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THE OTTOMAN CENTRALIZATION POLICY TOWARDS EASTERN PROVINCES BEFORE THE TANZIMAT EDICT

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Abstract

At the beginning of the XIXth century, due to prolonged wars, never ending rebellions and misgovernment in provinces, the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse. In this period, many domestic powers arose in eastern provinces because of ineffective authority as it was in the other parts of the empire. Kurdish chieftains and tribes were among those domestic powers, and they acted almost independent from the Ottoman governors. They paid nothing to the state treasury and even refrained from assisting government in the wars of Ottoman-Russian, and Ottoman-Persian. After Mahmud II ascends the throne, he had to re-establish the state authority throughout the empire. Besides, he had to remove all the lord of valleys, who were de facto partners of the government in the matter of sharing taxes and territories, and stringently opposed the reforms. In this context, the main aim of this article is to find out why the Ottomans had to conduct the centralization policy, and how was the situation of the Kurds before this policy. And also to examine how this strategy affected the lifestyle of the Kurds and how they reacted to increasingly centralized government

Keywords: Centralization Policy, Reşit Pasha, Hafız Pasha, Kurds.

Tanzimat Fermanı Öncesi Doğu Vilayetlerine Yönelik Osmanlı Merkezileşme Politikası

Özet

Osmanlı yönetimi uzun süren savaşlar, bitmek bilmeyen iç isyanlar ve kötü yönetim nedeniyle 19. Yüzyılın başlarında gücünü tamamen yitirmişti. Bu süreçte imparatorluğun genelinde olduğu gibi doğu vilayetlerinde de otorite boşluğundan faydalanan çok sayıda yerel güçler ortaya çıkmıştı. Hükümetin zayıflığı nedeniyle

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buralarda bulunan Kürt beyleri ve aşiretleri neredeyse tamamen bağımsız hareket etmişlerdi. Bunlar devlet hazinesine herhangi bir katkı sağlamamışlar ve hatta Osmanlı-İran ve Osmanlı-Rus savaşlarında hükümete destek olmamışlardı. Sultan II. Mahmut başa geçtiği andan itibaren, bütün imparatorlukta devlet otoritesini yeniden tesis etmek zorunda kalmıştı. Bunun yanında hükümetin vergi toplama hakkına ve topraklarına fiilen ortak olan ve reformlara ciddi şekilde direnen tüm derebeylerini uzaklaştırmak zorunda kalmıştı. Bu makalenin amacı Osmanlıların neden merkezileşme politikasını uyguladığını ve merkezileşme politikası öncesinde Kürtlerin durumunun nasıl olduğunu anlamaktır. Bunun yanında bu politikanın Kürtlerin yaşam tarzını nasıl etkilediği ve Kürtlerin merkezileşme siyasetine karşı nasıl tepkiler verdiğini tespit etmektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Merkezileşme Politikası, Reşit Paşa, Hafız Paşa, Kürtler.

Introduction

Generally, the Ottoman Kurds were living in the high mountainous area, between the Euphrates and the frontier of Iran. This region had been conquered by the Ottomans after the fights against the Safavids, during the eras of Selim I and Suleyman I. The Kurds, who were mostly Sunnis, often became the ally of the Turks in the battlefield as they were members of the same sect. The Ottoman sultans gave administration of some *sancaks* (i.e. districts) to the Kurdish *bey*s (i.e. chiefs) in return for their services. These districts, which were called *Yurtluk-Ocaklık* and *Hükümet*, had autonomic government and differed from the other Ottoman *sancaks*. According to the Ottoman codes, the Kurdish governors had to be chosen from the members of the *bey*'s family. Even if a *bey* rebels against the central government and then he is seized and executed, one of his sons or relatives had to be assigned as a governor to the same *sancak*. In return for the rights given to them, the *bey*s had to defend their districts, attend the battles with the Ottoman army, and obey the orders of the sultan unconditionally. In the XVIth century, the *bey*s performed their responsibilities without hesitation. For instance, some of those who joined the campaign to Georgia in 1578, fought to the death and Mir Mehmet Bey of Cizre, Saruhan Bey of Hazro, Duman Bey of Zirki and Mir Mehmet of Finik died in the battlefield².

The administrative system founded during the classical Ottoman period was still in force at the beginning of the XIXth century. However, the relations between the *bey*s and the central government changed completely. The Kurdish *bey*s, who were once the vanguards of the Sultan's army and fighting zealously, started to act extremely free and even disregarded the orders of the sultan, because of weakness of the Ottoman central government. For example, in the year of 1802, the *bey* of Cizre could request to be exempted from the war, even though he had been ordered to do so³. Furthermore, when

² Şerefhan, *Şerefname Kürt Tarihi*, (Çev. M. Emin Bozarıslan), Hasat Yayınları, İstanbul 1990, p.152.

³ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*, (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives), henceforth BOA, HAT, 272/15927, 1217 (1802).

Hasan Khan, the commander of the Persian army, entered the Ottoman territories on the 10th of September 1821 and at the same time Abbas Mirza, the crown prince of the Persia, occupied Beyazıt, Behlül Pasha of Beyazıt and Selim Pasha of Muş obeyed the Iranians without any slightest resistance⁴. In addition to this, during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1828-1829, the *beys* of Bohtan, Revanduz, Baban and Hakkari took a neutral position and refrained from assisting their sovereign⁵. After the war, Esat Pasha, governor of Erzurum, prepared a report regarding the Kurdish *beys*. According to this, it was impossible to supervise the *beys* without punishing them since they got used to acting independently for centuries. For that reason, he proposed to remove the Kurdish notables from their posts and confiscate all their properties. Perhaps he was the first person who made such a suggestion. According to him if his plan had been implemented, a considerable amount of money would have been flown into the state treasury, and the army would have recruited a high number of young men⁶.

The Influential Kurdish Notables in the Early of XIXth Century

In the beginning of XIXth century Mehmet Pasha of Revanduz was the most powerful *bey* among the Kurdish notables⁷ and strongly resisted the Porte to prevent the centralization policy of the government. It is reported that he always had thousands of armed men in his service⁸. So, the other Kurdish elites, who controlled the neighbouring districts and were afraid of his anger and punishment, had to obey him; his authority expanded from the borders of Iran to Cizre and Diyarbakır⁹.

Mir Seyfettin, who was the ally of Mehmet Pasha of Revanduz and accepted his sovereignty, governed the district of Cizre which acquired a legal status of *hükümet sancak* since the XVIth century¹⁰. Without a formal Ottoman presence, Cizre had become a shelter for deserters and a sanctuary of tribes who refused to perform the orders of the sultan¹¹. Cizre was also a source of soldiers for Mehmet Pasha, and he recruited thousands of men there¹². The khutba, which is one of the most significant symbols of sovereignty in the political Islamic tradition, was not read in the name of Sultan, but Mir Seyfettin or the *bey* of Revanduz¹³.

⁴ BOA, HAT, 816/37294 16.Ra.1237 (11 December 1821).

⁵ Michael Eppel, "The Demise of the Kurdish Emirates: The Impact of Ottoman Reforms and International Relations on Kurdistan during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, March 2008, p.247.

⁶ BOA, HAT, 794/36840-C, 25.Z.1247 (26 May 1832).

⁷ BOA, HAT, 448/22317-A, 2 Ca. 1250 (6 September 1834).

⁸ BOA, HAT, 395/20874-D, 1246 (1830).

⁹ BOA, HAT, 449/22346, 4 Za.1250 (4 March 1835).

¹⁰ BOA, HAT, 377/20477-I, 11 L. 1251 (30 January 1836); A.B. Cunningham, *The Early Correspondence of Richard Wood 1831-1841*, p.94.

¹¹ BOA, HAT, 1264/48950-A, 8.Ra.1252 (23 June 1836).

¹² BOA, HAT, 533/26254-B, 15 N.1251 (4 January 1836).

¹³ BOA, HAT, 288/17298-G, 21 M.1252 (8 May 1836).

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At the beginning of XIXth century, *hükümet* of Hakkari was governed by Mustafa Bey¹⁴. He was described as a ruler of the tribes of Hakkari by the Ottoman authorities¹⁵. From the XVIth century to the beginning of XIXth century the most worthy person to rule Hakkari was chosen among the family members of *beys* of Hakkari, and the name of chosen person was sent to Istanbul for confirmation. Then, the chosen *bey* was invited to the residence of the governor of Erzurum for offering his obedience, and thus he was officially accepted as the *bey* of Hakkari by the Sublime Porte. And Mustafa Bey was assigned to the *hükümet* of Hakkari in this way¹⁶.

There are many more documents regarding Hakkari in Ottoman archive than the other districts, so the most precise information concerning the assignment to the *hükümet sancaks* is about this district. For example, as Mustafa Bey was accused of collaborating with the Iranians and he was discharged in 1825¹⁷. According to the laws respecting *hükümet sancaks*, his son Nasırhan Bey was assigned instead of him. After a while, Nasırhan Bey died, and then Mustafa Bey who mended fences with the Porte became *bey* for the second time¹⁸. In the same year he died and his other son Ishak Bey was considered to be the worthy person for this post¹⁹. Perhaps, 1825 was the worst year for the *beys* of Hakkari because after several months Ishak Bey passed away and Nurullah, the last *bey*, and grandson of Mustafa Bey, was appointed to the *Hükümet* of Hakkari.²⁰ After his assignment, Nurullah Bey absolutely broke with the governor of Erzurum and acted completely independent from the central government²¹.

It is understood from the Ottoman documents that, the *beys* of Hakkari had a less reputation as compared with the other *beys* in the eye of the Ottoman government. While the Porte gave ranks such as colonel, brigadier to Selim Pasha of Muş and Behlül Pasha of Beyazıt, Mustafa Bey of Hakkari was not considered worthy for any grade, but was seen as a chieftain by the government²².

Khan Mahmut, the *bey* of the Müküs, and his brothers ruled the territory, situated between south of Lake Van and Iran border. Brothers had together acquired a lot of villages, which were not in their family possessions but belonged to Van²³. Thus, the

¹⁴ *The Missionary Herald, Reports from Northern Iraq 1833-1870, I*, (Ed. Kamal Salibi-Yusuf K. Khoury), Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Amman 1997, p.332.

¹⁵ *BOA, HAT*, 810/37204-H, 17.Ra.1247, (26 August 1831).

¹⁶ *BOA, HAT*, 825/37404-Z, 8.R.1236 (13 January 1821).

¹⁷ *BOA, HAT*, 808/37198-E, 7.R.1241 (19 November 1825).

¹⁸ *BOA, HAT*, 794/36859-C, 19.M.1238, (6 October 1822).

¹⁹ *BOA, HAT*, 808/37198-A, 29.Ra.1241 (11 November 1825).

²⁰ Ömer Toraman, *Tanzimat'ın Yurtluk-Ocaklık ve Hükümet Sancaklarında Uygulanması (1839-1864)*, Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Basılmamış Doktora Tezi, Elazığ 2010, p.125.

²¹ *BOA, HAT*, 733/34800, 23.R.1243 (13 November 1827).

²² *BOA, HAT*, 671/32853, 1234 (1818).

²³ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan, Brant, 1 June 1839; *BOA, HAT*, 812/37250-G, 15 S.1241 (29 September 1825).

number of villages in their hands increased more than three hundred²⁴. An Ottoman archive document dated 1838 mentions that Khan Mahmut acted waywardly for more than twenty years, and paid nothing to the state revenue²⁵. He had some three thousand men in his service²⁶. He obtained this military power by plundering the Akdamar and Çarpanak monasteries²⁷. He also made frequent incursions over the Persian border for the sake of plunder and even looted Turkish subjects²⁸. The tribes, who did not obey him, had no chance to locate in this region. For instance, the Haydaranlı tribe disobeyed him and therefore had to migrate to Iran²⁹. As Khan Mahmut and his brothers got stronger in time, they started to threaten territories of neighbouring *beys* and even plundered villages of Cizre and Bohtan³⁰.

The *sancak* of Beyazıt, on the frontiers of Persia and Russia, was governed by Behlül Pasha. His ancestors had several generations ruled Beyazıt dependent on governors of Erzurum, but the father of Behlül Pasha, named Mahmut, established a real independence. Behlül Pasha with his acts showed that he had neither energy nor capacity to govern such a district situated in an extremely strategic important place, on the frontiers of three states. This region was exposed continuously to the incursions of Kurdish tribes and Behlül Pasha never intended to prevent these lawless events³¹.

As far as it is understood from the documents, in XIXth century Selim Pasha was the first governor of Muş which is situated in the west of the Van Lake. His family had a lot of villages in this district and governed them for many years. As Muş was on a wide plain, the central government was stronger than the others mountainous Kurdish districts³². The *beys* of Muş supported the Porte when there were rebels against the government, but they were punished by the Ottoman authorities when they disobey the government, too. For example, Selim Pasha was decapitated in 1828 by Galip Pasha, governor of Erzurum, because in 1823 he did not help to the Ottoman army against the Iranians in the battlefield and he only watched the defeat of the Ottoman powers, though he had thousands of cavalries under his command³³. After his death, Emin Pasha, one of the sons of Selim Pasha, took over his father's post.

Perhaps, the only Kurdish *bey* who assisted the Ottoman army in Russian war of 1828-1829 was Emin Pasha. Although, the Russians tried to win Emin Pasha over and

²⁴ BOA, HAT, 448/22324, 4 S.1254 (23 October 1838).

²⁵ BOA, HAT, 448/22335-C, 21 S. 1254 (9 October 1838).

²⁶ BOA, HAT, 452/22386, 25 Za.1254 (9 February 1839).

²⁷ BOA, HAT, 448/22324, 4 S.1254 (23 October 1838).

²⁸ FO, 78/338, Reports on the Trade of Erzerum and Sketch of the State of the Pashalic and Its Dependencies, 7 February 1838.

²⁹ BOA, C. DH, 95/4227, 1255 (1839).

³⁰ BOA, HAT, 448/22335-D, 3 N.1254 (20 November 1838).

³¹ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

³² BOA, HAT, 1227/47928-F, 21.S.1223 (18 April 1808).

³³ Cevdet Paşa, Tarih-i Cevdet, XII, p.12.

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offered him 200.000 ducats, together with the investiture of Muş, Van and Beyazıt, he denied this offer and attacked the Russians but lost a significant portion of his men³⁴.

The authority of the *beys* in the Ottoman administration system was nominally quite limited. They could take up only their legal province and never interfere with the neighbouring districts. But in practice, they were the members of centuries-old ruling families and commanded armed nomad tribes. So, they became the most influential and powerful persons in Kurdistan and controlled over large areas out of their legal administrative area³⁵. Moreover, many of the *beys* obtained a spiritual personality by putting forward that they were descended from Halit bin Velit, a close friend of prophet Muhammad. For that reason, the Kurds were obedient and respectful to their *beys*. So, a *bey* could not only cease the conflicts among the tribes but also could launch new fights³⁶. Although the Kurdish notables were opposed to the authority of the central government and were often in rebellion, they established some safe zones for the people. Most of the Ottoman governors were incapable of ruling their districts and never ensured the necessary safety for the people. Even some of them caused oppressions and tyrannies that prevailed throughout the country³⁷. For that reason, people left their villages and moved to the lands that controlled by the *beys* who they considered as their protectors. So, nomad tribes or the other looters could not dare to raid them under the protection of the chiefs, because those, who attack the territory of the *beys*, could not escape from being punished. This migration provided a peaceful life to them and made *beys* stronger than before in terms of human and economic resources.

Each of the *beys* had a fortified castle on the impassable mountains. For example, the castle of Kasr-ı Geli, belonging to the *beys* of Cizre, was built on a precipice place, and situated on the Kasrik Valley that separating the Mount of Gabar and the Mount of Cudi. It was very difficult to capture this castle according to the technological conditions of that time. Besides, according to the Ottoman documents, the castle of Hoşap or Mahmudiye, belonging to the Khan Mahmut, could not have been seized even if it was surrounded by thousands of soldiers for six months³⁸.

There were a lot of people in service of the *beys* and lived on an amount of money paid by them. Although the Sublime Porte was extremely uncomfortable with the *beys*, it could not dare to dismiss them. If the *beys* and their servants had lost their privileges, they might have caused inevitable social reactions³⁹. For that reason authorities, having not

³⁴ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

³⁵ Fatih Gencer, "Merkezileşme Politikaları Sürecinde Yurtluk-Ocaklık Sisteminin Değişimi" Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi, Sayı: 49, 2011, p.79.

³⁶ BOA, HAT, 288/17298-G, 21 M.1252 (8 May 1836).

³⁷ Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gulhane Rescript", *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol.34, Issue 2 (Nov. 1994). pp. 177-78.

³⁸ BOA, HAT, 452/22387, 25 Za.1254 (9 February 1839).

³⁹ BOA, HAT, 490/24028-C, 3 Z.1250 (2 April 1835).

enough power and fearing of a large-scale rebellion, were only watching the strengthening of the *beys* from day to day⁴⁰.

It was a usual habit of the powerful *beys* to attack the weaker ones to expand their territories. For example, in beginning of the XIXth century, the *beys* of Bitlis were subdued by Selim Pasha of Muş and took the control of their lands. Selim Pasha also plundered the territories of the *beys* of Çapakçur, who had not enough power to resist the attacks. Those who were attacked could only save their lives by fleeing to the mountains with some goods they could carry. Selim Pasha confiscated Hınıs and Tekman districts, belonging to his relatives,⁴¹ and attacked Sheikh Ahmet, governor of Ahlat and Adilcevaz, and captured his territories⁴².

Khan Mahmut, the governor of Müküs, wanted to be the most influential chief in the Van-Hakkari region and his power disturbed not only the Porte but also the neighbouring Kurdish *beys*. Mir Seyfettin of Cizre was at the head of those who reacted to this menace. Nurullah Bey was also worried excessively about changing the balance of power around his lands⁴³. Soon after, Nurullah and Seyfettin understood the danger; they united against Khan Mahmut⁴⁴. Ultimately this crisis sparked off a war and the allied *beys* attacked Vastan and Müküs, and defeated Khan Mahmut's forces after the conflicts that continued over forty days⁴⁵.

An Overview of the Nomad Kurdish Tribes

Along with the influential Kurdish chiefs, the inhabitant of some mountainous regions, who lived in tribes, did not accept the Sultan as ruler. One of these was Dersim, described as Doojik both in Ottoman archival documents and British consular reports. According to Reşit Pasha, governor of Sivas, the inhabitant of Dersim was composed of two big tribes named Şeyh Hasanlı or Hasananlı and Dersimli⁴⁶. Sometimes Dersimli was called Şahhüseynoğlu, the name of the important family of this tribe, by the authorities⁴⁷. The people of Dersim who were Alevi and accepted as heterodox by the Sunnis, used to live independently from not only the interference of government but also all of the external influences. According to the Ottoman authorities, Dersim comprised of two districts, named Ovacık and Kuzucan, and several small towns. It was estimated that the population of Dersim was about 20.000 and the people, occupied there, lived in tribes and could bring into field eight thousand armed men⁴⁸. They lived in villages in winter, and in spring they climbed mountains for pasturing their herd and occupying around the highlands until autumn. In the time of harvest, the people of agriculture had to turn to

⁴⁰ Sarah D. Shields, *Mosul before Iraq*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2000, p.33.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *BOA, HAT*, 812/37250-K, 1241 (1825).

⁴³ *BOA, HAT*, 448/22324, 4 S.1254 (23 October 1838).

⁴⁴ *BOA, HAT*, 448/22335-D, 3 N.1254 (20 November 1838).

⁴⁵ *BOA, I MSM*, 48/1225-28, 4 S.1258 (17 March 1842).

⁴⁶ *BOA, HAT*, 447/22311-B, 10 B.1251 (1 November 1835).

⁴⁷ *BOA, I MSM*, 51/1311-6, 29 Ca.1263 (15 May 1847)

⁴⁸ *BOA, I MSM*, 51/1334-4, 1264 (1848).

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their villages to reap crops and prepared for winter⁴⁹. Indeed, some of Dersimis were farmers, however, sometimes the grains were not enough to feed the people because of the insufficiency of the arable lands. So, the tribes often grappled for lands and agricultural products⁵⁰. Probably, the limited cultivable lands also forced the Dersimis to perform harmful behaviours such as robbery and plunder which disturbed the neighbouring districts.

Dersim region was like a natural castle, consisting of impassable mountains, dense forest, and deep valleys formed by streams. The only way to Dersim was a narrow path bordered by precipices. Even a rock thrown from above, could close this way for the powers accepted as foreigner⁵¹. Reşit Pasha who commanded a military operation to there in 1835, was astounded to see such inaccessible mountains and forest. He said in his report regarding his expedition that when he saw the geographical conditions of Dersim, he understood why the state authority could not be established around there until that moment⁵².

Another mountainous region called Garzan, situated in the highland area south of the Van Lake, was very difficult to be controlled by the Porte. The authorities could neither recruit nor collect taxes from there. It was considered as one of the highest regions of the East Anatolia, and the way to Garzan passed through deep valleys which were formed by the tributaries of Tigris. It was such a dangerous road that the armies had never dared to cross. It was estimated that the inhabitant of Garzan could bring into field thirty thousand armed men, and they threatened the road safety of Diyarbakır⁵³.

The district of Şirvan, in Diyarbakır, was under the control of Yezidis. Because it is situated on mountainous terrain, the government forces could not enter there, and so, Yezidis lived independently for centuries⁵⁴. The other place where Yezidis lived was Sincar (Shengal) Mountain, containing thirty villages⁵⁵. There were many caves on the cliff that hundreds of people could shelter in case of danger. The way to the caves passed through a narrow passage, and it was impossible to climb those without a staircase or a rope⁵⁶.

The Sincar Mountain had such a strategic position, controlling the most critical way extending from Mardin to Mosul, that all the caravans and travellers had to pass this road. The Yezidis of Sincar could plunder the caravans and easily disappear without leaving behind a trace⁵⁷. It was an ordinary event for beys, governors, and tribes to attack

⁴⁹ BOA, I.MVL, 165/4891-1, 28 Ra.1266 (11 February 1850).

⁵⁰ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, Dam Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, p.20.

⁵¹ FO, 78/870, Brant to Palmerston, 22 July 1851.

⁵² BOA, HAT, 447/22311-B, 10 B.1251 (1 November 1835).

⁵³ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, Defa 168.

⁵⁴ BOA, HAT, 107/4270, 1222 (1807).

⁵⁵ Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları*, (Çev. Hayrullah Ors), Remzi Kitapevi, İstanbul 1999, p.214.

⁵⁶ BOA, HAT, 1333/51988, 20 S.1253 (26 May 1837).

⁵⁷ FO, 78/401, Rassam to Brant, 21 December 1840.

Yezidis and captive them. In response to this, when the Yezidis found a chance for vengeance, they tried to take revenge by murdering travellers without mercy. According to Ainsworth, it was impossible for a Muslim to escape from them⁵⁸.

In this period the greater portion of cultivators in east Anatolia were Armenians. However, some of the Kurds were also involved in agriculture. But the significant part of the Kurdish population was comprised of the nomad tribes. They used to live in tents in summer among the mountains, busy with their herds and flocks⁵⁹. When the cold forced them, the tribes returned gradually from the high grounds to the Christian's villages where they lived in winter. This custom was called *Kışlak*, or winter quarters. The villagers had to prepare hay and straw for the tribes three times more than their needs⁶⁰. The tribes paid for dwelling and what the villagers prepared, but the payment wasn't given to the peasants but to the governor of Erzurum without the cognizance of the Porte⁶¹.

The nomad tribes used to damage the inhabitants and attack caravans, passengers and capture whatever they find. The country from Ankara to the confines of Persian and Arabia were converted into pastures by Kurds for their herds. The people did not dare to go out from their city unless with strong guards for the fear of being murdered or plundered by the Kurds⁶².

In the first part of the XIXth century, due to insecurity and the lack of central authority, this region was like a desolate place that the trade was extremely restricted, and the farmers were only producing enough for their own needs. So, the country became poorer day by day. This bad situation was shown by a lot of documents of the authorities. Diyarbakır, once a city of large trade and a great population, became only a second-rate town⁶³ and 1200 villages of it were completely abandoned⁶⁴. Also Malazgirt and Bulanık had 120 villages and 100 of them were turned into ruin⁶⁵. Due to bad governance and unsettled state, Van turned into a devastated town, according to the documents it had no use for the state economy⁶⁶. Beyazıt was in a completely miserable situation⁶⁷. And Mosul fell into ruin because of the invasion of Bedouin⁶⁸.

When the tribes in frontier lines heart that they would be punished for their disobedience by the Ottoman forces, they could escape easily. For instance, the tribes in Kars, when were intervened, fled to Beyazıt, Van, and Hakkari where they could cross

⁵⁸ W. Francis Ainsworth, "The Assyrian Origin of the Izedis or Yezidis-the So-Called Devil Worshippers", *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, Vol. 1 (1861), p.14

⁵⁹ *FO*, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords and the Operations of Reshid Mehmet Pasha, 11 May 1836.

⁶⁰ *BOA*, *I,MSM*, 51/1334-1, 1264 (1848).

⁶¹ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

⁶² *FO*, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords.

⁶³ *BOA*, *HAT*, 80/3319. 7.Za.1220 (27 January 1806).

⁶⁴ *BOA*, *I,MVL*, 106/2410-1, 1.N.1263 (13 August 1847).

⁶⁵ *BOA*, *I,MSM*, 52/1345-1, 1264 (1848).

⁶⁶ *BOA*, *HAT*, 107/4245,1221 (1806).

⁶⁷ *BOA*, *HAT*, 812/37250-K, 1241(1825).

⁶⁸ *BOA*, *HAT*, 1336/52128, 19 S.1253 (25 May 1837).

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the frontier to Iran⁶⁹. As these tribes had pastures both in Ottoman and Iran territories they lived in these two countries. For example, 480 the tents of Celali tribe located on the Ottomans' territory and 460 of on Iran's region⁷⁰. Since they were often on the move from the border of one state to the land of another country in order to plunder or find pastures for their herds, they caused severe troubles between two states which sometimes resulted in battles. It was also so difficult to understand which tribe belonged to which state: the Ottomans or the Iranians.

Insecurity in the country did not only harm the inhabitants but also threatened the lives of nomad tribes, as the hostilities and mutually ruinous plunder never came to an end. Sometimes, even a conflict could take place among the members of the same tribe. For example, Hüso, a member of Haydaranlı tribe, was raided by his enemies, members of the same tribe, at midnight. They killed him and even wounded his son who was nine years old, and they confiscated three hundred sheep, ten horses, and a sum of money of him⁷¹. So, the Kurds, who did not want to be caught unprepared, were always armed; they carried a lance, a brace of pistols, a small bell-mouthed blunderbuss, a sword, and shield. The tribes never had many tents in the same place, only five to ten tents could be seen together. They collected their men by beating drums on the hills, and the signal was repeated from camp to camp when danger approached. Sultan Agha, the chief of the Haydaranlı tribe, said that he could summon about 150 horsemen well equipped for battle in an hour by this way⁷².

Although the Kurdish tribes caused some considerable problems for the Ottomans and the Iranians, they were seen as a source of taxation by the two states. For that reason, in XIXth century while Iran tried to expand her authority towards Hakkari and the other places inhabited by the Kurds, the Ottomans were attempting to put the tribes under their influence. Indeed, this vast country, occupied by these crowded tribes, was actually accepted belong to the state on which the tribes were de facto dependent⁷³.

The Kurds, were also considered as a military ally, could always furnish a large body of irregular cavalry. According to a report dated 1816 presented to the Porte; Selim Pasha of Muş, Behlül Pasha of Beyazıt, and Mustafa Bey of Hakkari governed the tribes whose numbers were more than tens of thousands. It was possible to recruit near a hundred thousand men from the districts of Muş, Beyazıt, and Hakkari. If the *beys* were faithful to the state and acted in accordance with the Porte's governor, the central government could be stronger; and in case of the emergency, the Kurdish forces could maintain the order and the safety of the community until the soldiers were dispatched from Constantinople⁷⁴. Mr Brant, who was consul of England in Erzurum, stated similar

⁶⁹ BOA, MVL, 127/4, 3 B. 1265 (25 May 1849).

⁷⁰ Derviş Pasha, Tâhdîd-i Hudûd-ı İraniyeye Memur Derviş Paşa Lâyihası, Matbaa-i Amire, İstanbul 1286, p. 160.

⁷¹ BOA, LMSM, 50/1260-2, 1263 (1847).

⁷² FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan

⁷³ BOA, HAT, 1227/47925-E, 19.Ra.1234 (16 February 1819).

⁷⁴ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

expression in his report dated 1836 and said:⁷⁵ “If all the Kurds were subjugated, from Angora to the country of the *Bey* of Ravendooz, they certainly could furnish much above 100.000 men.”

The nomad tribes were used as vanguards by both the Ottomans and Iranians for plundering the enemy's territories. For example in the year of 1822 Abbas Mirza led his tribes to loot the villages of Van and Erciş⁷⁶. In response to this, Sert Mahmut Pasha the governor of Van dispatched Osman, the chief of Ertoşi tribe, to the lands of the Persians in order to take revenge⁷⁷.

Each of the tribes divided into groups and each group was comprised of the septs. The Haydaranlı tribe is examined as an example of the tribal structure since both the Ottoman and English sources spelt this tribe out. According to Consul Brant, Haydaranlı tribe divided into two groups, and these two groups commanded by two brothers of whom names are Kasım Agha and Sultan Agha. One of these two groups was in Persia commanded by Kasım Agha, and the other one was in Ottoman territory of which chieftain was Sultan Agha. When a chief died, the elders of a Kurdish tribe elected a successor among the other members of the ruling family: an uncle, a brother, a cousin or a relative. In fact, any member of the family who was in the general opinion endowed with most bravery or judgment became the chief of the tribe⁷⁸.

The Centralization Policy of the Ottomans towards the Eastern Provinces

As soon as Mahmut II ascended the Ottoman throne, he was determined to restore the power of the sultan in the eastern provinces at all costs. It meant that he would root out the notables who did not obey the orders of the central government in those provinces, and he would replace them with governors sent from Istanbul⁷⁹. This policy imposed in the eastern provinces after the first stage of the Egypt Question in 1833. When the Treaty of Kütahya signed, Sultan Mahmut appointed Reşit Mehmet Pasha, the former grand vizier, as a governor of Sivas to strengthen the authority of state. He was also charged to defend this region which was under danger of the occupation of the Egyptians who had captured Syria and threatened to invade the Anatolia. First, The Porte ordered Pasha to improve the Kurdistan and to bring the rebels under the control of the central government. So, the Porte gave the control of Harput, Diyarbakır and Rakka to Reşit Pasha, he was rigged with extraordinary powers⁸⁰. Hence, he governed a vast region that lied from Sivas to Van, Hakkari, and Mosul. Indeed, the centralization struggles in eastern provinces were preliminary preparation for inevitable war with Egyptians. The pasha would root out the Kurdish *beys*, reinforce his army with recruits from the tribes and eventually he would fight Ibrahim Pasha⁸¹.

⁷⁵ *FO*, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords.

⁷⁶ *BOA, HAT*, 766/36124-C, 5.Ra.1238 (7 November 1822).

⁷⁷ *BOA, HAT*, 791/36817-E, 1.Z.1237 (19 August 1822)

⁷⁸ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

⁷⁹ Abu-Manneh, p.179.

⁸⁰ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, Defa 80-89; *BOA, HAT*, 698/33706-D, 1249 (1833).

⁸¹ *BOA, HAT*, 377/20487-A, 29 L.1250 (28 February 1835).

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The greater part of the Kurdish tribes around Sivas at once showed their loyalty to the pasha, and accepted the conditions dictated to them by him, such as payment of tax and furnishing recruits for the regular army. After a while, the Pasha established his headquarters at Harput to fight with the powerful Kurdish *beys* in the eastern side of the Euphrates and so he began to concentrate on his forces, and gradually transferred his artillery to there⁸².

When the pasha went to Diyarbakır and dispatched his troops to Mosul for a strength show, most of the *beys* around Harput obeyed him. But they were not sincere in their submission, and watched for an opportunity to revolt. Because they understood that their all privileges would gradually be disposed by the pasha, and then, if they did not serve the state, they would not have been allowed to be administrators as they used to be⁸³.

Reşit Pasha, after subjugating the North of Kurdistan, gradually overran Mesopotamia, and removed all of the opponents⁸⁴. During the period of his administration, he rooted out Mehmet Pasha of Revanduz and the *beys* of Zirki. He also defeated a rebel which broke out in Mardin. The Pasha was the first person who dared to enter into Dersim without artillery support and established the state authority in there. He captured Cizre and abolished its status of *hükümet*; so the process of the removing administrative system, which was founded in the XVIth century, was started. After the tiring expeditions, Reşit Pasha suddenly passed away in 1836, and Hafız Pasha was appointed to his post⁸⁵.

Hafız Pasha was ordered to solve the Egyptian problem by fighting with Ibrahim Pasha's troops in Syria. But first, he had to establish the state authority which started to ruin after the death of Reşit Pasha. Hafız Pasha organised expeditions to Garzan, Cizre, Sincar Mountain, Telafer and Akçadağ between the years of 1836-1839.

When a *bey* was subdued by using force, he was exiled to the European part of the empire and then the revenues of his district and also his own private properties were impounded on behalf of the central government except the money he got from the state per month⁸⁶. The capture of the *beys* enforced the Porte and gave the Sultan a complete control over Kurdistan, and enabled the strengthening of the state treasury with the restoration of the territory⁸⁷.

In fact, the people of the rural areas in the eastern provinces did not face with the state authority for a long time and knew nothing about the conception of the state. For that reason, most of the Kurds had never subjected to the pashas and never given anything

⁸² FO, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords.

⁸³ BOA, HAT, 377/20487-A, 29 L.1250 (28 February 1835).

⁸⁴ A.B. Cunningham, p.93.

⁸⁵ Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum (1826-1839)*, Kitapevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p.248.

⁸⁶ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan.

⁸⁷ FO, 78/367, Report on the Trade of Erzeroom for the Year 1838, and a Sketch of the State of the Pashalik, 12 March 1839.

such as tax for centuries; and they could not understand why now they should be forced to do so, as a result, they preferred to resist to the pashas⁸⁸.

Reşit and Hafız Pashas acted relentlessly to those who did not obey the government orders and rebelled against the state. For instance, the Garzan insurrection in 1835 was suppressed very strictly by Reşit Pasha, and a lot of people were put to the sword⁸⁹. Hafız Pasha also tried to control this mountainous land and set tens of villages on fire⁹⁰.

Indeed, the peace and the quietude in the region depended primarily on the fear of Hafız and Reşit Pashas. The *beys* or tribes had to obey the orders when they felt the pashas were closer to them. But if the pashas went to the remote provinces they could easily rebel again. For example, when Reşit Pasha went to Mardin, the rumours spread through the whole country that he was appointed to Baghdad and so a disorder occurred among tribes around the Harput. When he returned to Harput, it was said that the pasha was assigned to the Rumelia and this time the Garzan Kurds rebelled⁹¹. It is revealed that the tribes identified the state with Reşit Pasha. The Pasha who comprehended this sense decided to build a governor's residence and a barracks of six thousand soldiers in Harput which was on the centre of the region under his administration⁹². So, he wanted to show the tribes that he, in other words the state, stayed consistently in the area⁹³.

Building barracks, which started the era of Reşit Pasha and also continued the period of Hafız Pasha, was substantial evidence which demonstrated the foundation of central authority in the eastern part of the empire. Thus, people could see the presence of state power, for that reason Hafız Pasha gave a particular importance to the barrack, built in Nusaybin, to make the building look grandiosely⁹⁴. These two-tier barracks were stone buildings that several hundreds of the soldiers could stay in it⁹⁵. After it was completed, the Bedouins who got used to plunder this district had to turn into the wasteland because of the fear of soldiers⁹⁶. Furthermore, the Shammar tribe, who had thousands of cavalries, had to leave Nusaybin⁹⁷. So the people, who left their villages before, returned and started to cultivate without the fear of plundering. Also, since many members of tribes were settled in this area, the population of Nusaybin increased considerably⁹⁸.

According to Reşit Pasha, the most important reason why the state authority could not be established so far was the inadequate roads. For that reason, he made a carriage road from Samsun to Sivas and Harput to facilitate his communications with the capital,

⁸⁸ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a Part of Koordistan.

⁸⁹ *BOA, HAT*, 453/22414-G, 17 Ca.1252 (30 August 1836).

⁹⁰ Moltke, pp.233-234.

⁹¹ *BOA, HAT*, 451/22359, 1 C.1251 (24 September 1835).

⁹² Moltke, p.187.

⁹³ *BOA, HAT*, 451/22358, 1 C.1251 (24 September 1835).

⁹⁴ *BOA, HAT*, 448/22332-A, 13 Ra.1253 (17 June 1837).

⁹⁵ *BOA, HAT*, 493/24220-A, 13 N.1254 (30 November 1838).

⁹⁶ *BOA, HAT*, 450/22350-G, 21 C.1253 (22 September 1837).

⁹⁷ Moltke, p. 213.

⁹⁸ *BOA, HAT*, 493/24220-A, 13 N.1254 (30 November 1838).

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so he aimed to convey the artillery and stores sent from Istanbul easily and speedily⁹⁹. When he organised an expedition to Dersim, he decided to enlarge the forest roads by cutting trees. So, the soldiers, the artillery and the ammunition could easily be dispatched throughout the forest, and so the Dersimis would have understood that the troops could enter to the inaccessible places and there would be no choice but to obey the orders of the state¹⁰⁰.

Building the roads represented a significant step towards the centralization in the eastern part of the empire. But the high mountain ranges in the region and the deep valleys formed by the rivers made transportation very difficult. There was no bridge on the Euphrates although it passed through hundreds of kilometres. For that reason, Hafız Pasha took note of the river transportation and ordered the engineers to research the streamline of the Euphrates. They worked on the streambed from Keban to Birecik and saw that if some stony places had been cleaned it could be possible to send the soldiers from Keban to Bagdad by the river¹⁰¹. So Hafız Pasha employed Halil Bey, one of the army engineers, to clean the stony places between Gerger and Samsat¹⁰². Halil Bey did not accomplish his mission, but he could make a small channel alongside of the streambed. In this way, some munitions could transport to Rakka by *kelek*, a kind of raft¹⁰³.

The Sublime Porte aimed to settle the nomadic tribes, who were accepted as one of the obstacles for the development of economic activities, on the uncultivated arable lands, seized their arms and turned them into peaceful villagers by using force in order to prevent their damages.¹⁰⁴ Reşit Pasha, who adopted this thought, settled a lot of the members of the tribes from Ergani and Diyarbakır to Mardin after his expeditions¹⁰⁵. But tribes resisted the plan, which was seen as an imprisonment. So, in the XIXth century, a lot of conflicts took place between the central government and the nomad tribes¹⁰⁶. For example, a tribe called Badmanlı refused to submit Reşit Pasha firstly, but after a terrible defeat they had to obey him. The pasha took 300 recruits from them, and so they lost all of their properties, wealth and importance¹⁰⁷.

The tribes in Muş were enforced to settle in a permanent place around Muş by confiscating their tents. At the same time, the authorities tried to remove the Iranian tribes to step up the settlement process¹⁰⁸. But these tribes were unwilling to quit the Turkish territory. They had many advantages such as milder winter in Persia, but because of the pasture and abundance of water, Turkey was a more preferable place for them than

⁹⁹ FO, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords.

¹⁰⁰ BOA, HAT, 447/22311-B, 10 B.1251 (1 November 1835).

¹⁰¹ BOA, HAT, 373/20404-A, 3 Za.1252 (9 February 1837).

¹⁰² BOA, HAT, 681/33192-A, 5 Z.1252 (13 March 1837).

¹⁰³ BOA, HAT, 373/20404, 1252 (1837).

¹⁰⁴ BOA, HAT, 1040/43065-J, 9 R. 1246 (27 September 1830).

¹⁰⁵ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, Defa 123.

¹⁰⁶ BOA, HAT, 453/22435-A, 25 Za. 1250 (25 March 1835).

¹⁰⁷ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a Part of Koordistan.

¹⁰⁸ BOA, HAT, 637/31417-A, 24 C.1252 (6 October 1836).

Persia¹⁰⁹. For instance, Abgay, a plateau in Hakkari, was a very suitable place for grazing. According to the tribes, it was impossible to see such a matchless plateau like Abgay anywhere, so they got into the habit of going there every year¹¹⁰.

Both Iran and the Ottoman nomad tribes affected settlement facilities negatively. Because, the just settled people like the other inhabitants exposed to the threats of the nomads, too. Besides, there were a lot of never-ended hostilities among the tribes, and in a such atmosphere the most important thing for the members of the tribes was of life and property safety. But the communication between the members of the same tribes ceased as they located in the different villages. Furthermore, a tribe was losing its fighting force because an essential part of the young men recruited.

It is known that when janissaries were abolished in 1826, Mahmut II established a new army named *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* and then, people were conscripted into the army from all parts of the empire. Despite the entire struggle, the *Mansure* Army could not reach to a desirable level. For that reason, the *Redif* Military Organization or the Militia was established in August of 1834. After the order of the Porte, the conscription was introduced, and the *Redif* Military Organization was found immediately in the places under the rule of Reşit Pasha¹¹¹. Both Reşit and Hafız Pashas recruited for *Asakir-i Mansure* and *Redif* Military Organization, and they also confiscated the bey's properties in the name of the treasury of *Mansure*. The officers of the militia battalions were chosen among the members of the important families to ensure their support.¹¹² For example, Ismail Bey of Palu was appointed as a colonel at the request of Reşit Pasha¹¹³. At the time of the Hafız Pasha, Bedirhan Bey of Cizre was assigned as a major of militia, and then his rank was raised to colonel¹¹⁴.

The military reforms in the Ottoman Empire disturbed masses. There was not a specific duration in military service, and the recruits, who were caught like a bandit, had to leave their families and sent to the remote provinces for a long time¹¹⁵. Indeed, the Kurds feared conscription, because their lifestyle did not accord with staying in military service for many years. For that reason, they had to escape to the mountains or resist the weapons¹¹⁶.

While the conscription reinforced the military power of the state, at the same time it reduced the fighting force of the tribes. Those who affected by recruitment negatively were the Kurdish *bey*s who took their strength from the nomad tribes. The *bey*s, who were intimately acquainted with the fear of conscription, could easily make the Kurds revolt against the government. For instance, the *bey*s of Zirki provoked the Kurdish tribes to

¹⁰⁹ FO, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a Part of Koordistan.

¹¹⁰ BOA, Y.EE, 33/5,1287 (1870).

¹¹¹ BOA, HAT, 448/22338-B,1250 (1834).

¹¹² Takvim-i Vekayi, Defa 106.

¹¹³ *Takvim-i Vekayi* Defa 96; Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvîs Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi, IV-V*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p.828.

¹¹⁴ BOA, HAT, 445/22263, 1254 (1838).

¹¹⁵ Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, p.1445.

¹¹⁶ Moltke, pp.240-241.

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revolt against the Ottoman troops by spreading a rumour that their sons would be seized for the *Mansure* Army.¹¹⁷ Reşit Pasha repressed this mutiny but this time the Mardin tribes, who afraid of conscription, rebelled in July of 1835. According to the letter written by them to ask for help from Mehmet Pasha of Revanduz, they said that they would never obey the Pasha, never give soldiers and taxes, and they would be ready for a fight with the Ottoman troops¹¹⁸.

Recruiting young men caused a decline in the Muslim population. For example, a population census was conducted after the establishment of the state authority in Siirt. According to its result, there were 600 houses of Muslim and 200 houses of non-Muslim in this district. Eventually, it was observed that the Muslim population decreased to 400 houses after the recruitment was carried out¹¹⁹. Furthermore, enrolling the Muslims both for the regular army and the militia became an extreme trouble for them. As they left behind domestic works, their families faced with economic losses, and caused poverty. Because of financial damages and unbearable restrictions in the army, the recruited Kurds always sought an opportunity to escape from the army service¹²⁰. So, some of them were dispatched to the other part of the empire to prevent their escape. For instance, 98 persons of the tribe of *Nirb* had been recruited for the *Mansure* Army and were immediately sent to Istanbul, and 94 young men from the *Silvan* tribes shared the same fate¹²¹. But despite all the precautions, many recruits could find a way to escape from the military service¹²².

The ascendancy acquired in the eastern provinces, with the aid of the established militia and the military operations of Reşit and Hafız Pasha, brought better order and security there. Especially because of the enrolment for militia the tribes did not venture to plunder, and furthermore robbery became rare. Although, the people paid more taxes than before the centralization policy, and some of inhabitants had to service for military as soldiers; they enjoyed a middling security which they never had before¹²³. But the impending danger, the Egypt question, was threatening the sustainability of these improvements.

Indeed, a cold war started, ever since the treaty of Kütahya was signed. Neither Sultan Mahmut nor Mehmet Ali Pasha was satisfied with this agreement. Both Reşit Pasha and Hafız Pasha were already aware of an inevitable war with the Egyptians. But they postponed the battle for a while until taking the Kurdistan under the control and strengthening the army. In the beginning of 1839, Ottoman authorities thought they were ready for a fight with Egyptians¹²⁴. It was stated in an Ottoman document dated 23 March

¹¹⁷ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a Part of Koordistan; *BOA, HAT*, 449/22346-F, 27 L. 1250 (26 February 1835).

¹¹⁸ *BOA, HAT*, 450/22347-B, 17.R.1251 (12 August 1835).

¹¹⁹ Moltke, p. 240.

¹²⁰ *FO*, 78/289, Memorandum Regarding the Koords.

¹²¹ *BOA, HAT*, 324/18936-C, 28.M.1251 (26 May 1835).

¹²² *BOA, HAT*, 324/18936-E, 7 R.1251 (2 August 1835).

¹²³ *FO*, 78/366, Report of a Tour through a Part of Koordistan.

¹²⁴ *FO*, 78/367, Report on the Trade of Erzeroom for the Year 1838.

1839 that, the Ottoman Army, which was under the command of Hafiz Pasha, consisted of more than 37.000 men. However, the soldiers were in a deplorable state. The militia soldiers were not disciplined enough to fight in a great war with Egyptians. In addition, the number of regular troops was no more than fifteen thousand, and the rest of the soldiers were unreliable. According to this document, it was not a right time to fight with the Egyptians¹²⁵.

Shortly before the war, some of the Kurdish *beys* participated to the Ottoman army as they did in the 16th century. Of them, Emin Pasha of Muş and his brothers Şerif Bey of Bitlis and Murat Bey of Hınıs went to join Hafiz Pasha. Emin Pasha had 2500 Kurdish cavalry, and also 600 cavalries of the militia, commanded by Murad Bey¹²⁶.

As a result, on June 24 1839, the Ottoman army and the Egyptian forces came across in Nizip, and this war ended with a disaster for the Ottomans. After the battle, the Ottoman army was almost wholly destroyed¹²⁷. When the defeat of the army was known, the roads were infested by the stragglers and thieves. The nomad tribes immediately started plundering and murdering. Even the soldiers rebelled against their officers and caused disorders throughout the country. The safe region turned into a dangerous one; nobody could dare to go on his way without a strong escort¹²⁸.

Conclusion

In the early years of XIXth century, the Ottomans tried to sustain their empire, which was on the point of collapsing, but economic resources were not enough. Moreover, they had to recruit soldiers and go to the expense of money for the newly established army. But the most valuable resources of the empire were under the control of the local powers, and they did not allow the government to levy and recruit. What is worse, the Egyptian Question was not solved exactly, and Anatolia was under the danger of Egyptian invasion. Due to these reasons, Sultan Mahmut had to initiate the centralization policy in the eastern provinces. With this policy, he aimed to control the complete resources of the empire in the eastern province.

In the years of 1833-1839, many conflicts took place between the Ottoman troops and local powers. Both Reşit Pasha and Hafiz Pasha arrested many beys, abolished their privileges and confiscated all of their properties. Many young people in the provinces controlled by the beys were recruited into the army. The nomad tribes, resisted the Ottoman authorities, were defeated and settled forcibly. In this time, many people were killed and villages were set on fire. However, the authorities could not create a peaceful atmosphere for the inhabitants of the eastern provinces. Actually, neither Reşit Pasha nor Hafiz Pasha had a permanent plan to bring peace for the region people and to create a rational administration system as they had to collect taxes and recruit men for the army

¹²⁵ BOA, HAT, 378/20514, 7 M.1255 (23 March 1839).

¹²⁶ FO, 78/366, Brant to Palmerston, 13 May 1839.

¹²⁷ Khaled Fahmy, *Paşanın Adamları Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha, Ordu ve Modern Mısır*, (Çev. Deniz Zarakolu), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, p.268.

¹²⁸ FO, 78/366 Brant to Palmerston, 20 July 1839.

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first. Perhaps, they did not have opportunity to conduct such good plans since the country was in the danger of Egyptians occupation.

In the beginning of 1839, there was nobody to resist the state authority, and Ottoman government managed to make its presence felt in this provinces. At the same time, it was understood that a war with the Egyptians was inevitable. But, what the Ottomans need was peace in order to strengthen the economy and the army. The untimely war with Egyptians destroyed the state authority, that took many years to establish. Thus, the eastern provinces entered a period of chaos again until the application of Tanzimat in 1845. In this respect, without doubt the Battle of Nizip is one of the most important events that negatively affected the fate of the empire and especially eastern provinces.

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