tehran with more detailed and different figures p. 147)

¹¹⁷ Y. PRK. EŞA 2/71 as quryans depicts playing drums or wearing garments the manifestation of authority.

siding although his son Mina Aga participated actively. He tried to save his property against the plunders and revenge of Persian Army at the end. Through his tacit understanding between Hamza Aga, he ripped the benefits off the movement on his behalf in the beginning. Gulabi Aga of Dehbokri tribe was against the movement but he had to hide his intentions for a while. Osman Aga of Gavirg tribe at Serdesht region participated the movement after the Mianduab event and that was also with much reluctance when a more accurate balance of power appeared.

Sheikh Abdulkadir settled his encampment in the city for a few days and according to Quryans, his intention was first attack on the lands of Afşar and Saqez. But a call of help from the Kurdish villagers of Meraga at the direction of Mianduab caused him to send some cavalries to the Merhamedabad. His uncle was killed in the skirmishes with cavalries Mehmet Huseyin Han of Bahtiyar and Selim Han of Çarduli and Ali Han of Meraga. With the appearance of forces from Sawjbulak, they retreat to the Castle of Mianduab that contained a little artillery and soldier. After three hours of struggle, Celil Aga (brother of Han Babacan) passed to Kurds' side by burning the city bazaar, and these happened at 1st October at the night of Friday causing the massacre of civilians and big plunder in Mianduab, causing 800 Muslims, 20 Armenians and 50 Jews dead in the city according to Quryans.¹¹⁸ The tribal levies resorted to pillage to devastating affects due to the lack of provisions. It was interesting to note that they could not utilize the cannon that they got from the Mianduab. On 12th October, the group left the Mianduab in ruins and moved to Benab, and on 17th October they arrived to Malek Kandi¹¹⁹ The events of Mianduab soon aroused a reaction among the Shia majority of Iran. Persian general army under the command of İtimadu's-Saltane moved from

¹¹⁸ quryans p. 41 he gives the accounts of casualties at page 43.

¹¹⁹ "... with a number of eight thousand cavalries and nine thousand infantry. The others that gathered with the expectation of plunder was not less than 10 thousand." p.57 Quryans seemed to exaggerate the numbers in order to make the Persian victory dearer. Although he had prejudices, his work gives valuable information. That can be inferred also his stressing on Friday night. He always stressed that Sheikh's arguments and hatred toward Shias were futile.

Tebriz towards to Meraga and a second army under command of Hamza Mirza Haşmetu'd-Devle move from Tehran on 14th October.¹²⁰

The extent of looting proved the nature of tribal warfare, although there might be some runaway Ottoman soldiers from their rows at the border.¹²¹ Once each tribe got its share from the plunder, need to continue warfare afterwards did cease to exist for them any more. They soon dispersed. As for the legitimization of their acts, they had religious decree of Mufti of Sawjbulak that permitted spoiling unbelievers. Moreover the desperate socio-economic conditions motivated such acts. Most of the loyal tribal units of the group were also geographically near to Sheikh's resort and under his influence. The lack of ammunition and health provisions in case of wounding also made quick retreat strategically advantageous.

The events of looting increasingly appeared around the towns of Benab and Meraga. Their affects wide spread even as far as in front of Tebriz. While the 55 of infantry and 5 cavalries of Mengur tribe were plundering the villages of Meraga, the soldiers of Meraga caught them and they were killed except four of them. Then, Sheikh Abdulkadir ordered to encamp around Kehriz Bazaar three kilometers far away from Benab. After stalemate skirmishes that lasted ten days, Kurds lost 300 men where the defenders used canon. Sheikh Abdulkadir retreated to Malek Kandi and stayed there for two days. From there he passed to Çelik on 3rd November. There, because of insufficient food supplies he decided to set some forces free and ordered most of them to go and join with the forces of his father at Urmiye. Many found this occasion as a good opportunity to evade.

The army from Tebriz under command of Hasan Ali Han arrived to Meraga. Meanwhile 500 voluntary cavalries of Şahseven under command of Ferdi Han and Necefkuli Yurtçi arrived from Tebriz in order to participate main part of the army. They made plunder en route

¹²⁰ Y. Prk Ask 4/54, 4/65,4/67

¹²¹ Y. Prk Ask 4/72 on 6th November, Sami paşa reports there might participants from the army despite were not permitted. There was important numbers from Ottoman tribes and the nucleus of the group around the Abdülqadir were former auxillary veterans of the Ottoman Russian war as Quryans had termed "qarapushek" wearing black. Therefore the commander advised not to conscript soldiers from the border regions.

(Kızılcan, Kuskulan and Refvan were sacked). When they reached Çelik, İtimad Saltane did not permit their offer to pursue Abdulkadir , because he realized that it would be further pretext for looting.

Afterwards the excesses of Persian army far surpassed the turmoil caused by the tribes. In this chaos, even neutral ones and supporters of the Persian government were not exempt from the damages. Sheikh Abdulkadir stayed at Sawjbulak for a few more days, when he realized that tribes would not return back, he retreated towards Ushnu with the remaining 400-500 cavalries. He and Hamza Agha also took some refugees with them to shelter around Ushnu and Saqez.

On 11 October the deputy caliphate, Said and cousin of the Sheikh Mehmed Emin, came to the İsmail Kale 9 km far away from the city of Urmiye with the 4000 of conscripted cavalry and infantry from the Bradost region. The town governor İkbāl u'd Devle confronted them by settling in the Bedirbu¹²². Mehmed Said attacked the Kavilan and the six villages around and the Christian villagers of the region run to the city for the fear of rehearsal of Miandub. During an attack on the castle, Kurds were able to capture two cannons that they could not utilize due to lack of ammunition. The army of İkbāl u'd Devle entangled in the castle but the nephew of Timur Paşa, who was patrolling between the city and castle, came to help with his six squads from the Hoy regiment. On 18 October, Sheikh Ubeydullah also came to Urmiye with 3000 cavalries and infantry whom he collected among the tribes of Herki, Zirza, Deştbil and from the Mergever region of his influence. He encamped in the village of Sen Serkis at the Sir Mountain situated 3 kilometer south of the city. This village was the summering place of American missionaries. From there, he immediately sent a letter to the religious authorities

¹²² The editor of Quryans' book points that there is no such castle Bedirbu or Bedirbud. Y. Prk Ask 7/34 Sami Paşa dated telegraph 2nd November describes the Bendi valley as the meeting place of sheikh and from there they went together with 6000 soldiers. The governor attacked Mehmed Said, when they were around Chenize castle with 4 regiment and 800 cavalry with three batteries and lost two of them. After two hours of skirmishes governor retreated to Bedirbu ruins. When he could not protect him after another two days retreated back to city and shut the doors. Sheikh put a seizure to city with 12 000 men.

of the town (Seyh u'l Islam and Muçtehid), telling them if they handed over the city peacefully, they would be spared. The city dwellers asked for a two days delay, and this was accepted. The following day the Catholic bishop Clozel sent an envoy to ensure the security of Christians. Ottoman consul representative took his brother Hoca Davud and Solomon the preacher with him. Here an important speech was changed between the parts. When the Ottoman consul introduced himself, he replied that the Ottomans and Persian state were spoilt and their names fades and from then, there would be no need for consul, vizier or governor and he would conquer the two Sultanates. Then he showed some men around him saying, “ Look this people! Each is noble and clever and had previously owned an estate. Now they were so oppressed at the hand of Ottomans that they can be no more called human but animals. There will not be such oppression in our government. I hope that after I give a regulation to Iran, I will turn to Ottomans and defeat them. When I would control whole of Iran and Turan, I will establish an order that everyone will be at rest.”¹²³

Sheikh knew their intentions of delay to gain time for help from Timur Paşa at Hoy, because he was able to capture some heralds from the city and refused their offer of another three days of deferment. He stipulated again his former conditions and the Christians would also be safe in such a case, or tie and send Ikbalu'd Devle to him. Otherwise he would attack the following day.

On 23rd October, the ceasefire granted to the city finished. Sheikh and his elder son Sıddık and his caliphate attacked the city from the west gates, Askerhan, for three days. 300 men, mostly civilians from the city died. The English Tebriz consulate, Abbot, was in the city due to a summer vacation. He had planned to visit the thermal springs of Tiflis, because of his wife's illness. He decided to spend a few days in Urmiye more due to its good climate. He went to see the Sheikh and asked for another delay or at least permission for the Christians to

¹²³ Y. A. Res. 10 /3 (18) 6 April 1881 Ottoman consulate representative told the his interview with the Sheikh in his letter. Quryans, p 98

leave safely because they were in the dangerous part of the city that was affected by the clashes. His stay there had already caused gossips that he was collaborating with the aggressors. When he was returning back to the city together with the Armenian Simon in order to deliver the messages of Sheikh and arrange the leave of Christian, fire was shot on him from the city. When his situation appeared insecure, he was sent to Sawjbulak via Salduz, because the Hoy road was not secure, either. On 31st October, he met with Sheikh Abdulkadir, who escorted him with 150 cavalries until Gerdereş at 12 km far away from Benab.¹²⁴

Sheikh changed his place and began to attack the city from the Garden of Dilguşa. The clashed remained inconclusive and defenders were using canon and the elder son of Sheikh was wounded. He retreated back to Sir Mountain. Meanwhile 500 load of ammunition reached to city and increased their morale. A stalemate occurred between parts for 15 days. Timur Paşa came with six divisions, 2000 cavalry and six cannon from Hoy. He was situated 36 kilometers and he was not hurrying because he had former conflicts with the İkbâl u'd Devle. Sheikh Ubeydullah confronted him by sending 500men with 30 gamel loads of artillery under the command of his elder son, but Timur Paşa was able to control the retreat of Sheikh Sıddık. He was able to reach and settle at the north of city. After then only small skirmishes occurred like the one village of Askerabad, while the sheikh tried to move İsmail kale and the local villagers placed an ambush. This act of them were doomed failure because there was no help to them Timur Paşa. Another clash occurred when Sheikh attacked the village of Çarbaş, where Timur Paşa encamped. The resulting clashes extended until Aluce, a village three km away from the city. For a time a standstill existed between parts. On 11th November, the group disappeared and emerged again in Bradost two days later. There the group around him dispersed. Sheikh was ill stayed at Dir monastery for a half hour, and moved towards his region Mergever. In his letter, Ottoman consul representative informed

¹²⁴ Quryans, p.68

that either he returned to Nehri or he stayed between the borders because of Ottoman fear. He added that his illness prevented him to eat and sit.¹²⁵ Timur Paşa continued to commit injustices indiscriminately towards local people and the government in order to get rid of his excesses far exceeding the Kurds, paid lip service to sacking far away villages at Mergever under the pretext of pursuing the sheikh. His hatred towards the local people was due to his punishment by the former governor Sucau'd Devle.¹²⁶

The Ottoman state retaliated the turmoil at Iran side with measures of martial law, whereas the official declaration of the situation suspended and permitted to the 4th Army's disposal. In case of sending a big army to settle the border, Bosna-Hersek crisis would give a good opportunity for the powers to insert their influence. Besides Persia officially declared that the offense of Sheikh should be prevented by the Ottomans, otherwise the necessary permission should be given to pursue him and any responsibility of a possible infringement of the border by the Persian army should be endured by the Van governor. The State was very keen on not to cause any disorder on the border. At first it tried to provide the required grain and cash for the dispatched army from local supplies. But the poverty hit population made this alternative inaccessible, so the Ministry of Finance had to bear the burden. Although the state acknowledged the possibility of persuading the sheikh, there were serious reports of his acts. On 12 October, Sami Paşa depicted the account of sheikh's affair in his telegram. He informed that the sheikh gathered more than eight- ten thousand men in the Ushnu district, which he collected from the districts around Gevar and among Persian tribes at the other side of the border, and by sending letters, he informed his attack on Sawjbulak and Urmiye and asking armed men from the local notables and agas. Accordingly, Abdullah Aga from Seydanli and İzettin from the Albak district collected separately some men to go immediately and sheikh's

¹²⁵ Y. A. Res 10/3 (17,18) and Quryans leaves his report of Sheikh's until his retreat towards Bradost. Y. Prk Ask.5/31 on 9th December Nafiz paşa informed Sheikh had rheumatism at his knee and he was resting at his home and his son Abdulkadir was protecting the grain stored at Merge.

¹²⁶ Y. A. Res 10/3 (16) and also quryans

caliphate Said came to Hervati and gathered men. In the Geviç region of Colemerik, in the Albak districts, and the residents of Masru and Siverkan made open alliance with the sheikh, and Ishar and other places agreed with the sheikh. Although there were hearsays that sheikh will explicitly attack the Persian lands and punish the Ali Han of the Şikak tribe for his raids on Ottoman tribes, Sami Paşa pointed that his real aim is to control Ottoman side and the need to send more sufficient troops would be urgent, if there would be no solution in Iran. More crucially since Sheikh had a big influence, a possible invitation of tribes would cause big turmoil at Ottoman side. In order to prevent this event happen and to menace the passing of people from here to contribute his movement in Iran; the military strength of Rewanduz and Hakkari districts was increased, two detachments of mountain artillery and a battalion under the command of Miralay Ali Şefik dispatched to Gevar. Musa Paşa, the commander of 8th Division, with two battalions and a battalion of soldiers in Erciş was immediately sent to Hakkari. Two battalions were also asked from the center of 4th Army. A regiment of soldiers from the 7th Division was prepared to be ready for a sudden dispatching and same task was ordered from the Şehrizur headquarters at Revanduz.¹²⁷

On 19 October, Sami Paşa informed that the insurgents consisted three branches. One is on the move towards Tebriz under command of Sheikh Abdulkadir and they were around Merhamedabad. The second is under the command of the elder son Mehmet Sıddık and around Mergever and he would go to Urmiye who had already won the consent of the Urmiye people, and the remaining part was situated at the retreat of Abdulkadir in Somai in order to secure the grain stores and an offence from the Persian army. This reserve might join with the group in Urmiye and go to Tebriz. Ottoman consulate in Tehran notified the commander that the dispatched Persian army was insufficient. Sami Paşa explained his fears that the Sheikh's real aim was to establish an independent Kurdish government, since sheikh understood that he

¹²⁷ Y. A. Res. 8/7

could not realize his aim in Ottoman lands, he used the Hamza Aga's case as a pretext for his offense. If the Persian army could not cope with them even using all of its power, his government would settle. Then with the power he established, he would increase his influence and even if he did not demand the Ottoman lands, it was natural for the people near to the border to pass to his side due to their ethnicity.¹²⁸

The State consulted to a military committee, in which the former commander Muhtar Paşa and Ahmed Ratip also existed. To the issue of how to deal with the Sheikh, they recommended the removal of the sheikh from the region according to several reasons mainly created by the former policies of Iran state. In order to compel the sheikh to its side, the Persian government had followed a process of cutting the incomes of his foundations situated at the Persian side for a time, and then they first accepted the elder and then the smaller son as their subjects. By granting them favors in order to win their side, at last their aim was to make them fear from the Ottomans and cause the sheikh to flee due to a possible Ottoman military operation towards Hakkari.¹²⁹ Despite the continuous damages from the Persian side, the Shah in his letter tried to reflect just the opposite. Shah personally asked from the Sultan to send his army to the border. His request was replied by the assurance of preventing the Ottoman tribes to participate the insurgents and by the information of the military proceedings on the issue.¹³⁰

Besides the necessary steps, general military inspector Asaf Paşa appointed and was sent to the region in order to delay the necessary instructions and directions to provincial administrators and tribal leaders to prevent them participating.¹³¹

Initially Ottoman state considered the situation an ordinary infringement of the border and there was not any serious suspect on the loyalty of the Sheikh. Even the previous reports of the Van's governor, and that he stayed away from his sons' acts and the Sheikh went to

¹²⁸ Y. Prk. Ask 3/72

¹²⁹ 16 october y. prk bşk 3/64

¹³⁰ Kajarian Documents on Persian and Ottoman relations # document 574, p 642.

¹³¹ 16 october Y.A.Res 8/9

Urmiye in order to dispel the participants of Ottoman subject when he found suddenly himself in skirmishes, was taken granted. Soon the extent of events became clearer by the protests of Iran and other reports.¹³²

The first remarks that the sheikh began to gather men were interpreted that he would move towards Imadiye, like the governor of Akra did, who informed that the men of Sheikh Abdulkadir kidnapped the sheep of another local Sheikh Mehmed. The fact that sheikh had established connections with the foreigners and that he was provoking and leading the movement had more serious outcomes than his attacks on the tribes Muzuri and Gerdi tribe of Semdinan just a several weeks before the Urmiye events.¹³³ When results of the events begin to be felt, the in Ottoman government had to get on a political decision that will not harm her international balance. The Ottomans understood that the event was more widespread and defeat of sheikh was more probable, the former ten battalions of infantry, a regiment of cavalry and a battery of canon would be sent and the officers of the border responsible for the event should be changed.¹³⁴ The governor of Van was discharged but his co-operation was found necessary for the critical interim and due to significance of the affairs a more potent and intelligent commander, Mehmet Nafiz Paşa was appointed as the commander of 4th Army instead of Sami Paşa.¹³⁵

The Ottoman government evaluated the situation as a threat against the recent depraved conditions after the war. Therefore mainly aimed to stabilize the border and concerned to prevent the sheikh using his influence among the tribes for distracting the Ottoman and Persian relations. The state recognized that the possibility of a long disorder at the border may cause England and Russia would interfere against Ottoman benefits. An interesting and

¹³² Y.A.Res 8/23 5 November, Y Prk Azj 4/12 A petition from the sheikh for his purpose to be in Urmiye A. MKT. MHM 486/28 the governor of Van's first interview with the sheikh

¹³³ Y. A. Hus 166/49

¹³⁴ y. prk a...2/88 5 november

¹³⁵ Y. A. Res 8/25, 10 november Kajarian Document #573 15 Nov. 1880, Y. Prk Ask 4/76 from Erzincan; Nafiz Paşa pointed the seriousness of sheikh's case the need to send 2 500 soldiers with more condensed battalions.

significant remark is that Ottoman concern about the Armenians living in the region. The State acknowledged and tried to prevent that the possibility of Sheikh's influence to turn against the Armenians and the existing disorder might cause harmful effects on them. With respect to the allegations that he would turn against Ottoman State and his correspondences with the foreign embassies, the government decided that these would necessitate no more solution other than to get rid of the sheikh, in case they were true. Muhtar Paşa and İsmail were nominated even for this task. These allegations were to be checked against the Persian propaganda, which tried to make Ottomans to take harsher measures against Sheikh and rebels. The ottoman ambassador Fahri Beg informed that the content of the letters delivered was contradicting with the genre of Sheikh and that the seals of the envelop differed. He attributed that there might be a foreign intrigue in the sheik's declaration of independence. The letters sent to Ikbâl Devle remained ambiguous and inconsistent. Sheikh's interview with the English consulate was alarming for the government. When the consulate could not return the city, Sheikh got a written recognition from the consulate so that a possible slaughter of the Christians by the town governor should not be charged on Kurds.¹³⁶

The royal aide Ahmed Ratip was decided to be sent for a better evaluation the situation and to deliver suggestions to the Sheikh. In order to obtain Sheikh's content, the government had to reconsider and conclude his demands after the events at İmadiye. Most of them related to the government issues were rejected because they will increase his already challenging influence. His suggestion of Seydan (descendants of prophet) to be tax exempt cannot be applied. That was against the principles of Tanzimat with indiscriminate results; the government could only give aid to those at desperate need. He had also asked the taxation of Nestorians on same terms as Muslims and exemption of sale tax on salt from Iran. The government formulated that the sheikh should act in confirm of his status by not intervening and suggesting the

¹³⁶ Y. Prk. Ask 4/79 9th November Sami Paşa immediately sent some officials to sheikh about the interview of the consulate. Y. A. Hus 165/178, Tehran consulate informed the involvement of Rıza Beg in delivering of the mentioned letter, who had came to Tehran last year to ask Sheik' acceptance of Persian subject

removal of corrupt official like the Timur Pasazade family in Van and assigning more adequate officials in general. The government also wanted potent officials, but there was no serious failure of Timur family in Van. Ahmed Ratip returned to Hakkari with 5000 piastre yearly allowance and some other privileges for his tekye, which had already granted previously and with the promise that Herki incursions would be stopped by preventing such passes between borders and formerly impaired war veterans would also be included the already granted salaries by proving their conditions.¹³⁷

The royal aide reached to Van but unable to reach the sheik's resort due to winter conditions. His first interview with Sheikh deputy, Said confirmed the loyalty of Sheikh and the events caused by Persian hostility against the Sunnis. From the letter of Sheikh left for the government of Van, sheikh stressed the Persian oppression of Sunnis to the unbearable levels and this caused a big contempt. He did not denied his involvement in the affair but the conditions prevented him to comply with Sultan's orders. He left the Persian injustices and left the disputed villages to Sultan's control.¹³⁸ Iran repressed the insurgent with harsh measures and caused many civilians to pass Ottoman side. Iran continuously asked their return and advised the arrest of sheikh and other Ottoman instigators. The Ottoman State accepted them refuges and tried to disarm them and replied the Persian request that the problem should be solved by a general amnesty, and a commission should be established for investigating the crimes and damages.¹³⁹

On 23rd December, Iran declared a general amnesty and asked from the Ottoman government to expel the sheikh from the borders. The amnesty was ineffective against the ongoing punishment of civilians and even some resorts to return were not spared. Winter conditions

¹³⁷ Y. A. Res 8/23 5 November; from that onwards the state began to collect information about the intentions of Sheikh in Y. Prk A...3/74

¹³⁸ Y prk A...3/4. 15 December

¹³⁹ A. MKT. MHM 486/28, 23 november gives the number of refuges, 60 000-70 000 and another estimate of Ahmed Ratip was 15 000 house holds in Y. Prk A...3/4 3rd Jan, in Y. Prk Ask 5/70 Nafiz paşa informed the general amnesty was ineffective 9th January.

made any military operation impossible, but it was obvious that the refugees would again attack at the beginning of spring. In this case Iran implied that he would seek the help of Russia. There was already information that Russia was sending some troops towards Nahcevan. The diplomatic relations between two states was determined in that context until spring. The Ottoman government decided to bring the Sheikh to Istanbul and settle armed tribes relatively farther areas from the border. The Ottoman government was very sensitive about the solution on bases of a committee between two Muslim countries, not to let the interference of powers.¹⁴⁰

During the winter, the refugees were making preparations to attack in the spring. Some sixty men fled from the regiments, and by participating the formers they reached a number of hundred and began to do military exercises. There were also other hints that refugees planned to transform themselves into a military order by buying uniforms, horses and gun. Hamza Aga attacked on Karapapak cavalries and killed at least a hundred of them in February. Whereas, some tribes like Gerdi and Bradost declared to refuse the leadership of sheikh and appropriated his elder son's sheep. The sheikh told the Van administration that he would not go with the refugees and he could not prevent their attack in spring. Van administration interpreted that Abdulkadir would lead the refugees, and when Persian government would not guarantee their safe return, they would again resort to insurgency. At Imadiye, sheikh sent some envoys to Berfire and Rikan, announcing that the tithes would be eliminated there. On 23 March this time another letter of sheikh was caught, which declared holy war against Persians and asked the Ercis people to prepare and join their brothers. In order to curtail the affect of these correspondences government ordered 4th Army and responsible governors to issue and deliver a decree denying the sheikh's claims.

¹⁴⁰ 166/38 Y.A. Hus. and 166/41. Y. A. Res 9/61 Russia sent 10 regiments and two batteries on 26th December. Y.A. Hus. 166/42, 24th January, Shah declared that he would collaborate Russian unwillingly in case there was no guarantee from the Ottomans.

The government plans to disarm the tribes and their settlement inside the Bradost region was inapplicable, because the region contained more enemies than their relatives. The refugees mostly settled around Merge and Ranya. They were accepted as refugees if they surrendered their guns; therefore, gun bearers remained at the Persian side of the border. They were to be sent to the farther areas from the border in order to isolate them from a provocation. The royal aide Ahmed Ratip tried to persuade them to be calm.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile Iran began to increase its diplomatic pressure on Ottomans on the point that there were important signs that Sheikh still instigating the tribes against Iran, yet Ottomans did not proceed on their guarantees and deporting of the sheikh. The government rejected Persian claims that sheikh was supported by the state on purpose. Iran began to declare more openly that Russian would contribute militarily in preserving Persian borders. With the beginning of March the Persian army declared that he would mobilize the arm under previous commanders and began attack at New Year. Russia also mobilized soldiers towards Nahcevan.¹⁴² Iran gradually assured to Ottomans that foreign intervention for a solution should be sought after a time limit, although it was undesirable on their part.¹⁴³ Russia held the same view with Iran about sheikh, and officially declared to Ottoman government that it would pursue the sheikh's case seriously.¹⁴⁴

The State recognized that sheikh couldn't be get rid of by using force alone unless. Then his influence among the tribes should be included in a solution. Ottomans initially sought the arbitrariness of a committee in which the refugees' problem would be solved, later the plans for a new rising and that Russian got same airs with Persian made this infeasible. The State

¹⁴¹ Y. A. Res. 10/3 a telegraph from Musul governor on 28th February told that a letter of the Sheikh Ubeydullah was caught, informing tribe leaders that their meeting with Ahmed Beg was satisfactory and all the governments gave right to Kurdistan and found Iran illegitimate and the union should not be damaged. Y.Prk Ask 6/25, Nafiz Paşa informed the content of the letter written in Persian to be evaluated for his intentions by the government on 20 April, Y.A.Hus 167/42. A. MKT MHM 486/62 17th April government rejected the Persian claims and ordered delivering a decree.

¹⁴² Russia sent soldiers towards Nahcevan, amount of mobilized Persian army given in Y. Res. 10/10, 8 march

¹⁴³ Y. EE. 82/6, Y. A. Res. 10/ 3, Y. Prk Hr. 5/63, Y. A. Res 10/2 8th April, HR Sys 82/46, Y.A.Res 10/19

¹⁴⁴ Y.A. Res 10/26, 30 mart government decided to remove sheikh by evaluating Russian intervention.

had tried to get a concession from Iran through a committee, in order to compensate the refugees and compel some hardliners to settle at distant places of the border. Although Ottoman openly declared that the order of the border would be established on her part, the means was not clearly stipulated. A solution in favor of Ottoman benefits required the coordination from the sheikh and consent of the tribes. Iran strictly insisted the remove of sheikh and return of the criminals. They were given guarantees about the deportation of sheikh and informed their proceeding on the issue in order to proof their serious intentions. When the invitation of sheikh to Istanbul was heard, Iran still worried whether the sons of sheikh would also be deported.

Besides, the correspondences of royal aide showed that sheikh was reluctant to obey the sultan's invite. The state became increasingly sure that sheikh was behind the scene and instigating the tribes against Iran. It became clear that guarantees about preserving the border could not be established without removing the sheikh. The Persian ambassador had continuously asked the proceedings about the bringing of the sheikh and his Russian colleague helped him to get the other embassies concern on the issue.¹⁴⁵

At last Sheikh Ubeydullah was informed that he deceived the government by his offer of guarantee on the border, and he tried to gain time in order to provoke the tribes. He was ordered to come to Istanbul, otherwise more severe measures would be implemented. Sheikh had replied the official order by denying the accusations. He claimed that he had rather prevented the plunder of Urmiye. If he had had such aims, he would already had that opportunity previously when the consulate and the notables of the city were near him. His meeting with the consulate was due to arrange his secure travel to Tebriz and denied foreign inspiration. British Tebriz consulate could be witness for his common sense. He swore that he did not have such slanderous aims and the letters were fraud. He promised the security of the

¹⁴⁵ Y. A. Hus 167/38 17th May. As for intentions of Sheikh another of letter was caught addressed to Musa and Mehmed Aga of Haydaranlı tribes (dated 2 April) in Y. A. Hus 167/15.

border again if it was necessary for the benefit of state but he could not understand why he should accept the Sia oppression.¹⁴⁶

4th Army commander, Nafiz, arrived to Şemdinan on 31st May. Sheikh agreed to come Istanbul and his two sons refused to come. They moved to Van via Gevar, and they reached to Van on 11th June. Nafiz paşa did not believe Sheikh Abdulkadir pretense to be ill, who did not meet him. Nafiz Paşa noted that the elder son, Sıddık had not met with his father for eight months due to resentment between them. Sıddık was busy with moving half of his household to Iran lands and he would move the other part after his brother illness recovered. The commander interpreted this as a threat of his inclination towards Iran. He was not as affective as his brother. The brothers could not play the same role of their father and this was especially so, when their father were at the hands of the government. The eight division of Musa Paşa was already left in Gevar, incase their dispatch became urgent and it was useful to postpone such a decision until sheikh reached Istanbul. Sheikh also guaranteed that his sons would not react. Moreover, sixteen regiments of soldiers were reallocated and an important amount of them were kept in the region even after sheikh's dispatching. Sheikh was moving to Istanbul on 4th July with a group of his disciples and caliphates escorted by the Ahmed Ratip and Süleyman Paşa.

Escape from Istanbul

Sheikh Ubeydullah had stayed in Istanbul for a year and then he decided to leave on 23 July 1882. When the government recognized his unexpected depart nearly a month later, his caliphate Mehmed Said and a Persian refugee accompanying him were interrogated by a special commission. At first they denied that they knew anything about his depart, but after three days Mehmed Said told that sheikh went towards Batum by a steamer with the help of

¹⁴⁶ Y.Prk. Ask 7/55, 29 April, telegraph from Nafiz paşa and translation of Sheikh's reply. Nazmi Paşa accounts while he brought the sheikh from Şemdinan was given also in same catalogue number 7/34

someone called Kurd Ahmed Efendi. Mehmed Said seemed to be left in charge of the sheikh with an explanation of his intentions.¹⁴⁷

The commission inferred from the last interview between the sheikh and his cousin that he would go and wait for a decision for his deportation in his home. He had already been in Istanbul for one year and his petitions remained unanswered. He declared that he had preferred any place in the vast Ottoman lands, but he had got no answer until then. He was glad to meet the Sultan, but the compulsive conditions prevented his obey to stay further. In general, he regretted that Persia did not compensate for the damages committed against his property and the Ottoman did not attempt anything on the matter. These points were clearer in the petition he had left one year ago. In his letter, he stressed that Kurds were the most loyal among the Nestorians and Armenians in the region. But they were being from Sunni sect were seriously oppressed by Iran as if to make them Sias like the “Kelhur”s and “Lor”s. Recently, the Persian had increased their torture to unbearable levels; therefore his lodge became the main target. Urmiye governor attacked his villages and killed 48 people causing a damage worth 50 000 lira. He had sought his right through a commission established by the Ottoman Tebriz consulate. Although he was obviously right, everything remained in vain. The recent Urmiye event was the outcome of such Persian policies and especially support and continuation of excesses of Ali Han Şikak at Van. He prevented any looting on Urmiye when the clashes began. He also declared that despite his submission, Persians had not quitted their hypocrisy. By continuing such tricks, they were successful to deceive some hundred destitute from Bradost tribe to go and settle at his lands benefiting from his absence. He had already sowed those lands with seeds amounting 8500 loads.¹⁴⁸ In autumn, he made another petition

¹⁴⁷ Y. Prk Zb 2/14, 19 August, 1882 the commission took Mehmed Said's testimony and Y. prk kom. 3/65, 20 August. When the government recognized the escape, he increased the custody of another candidate, mufti of Taşlıca, Y. Prk A... 3/46, 16th august his 5000 kurus allowance was to be cut. Y. prk. kom. 3/66

¹⁴⁸ Y. Prk Azj 4/84, 30 August 1881.

when the Persian soldiers attacked fifteen of his villages and asked for a permit to go and settle either in Musul or in Van before winter season in order to prevent the damages.¹⁴⁹

Just after the interrogation, Sheikh Ubeydullah appeared around Van. He arrived there from a long way through Poti, Gümrü and Kars. In Eleskird one of his deputies Abdulsamed and the other notables met him. The group around him reached to 4000, and he pretended people as if he had a permitted return and the need to collect soldiers against the later Egypt crisis.¹⁵⁰ When he reached to Şikafti village at the Persian side of the border near Başkale on 17th August, he had already collected a group of five to six thousand men. A group of soldiers were immediately dispatched from Hakkari province to bring him. But when it was realized that they were not sufficient, the supplementary forces were asked.¹⁵¹

Unlike the previous reluctance, the government replied for the actions of sheikh more quickly. All the nearby military forces were sent to Başkale, and all the officials around the region were informed about the event for coordination. The fourth army commandment mobilized two infantry and a cavalry regiment from Erzurum, one regiment from Bitlis, besides the regiments at Van and the eighth marksmen regiment from Erzincan, additional regiments of 6th Army were also asked from Revanduz. There were already sixteen infantry and a cavalry regiments in Hakkari.¹⁵² In order to neutralize sheikh's propaganda, the tribal leaders were informed about his escape and his acts would damage the order. The government considered the case as very sensitive and acted persistently and quickly. The government ordered the 4th Army in Erzincan to bring sheikh alive to Istanbul. An envoy should get the suggestion that his resistance would lead the bloodshed and told him that his family would be sent to one of

¹⁴⁹ Y. Prk Azj 4/96, 12 October 1881

¹⁵⁰ Y. Prk um 5/36 21. August 1882 the rapport of Van governor

¹⁵¹ Y. A. Hus 171/37, 19 August

¹⁵² Y. Prk. Ask 14/7, 20 August, Y. Prk. Ask, Y. Prk 14/8

the holy cities of Mekke and Medine after him with government care. The royal secretary Kamil Beg was dispatched from Istanbul to bring him.¹⁵³

The group around the sheikh dispersed soon, when they realized that he escaped from Istanbul rather than he had an official permit. Sheikh moved to his village in Nehri. A group of 500 armed remained under the command of his son Abdulkadir, who tried to prevent the arrest of sheikh. Major Yusuf Paşa was sent to Şemdinan to convey the official message and in his return he noted that sheikh was planning to unite the tribes and affect the Persian tribes, and Iran was also informed to take necessary steps at her border. Sheikh replied the official decree that he had gone to Istanbul to demonstrate the recent cruelty but remained in vain, therefore he returned to his lodge. Any conflict between the soldiers and the people would cause disturbance among the Muslims. During his parting in previous year, many come together until Erzurum to prevent his deportation. But he persuaded and prevented them. This time his deportation to holy cities meant also deportation of around 5 000 households. Such activities to make things difficult were aimed to incite him rebel. He had an influence among 200 000 people, who diffused in the lands of Russia, Iran and Ottoman. He pointed that he only tried to protect his life and honor. He asked a delay until the spring and then he would come to Van accept to go any assigned place.¹⁵⁴

At that stage, the government evaluated the delay to be useful in order to accomplish the required military actions and evaluate sheikh's intentions better. The village of the sheikh was blockaded and the negotiation with the sheikh began. After several days, he excused for his escape and asked to settle in Musul when he realized his critical condition. Meanwhile, the government got suspicious of his intentions to gain time for uniting the tribes, but such an attempt doomed failure by military preventions and dispersion of the first group. The

¹⁵³ Y. Prk Bşk 6/49, 22 august. The official message was entrusted to Yusuf Beg.

¹⁵⁴ Y. Prk. Ask 14/20 29 August sheik's reply.

government had to evaluate the possibility of his fled to Iran or Russia, which might be a big trouble. The shelter of Iran was obstructed to him because of the previous events. In fact, Persian governor, Emir Nizam, had already printed a decree informing the people about the escape of sheikh and that he rebelled against the Ottoman state. He warned the tribes not to join him and believe that any government was supporting him. He also claimed that his request of Persian protection was denied. There were also hints that sheikh tried to appeal for a Russian protection with the arbitrary of Nestorian patriarch, Mar Şemun. The governor of Hakkari informed that one of Sheikh's envoy, called Mahmud went to Nestorian villages asked their help, but they replied that he should speak such matters with Mar Şemun. Some other envoys were also sent to the patriarch, but they returned empty handed.¹⁵⁵

On 18th September sheikh met the royal secretary Kamil Beg who was dispatched there in order to arrange his deportation. Sheikh seemed to agree go to Musul, where he could still enjoy his influence. He requested to stay in Musul and gave the pretense that they used to live in cold climate and they would have health problems with the heat of holy cities and they could not bear the long travel. The government decided to settle the issue as quick as possible and offered sheikh 25 000 piastre as travel allowance and 15 000 piastre salary and in case he would agree to go Medine, he would get sufficient grain allowances in the city.¹⁵⁶ The government tried to remove sheikh by moderate means, when there were only 200 men left around him and some of the tribes agreed to contribute the government in a military operation. Once Sheikh persuaded to go Musul, from there he could be moved to Medine. But sheikh strictly refused the direct route to Medine.¹⁵⁷ On 1st October, Sheikh Abdulkadir attacked Oramar with 300 of his men and controlled there. He began to settle at this

¹⁵⁵ Y. Prk Ask 14/38, the telegraph of the Hakkari governor, 18 september. Urmiye governor's printed decree dated 16 September and is in the file Y. Prk. Ask 15/18

¹⁵⁶ Y. Prk Azj 6/1 sheikh's petition, Y. Prk Ask 14/39 and 14/40 contains the views of Kamil about sheikh. Government offered (3 erdeb for each month and one erdep was 1000 kıyye) Y. Prk Bşk 7/90, 26th September.

¹⁵⁷ Nafiz paşa suggested to arresting sheikh whereas Kamil Beg favored a moderate attitude. Y. Prk. 7/95

defensible district and tried to control the surroundings from there.¹⁵⁸ Sheikh still insisted to settle in Musul rather than in Medine and asked for safety and his allowances. He gave oath to send his son Abdulkadir to Istanbul, if his request was accepted. Sheikh was completely isolated and his bargains were seen as endeavors for gaining time.

At last sixty of his family moved to the Evliyan village on the road to Musul, but sheikh did not move from Nehri because of his illness. The deadline finished on 5th November, Ahmed Ratip Beğ stayed in his house to prevent his escape with a help of 40 regular soldiers and 20 men of the greater son, Mehmet Sıdık, who had already declared that he was ready to serve if his father would not keep his promises.¹⁵⁹ His son Abdulkadir planned to evade his family from Evliyan and bring them to Oramar, but he could not leave Oramar despite the military blockade and operations. Sheikh Ubeydullah moved to Evliyan village and waited for his son, but when he understood that Abdulkadir could not leave Oramar, he decided to leave to Şepitan village.

It was understood that Sheikh would not go Musul without arrest. While Kamil Paşa sent to with 160 soldiers another regiment was also dispatched after him. At the Gerdi pass the soldiers clashed with a group around 200 men. The group could not resist the cannon fire and retreated. Kamil Paşa expected a resistance in the Şepitan village and asked the help of three regiments. There were already three regiments of 6th Army at Kanireş and they moved to Şepitan village under command of Huseyin Paşa. Together with the Huseyin Paşa forces, Kamil Beg attacked the village on 24 November. Sheikh Ubeydullah sheltered in one of the houses when he met the cannon fire. Abdulkadir was two hours far away from the village with 400 men and tried to help his father. When there was no possibility of escape, Sheikh Ubeydullah accepted to submit. There were no casualties from both sides after seven hours of

¹⁵⁸ Y. prk Ask 14/50 and 14/22.

¹⁵⁹ Y. Prk Azj 6/7 Seyh Sıddık petition, Y. Prk Bşk 7/97 Kamil Beg's telegraph There was a serious conflict between the two sons of the sheikh. Three servants of Mehmed Sıddık were found dead around his village. Mehmed Sıddık was able to transfer his family to Persian side.

clashes. After two days Sheikh Abdulkadir also came near to his father in Şirvan. They were sent to Akra and then to Musul under the control of four regiments.¹⁶⁰

They arrived Musul on 7 December and after a month they were sent to Medine via Iskenderun. On 10 February they were in Kilis and on they arrived in Beyrut on 17 March, 1882. Sheikh died in Medine in autumn of 1883. His son Abdulkadir remained there until the 1908 take over by İttihat Terakki. He entered parliament as Hakkari deputy. Seyh Mehmed Sıddık had fled to region and he refrained from harming the order¹⁶¹. Later he got very influential in the region.

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Y. A. res. 162/20 fotokopisi verilmedi

Y. Askeri maruzat: 5/2

Z. 1297-Z-19

Vanda bulunan müşir Sami Paşa'nın 10 teşrin sani 96 tarihle şifreli yazılan telgrafnamenin suretidir.

Ol taraflar vukuatına dair taraf-ı valalarına gelen şifreli telgrafname celbi takdimi manzuru ali buyrulmuştur. Şu aralık Şeyh Ubeydullah Efendi hakkında istiamel eylediğiniz lisan efendi-i mumaileyh ileride uğraşmak fikirinde bulunduğunuzu ima ima ediyor bunun esbab-ı mucabi ve mecburesi anlaşılmadığından fikrinizi büyük sevk eden evamir ve talimat tarafdandır ahz olunmuştur ve kimlerle muhabere buyrulmuştur sserien işarı Nusha olunanın aynıdır Harb nazırı kulları

Y. Askeri Maruzat:5/46

1298-M-19

4. Orduyu Humayun müşiri olup Vanda bulunan Nafiz Paşanın Harbiye Nezaretine murud 10 Kanun-u evvel 96 ?8) tarihli telgrafname suretidir.

Musul ve Hakkari taraflarından alınan malumata göre elhamd saye-i hazret-i padişahide hudud babında emniyet ve asayiş berkemal olarak vukuatı adiyeye dahi olmadığı anlaşılmış olduğu arz olunur.nussha olunan aynıdır. Harb Nazırı kulları

Y. Askeri Maruzat:14/8

1299-L-6

Dördüncü Orduyu Hümayun müşiriyeti celilesine İstizan-ı rey ve mutalaa-i devletleri havi keşide olunan telgrafname-i aczi üzerine cevaben varid olan emr-i telgrafiyeleri maen malumu-u senaveri olmuş ve şeyhin derdesti hakkında ne bapta mumamelede olunması icap edeceğine dair akdemce lazım gelen mahalden evamir-i muktezayinin taraf-ı devletlerine tebliği buyrulmuş olduğu telgrafname-i asifaneleri elinden? Anlaşılmış

olduğundan Bu halde senaverlerine bir güne muamelenin tayini cihetine gidilemeyeceği bu babta her ne vechle sayı ve gayret buyrulduğu takdirde nezd-i şahanedemucep olacağı ve feriben dahi mukafati görüleceği şimdiden tebşir ederim. O babta 9 ağustos

0100580

Kulce, Suleyman

Osmanli tarihine Arnavutluk

[s.n.] Izmir 19440100580

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Osmanli tarihine Arnavutluk

[s.n.] Izmir 1944