

**TANZIMAT IN THE BALKANS:  
MIDHAT PASHA'S GOVERNORSHIP IN THE DANUBE PROVINCE  
(TUNA VILAYETI), 1864-1868**

**A Master's Thesis**

**by**

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**THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA**

**June 2007**



*To Prof. Stanford J. Shaw*

**TANZIMAT IN THE BALKANS:  
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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

in  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

June 2007

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TANZIMAT IN THE BALKANS: MIDHAT PASHA'S GOVERNORSHIP IN THE DANUBE PROVINCE (TUNA VILAYETI), 1864-1868**

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This study aims at analyzing Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube province between 1864 and 1868 within two dimensions: Midhat Pasha as an Ottoman governor symbolizing the Tanzimat ideology and modernization in the countryside; and the rise of the Bulgarian revolutionary movements supported by the Russian Pan-Slavist policies. For this purpose, focus is placed on Midhat Pasha's reforms in this pilot region, which would be carried out as examples for the other provinces within the empire, and also his struggle against the national uprisings. The huge amount of relevant single documents in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and the Ottoman archives in Sofia along with the provincial newspaper, (Tuna), the yearbooks of the province, and the memoirs of Pasha himself constitute the main source and bases of this thesis.

**Key Words:** Tanzimat, Balkans, Midhat Pasha, Danube province, Reforms, Pan-Slavism

## ÖZET

### **BALKANLAR'DA TANZİMAT: MİDHAT PAŞA'NIN TUNA VİLAYETİ VALİLİĞİ, 1864-1868**

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Bu çalışma Midhat Paşa'nın 1864 ve 1868 yılları arasındaki Tuna Vilayeti valiliğini iki temel boyutta incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır: Tanzimat ideolojisini ve modernleşmesini taşrada temsil eden bir Osmanlı valisi olarak Midhat Paşa; ve Rusya'nın Panislavist politikalarıyla yükselen Bulgar ihtilal hareketleri. Bundan dolayı, bu çalışma hem Midhat Paşa'nın bu pilot bölgedeki imparatorluk içerisindeki diğer vilayetlere de örnek teşkil edecek reformları, hem de milli ayaklamalara karşı mücadelesi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. İstanbul'daki Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi'nde ve Sofya'daki Osmanlı Arşivinde konuyla ilgili çok sayıda ayrı evrak, vilayet gazetesi (Tuna), salnameleri ve Paşa'nın kendi hatıratı ile birlikte bu tezin temel kaynaklarını oluşturmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Tanzimat, Balkanlar, Midhat Paşa, Tuna Vilayeti, Reformlar, Pan-Slavism.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The reform edict known as the *Tanzimat-ı Hayriye* (Auspicious re-ordering), prepared and promulgated by Mustafa Reşid Pasha on November 3, 1839, initiated a new era in the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire. His successors, Ali and Fuad Pashas, advanced this fundamental reform movement by training the influential statesmen, sometimes the de facto leaders of the government. Midhat Pasha was among the most prominent and liberal of them all. After passing through various grades of offices in the Ottoman bureaucracy, he was given important responsibilities, which had a great impact on his career. For instance, in 1854, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Pasha, the Grand Vizier, charged him with the important task of pacifying the separatist organizations and the bandits in the Balkan provinces and he successfully accomplished this role. The Sublime Port appreciated his administrative and reforming talents in this duty. Afterwards, he was nominated to the governorship of the Nish province in 1861. In this way, Midhat Pasha was promoted to the administrative class with the Ottoman bureaucratic rank of *vezir*.

It is important to emphasize that until the 1860s, the focus of the Tanzimat reforms principally aimed the center rather than the periphery of the state. Midhat Pasha was chosen by the Ottoman administration for the significant mission of introducing the Tanzimat to the countryside. Accordingly, the Danube region was

given priority over the other parts of the empire for the reforms. In those years, this region became the most troublesome place in the empire owing to the local revolutionary committees related to the central revolutionary organizations of the Bulgarians stationed in Bucharest and influenced by the Pan-Slavist ideology supported by the Imperial Russia. In addition to the separatist movements, the internal problems such as banditry, unjust treatment of landowners to the peasants and unfair taxation made it inevitable for the Ottoman administration to establish reformation in the Danube region. Therefore, Midhat Pasha's appointment to the governorship of Nish should be considered as an introduction of the Tanzimat to the provinces. As a result of his outstanding success in this province, Ali and Fuad Pashas summoned him to the center in order to formulate a general organic law for the government of the provinces in 1864. Soon after, the establishment of the Danube province (Tuna Vilayeti) was declared on October 13, 1864, together with a set of regulations (Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi)<sup>1</sup>. Midhat Pasha became the governor of this new province, which was a combination of the provinces of Nish, Vidin and Silistre. The Danube province was considered as "a pilot region" where the reforms would be carried out as examples for the rest of the empire. Thus, Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube province was of great importance in the late Ottoman history.

Midhat Pasha symbolized the rising Tanzimat ideology as a diligent governor in the provinces.<sup>2</sup> However, his reforms and projects such as schools, banks, police stations, orphanages, printing houses in the Danube province should be analyzed not

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Vilayet Nizamnamesi*, Düstûr 1. Tertip (Istanbul 1289), pp. 608-624, and the *Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi*, BOA, IMMS no:1245. Also see M. Hüdai Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850-1875), (Ankara: TTK, 1992), pp. 253-271 for the differences between these two copies of the *nizamname* and their transliteration to the Latin alphabet.

<sup>2</sup> Midhat Pasha's governorships in the provinces: Nish (February 4, 1861- October 25, 1864), Danube (October 25, 1864- March 6, 1868), Baghdad (February 27, 1869- July 31, 1872), Syria (November 24, 1878- August 5, 1880) and Aydın (August 5, 1880- May 17, 1881).

only within the context of the Ottoman reform movement, but also in a broader perspective which includes Russia's political and military challenge of the Ottomans in the Balkans. It is thus an oversimplification to consider the problems in this province just as a "Bulgarian Question". It is also necessary to take the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the 1848 Revolutions in Europe into consideration. Russia had been seeking the ways to take the revenge of the Crimean War and to reach warm water ports by controlling the Balkans as well. Furthermore, the 1848 revolutions created an anti-imperial atmosphere, in which the Poland revolutionaries against Russia and the Hungarian ones against Austria were backed by the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, the Balkan nations perceived Russia as their Slavic ally against the Ottoman rule.

The Ottoman policy was to modernize the Danube province in accordance with the westernization ideology of the Tanzimat, while pacifying the nationalistic movements. On the contrary, Russian policy was to create and organize Bulgarian revolutionaries that would lead to national uprisings, which was the ground Russia needed to intervene and even occupy the Balkans. It was assumed that Russian military success against the Ottomans in such a possible war would enable Russians to have control over the land including Istanbul and the result would be the establishment of the Russia controlled independent Bulgarian state and Russian access to the warm water ports in the Mediterranean Basin. In order to achieve this goal the Russian consuls, schools and press carried out systematic Pan-Slavist propaganda in the Balkans. That is why, after Midhat Pasha's nomination to the governorship of the Danube province, this region turned into to be a chess board between the Ottoman governor, Midhat Pasha, and the Russian ambassador, Count N.P. Ignatiev (1864-74).

The focus of my research is to analyze Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube province with an emphasis on his reforms and struggle against the Pan-Slavist ideology. Even if some studies have been conducted on this issue it has not received appropriate attention from scholars. Although the previous studies will not be mentioned here in detail an overview of the different approaches in the historiography is indispensable.

In the Russian historiography this subject seems to be rather neglected. E.I. Fadeeva's studies on Midhat Pasha's life and career might be considered as the only significant one.<sup>3</sup> It is valuable work as it contains a wealth of information in historical detail but its focus is limited only to Pasha's political activities in the center rather than his reforms in the countryside. It regards Midhat Pasha as a big enemy to the Russian imperial interests and mentions his activities in the province just to expose the faults of the Ottoman administration. For example, the project of road construction was reflected as an unjust work labor imposed on the peasants instead of its contribution to the transportation network and the improvement of local economies within the province.

Bulgarian historians have contributed the most to the study of modernization in the Danube region but their approach to Midhat Pasha and his reforms was quite parallel to the Soviet-Russian perspective until 1989 when important democratic developments were achieved in the country. Afterwards, they have tended to base

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<sup>3</sup> E.I. Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha: Jizn i Deyatel'nost [Midhat Pasha: His Life and Career]*, (Moscow: 1977); "K Harakteristke Deyatel'nosti Midhad Pashi v Bulgarii v 1864-1868 g" [About the Main Characteristics of Midhat Pasha's Activities in Bulgaria 1864-1868] *VIII Godich Nauchnaya Sesia LO Ivan*, Moscow, 1972; "K Harakteristke Obshestvenno – Politicheskikh Vzgl'yadov Ahmeda Midhad Pashi" [About Ahmed Midhat Pasha's Social and Political Conceptions], *Arabskie Strani, Turtsia, Iran, Afganistan, Istoria Ekonomika*, Moscow 1973; "Reformatskaya Deyatel'nost Midhad Pashi v Bulgarii" [Midhat Pasha's Reformation Policy in Bulgaria], *Turkologicheskii Sbornik*, Moscow 1974; "Tabsira-i Ibret" i "Mirat-i Hayret" Kak Istochniki Dlya Izuchenia Obshestvenno- Politicheskikh Vzgl'yadov i Deyatel'nosti Ahmeda Midhad Pashi" ["Tabsira-i Ibret" and "Mirat-i Hayret" as a Source of Ahmed Midhat Pasha's Socio-Political Conceptions and Activities] *X Godichnaya Nauchnaya Sesia LO Ivan*, Moscow 1974.

their works on more balanced evaluations than before. The valuable works of Georgi Pletnyov and Milen Petrov might be good examples of these studies.<sup>4</sup>

Midhat Pasha's life and career as a research topic is very popular among Turkish historians but they mainly deal with two aspects of it, his statesmanship as heroic figure of the Tanzimat and his judicial execution because of the murder of Sultan Abdülaziz.<sup>5</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and Bilal Şimşir, two well known Turkish historians, conducted essential researches on the second aspect. Moreover, the political biography of Midhat Pasha was written by his son Ali Haydar and published in English, Turkish and French. He also published the autobiography of his father in two volumes, *Tabsıra-i İbret* and *Mirat-ı Hayret*. In general, Turkish historians have reflected Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube province as a story of successful career, except İlber Ortaylı who draws attention to Midhat Pasha's failure in reviving the ideology of Ottomanism (Osmanlılık) in the Balkans. The most remarkable of them are M. Hüdai Şentürk and İsmail Selimoğlu, whose works are highly supported by a great amount of archival documents but devoid of essential analysis of each document.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the Western perspective of the issue, one should mention that most of the early Western contributions on the Tanzimat era perceive modernization in the Ottoman Empire as a part of "Eastern Question". Later on, Roderic Davison's

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<sup>4</sup> Georgi Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], (Veliko Tarnova 1994); Milen Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, Unpublished PhD thesis Princeton University, Department of Near Eastern Studies (Princeton: September 2006).

<sup>5</sup> After his judicial execution he was called as "Hürriyet Şehidi", which means the martyr of liberty.

<sup>6</sup> M. Hüdai Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), (Ankara: TTK, 1992); İsmail Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences (Ankara: 1995).

comprehensive book, on the Tanzimat reforms, approaches to the issue from a broader perspective by taking the local dynamics into consideration.<sup>7</sup>

My thesis aims at analyzing Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube province and figuring out to what extent his reforms became successful. The incredible amount of documents in Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives) in Istanbul and the Ottoman archives in Sofia, Bulgaria constitute the main source and bases of my research. Although there are a number of *Temettuat defters* (collections of financial records), which reveal the economic dynamics of the provinces in detail, I intend to make use of the huge amount of single documents in both archives, which directly concern Midhat Pasha's activities and reforms in the Danube province. These single documents, which bear an enormous significance for the researchers, were mainly comprised of the *Irades* (imperial degrees) such as *Irade Dahiliye*, *Irade Hariciye*, *Irade Meclis-i Vala* etc. In addition to these documents, the first provincial newspaper, (*Tuna Gazetesi*) founded by Midhat Pasha, the *Salnames* (yearbooks of the provinces) and the memoirs of Pasha himself were also used in my research along with a number of secondary sources written in English, Turkish, Bulgarian and Russian languages.

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<sup>7</sup> Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

## CHAPTER II

### THE BALKANS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

#### II.1 The Tanzimat-ı Hayriye (Auspicious re-ordering) and Its Perception in the Balkans

Although the earlier reform efforts made by Selim III in the late eighteenth century aimed at modernizing the empire, they achieved nothing more than initiating the reforms that would be undertaken by the following sultans. The failure of Selim III resulted from the resistance of conservative bureaucrats, religious circles in power and also by the Janissaries who were strongly against the reforms, which threatened the bases of their power. Thus, in 1807, a Janissary revolt dethroned Selim III and brought his *Nizam-ı Cedid* army to an end. Mahmud II ascended to the throne in 1808 as the last surviving member of the dynasty. In the early years of his reign, he was unable to carry out the reforms he wanted owing to the same problems Selim III faced. Instead of making real reforms he had to content himself with planning them, training the new generation bureaucrats and gradually placing them into key positions until the Janissaries were overthrown and wiped out on July 10, 1826.<sup>1</sup>

The destruction of Janissary corps, the *Vaka-yi Hayriye* (Auspicious Event), paved the way for implementation of the reforms necessary to modernize the empire.

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<sup>1</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic Vol.I*, (Ankara: TTK 2000), p.19.

The sultan focused on building a new army, a more efficient taxation system to generate money for the military, and a modern central and provincial bureaucracy which was essential for an efficient taxation system.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, during the reign of Mahmut II, a comprehensive reform edict, the *Tanzimat-ı Hayriye*, was also prepared but could not be declared before his passing away on June 30, 1839. This reform edict also known as *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayun*, (the Imperial Edict of Rose Garden) prepared by the leading reformer and Foreign Minister Mustafa Reşid Pasha, was promulgated on November 3, 1839 on behalf of Sultan Abdülmecid. The edict marked a turning point in the process of the modernization in the Ottoman Empire. It included essential promises of four main issues: establishment of guarantees for the life, honor and property of the sultan's subjects, replacement of the tax-farming (iltizam) with a new taxation system; regulations in the conscription for the army; providing equality among all the subjects of the sultan. Thus, it initiated a new era, which is referred to as the Tanzimat Period in the Ottoman history.

The reforms introduced by the *Gülhane* Edict were perceived in different ways by each social class within the empire. The *reaya* (the tax paying subjects of the Ottoman sultan) was excited about the equality, especially in taxation where the Tanzimat promised that the taxes would be levied equitably in accordance with the assessment of the wealth. In addition, the sultan ordered the nobles to abolish the corvée labor and to ease the work load of the *reaya* since they had been suffering from the hard work imposed by the new land owners (gospodars). However, the privileged Muslim and non-Muslim groups, the Muslim land owners, *Çorbacı*s or *Kocabaşı*s (Local Christian notables), were not in favor of losing their privileges and paying high amounts of taxes. They complained about the high taxes assessed on

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<sup>2</sup> Eric J. Zürcher. *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1997), p.41.

wine and rakı. Then, they threatened the *reaya* by saying that they would not give them jobs in their vineyards and they also would not buy the grapes grown by them. Thus, both notables and the *reaya* stood against the newly imposed taxes.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to this, the leaders of religious communities had been strongly opposed to the national movements against the Ottoman order because their authority over their own community members was provided by the central administration. Accordingly, the Ottoman *millet* system allowed all the non-Muslim and Muslim communities to regulate themselves in respect to religion, education, marriage, divorce, inheritance etc. However, these religious leaders began to lose their authority as a consequence of the Tanzimat's attempted reforms for the democratization of the *Millet* system. Therefore, they started to support the national movements and uprisings and even provoked their own communities to rebel against the Ottoman rule.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the reforms of the Tanzimat disappointed the Muslim people because of the rights given to the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan. Some high ranking religious functionaries and scholars, notables, and even some governors who lost their authority and privileges provoked the Muslim population to revolt against the reforms. This situation caused discontent and the rise of national ideology among the non-Muslim minorities who had great expectations from the reforms.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Halil İncılık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler", *Bellekten*, XXVIII/112 (Ekim 1964), p.642.

<sup>4</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Azınlıklar Sorunu", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. IV, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), p. 1005.

<sup>5</sup> İncılık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler", p.624.

## II.2 The National Awakening of Bulgarians in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century, which İlber Ortaylı called the “longest century of the Ottoman Empire”, witnessed the rise of national consciousness in the Balkans as a whole. National ideas had also begun to spread in the Bulgarian lands as in the other parts of the Peninsula. However, Bulgarians were struggling not only for their national independence but also for their religious emancipation from the Greek Patriarchate. The Greek nationalist policies beginning from the late eighteenth century constituted the major threat for the existence of Bulgarian identity. The religious and political authority of the Patriarch given by the Ottomans provided Greeks with a privileged position in the empire and turned them into decisive factor of the cultural processes among the Christian subjects of the sultan. Thanks to this authority, in 1767, the Greek Patriarchate abolished the Bulgarian Orthodox archbishop of Ohrid, which represented the Bulgarian Christians in religious and cultural terms. After that, in 1800, the patriarch in Istanbul closed the Bulgarian religious schools and declared the Greek language as the only one of the Orthodox churches in the empire. He also forbade publication of religious books in languages other than Greek and this process continued with more strict applications such as the prohibition of the religious ceremonies carried out in Bulgarian language, burning Slavic books and replacing them with Greek ones.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Greek clergy Hellenizing the Bulgarian people was accused of suppressing the Bulgarian language and cultural traditions, and bringing about the historical amnesia that characterized the Bulgarians during the Ottoman period.<sup>7</sup> This situation led to the rise of anti-Greek feelings among the Bulgarians. At the same time, the Greek bourgeoisie also

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<sup>6</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1992), pp. 18–19.

<sup>7</sup> George G. Arnakis, “The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism”, in *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Hamden: Archon Books 1974), p. 136.

controlled the commercial activities of the Bulgarians who lived in the villages and mountainous towns, in addition to the Greek hegemony in religion and culture. However, although Bulgarian bourgeoisie had gradually appeared in the course of the nineteenth century it tended to be Hellenized and merged into the Greek one.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Bulgarian nationalism emerged initially as a reaction to the Greek hegemony.

The Bulgarian nation was not the only one that suffered from the “Greekification” policy of the Patriarchate; all other Orthodox people, Bulgarians in the first place among them, were affected by it and they struggled against the nationalistic policies of the patriarchate, which suppressed their culture and language.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, owing to the reforms of the Imperial Edict of 1856, the Orthodox Church was influenced by the reforms as well. Each Balkan nation that Bulgarians were leading, wanted to develop its own national church. Therefore, the authority of the Greek Patriarchate grew weak over the Balkans. As a result, the Russian Empire became more influential in the Balkans with its Pan-Slavist ideology.<sup>10</sup>

As Midhat Pasha mentioned in his famous article published in London in May 1878, Russia had found a new weapon against the Ottomans called “*İttihad-i İslav*” (Unification of Slavs). According to it, Russia began to use schools along with printing houses and their publications as an influential way of spreading out the pan-Slavist ideology and underground revolutionary activities among the Bulgarians.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City, 1400–1900*, (Seattle-London, University of Washington Press 1983), p. 540.

<sup>9</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “Balkanlarda Milliyetçilik”, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, Vol. IV*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), p. 1028.

<sup>10</sup> Cevdet Küçük, “Osmanlılarda Millet Sistemi ve Tanzimat”, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, Vol. IV*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), pp. 1021–1022.

<sup>11</sup> Midhat Pasha’s famous article published in London, in May 1878. It was published in French and English. “La Turquie: son Passé, son présent, son avenir”, *La Revue Scientifique*, 2e série 7, no. 49 (June 8, 1878), pp.1149-1154; “The Past, Present and Future of Turkey”, *The Nineteenth Century* 3, no. 16 (June 1878), pp. 981-993. Later on it was translated to Ottoman Turkish as “Türkiye’nin Mazisi

Thanks to the Tanzimat reforms, the number of Muslim and Christian schools increased in the Balkans. Although some of them were opened by the Ottoman administration there were many other schools, mainly Bulgarian, constructed by the minority groups on their own. At the same time, American missionaries promoted education by opening new schools and distributing books in the Bulgarian language.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, one can say that the newly opened schools, Russian political and cultural influence and to some extent the colleges of the American missionaries all contributed to the development of liberal-national political ideology among the Bulgarians.<sup>13</sup> American schools including Robert College in Istanbul helped to educate many of the Bulgarian leaders and created an avenue of vital contacts with the English speaking countries.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Russia opened consulates in the main centers such as Sofia, Plodiv, Ruse and Varna and appointed Pan-Slavist consuls in order to organize the people against the Ottoman rule.<sup>15</sup>

The rise of nationalism and the discontent continuing in the Balkans along with the Russian encouragement and propaganda in the 1850s led to national revolts in some important areas such as Vidin, Nish and Tırnovi. In this way, Bulgarian national movement reached its peak in terms of both ideological development and organization in the beginning of the 1860s. The Bulgarian revolutionary committee established its central community in Bucharest in 1862.<sup>16</sup> The reaction of the Tanzimat statesmen on power was to appoint Midhat Pasha to the province of Nish in 1861 and later on to the province of the Danube in 1864 as an Ottoman governor

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ve İstikbali”, by Ahmet Refik, (Istanbul: Tab’ı ve Naşiri Kitabhane-i İslam ve Askeri, Artin Asaduryan Matbaası, 1326 (1908–1909), see pp. 14–17.

<sup>12</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria*, (Ankara: TTK, 1998), p.42.

<sup>13</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States 1804–1920*, (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press 1986), p.136.

<sup>14</sup> Marin V. Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism”, in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Peter F. Sugar and Ivo John Lederer, (Seattle&London: University of Washington Press, 1994), p.107.

<sup>15</sup> Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria*, p.42.

<sup>16</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), p. 182.

who symbolized a new mentality in an old empire of keeping up with the times and modernization.<sup>17</sup>

During his four years of governorship Midhat Pasha fought successfully against the separatist movements and the pan-Slavist policies of the Russian Empire. Furthermore, he carried out a number of reforms in order to combine the non-Muslim population with the Muslim one, which the situation became more problematic for the local government with the refugees coming from the lost territories, under the ideology of Ottomanism. Meanwhile, the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, Count N.P. Ignatiev, was horrified that Midhat's policy ran directly opposite to the ways of the Russian Pan-Slavic policy and made great efforts to force the sultan to recall him from the Danube province.<sup>18</sup> After Midhat Pasha's removal from his position in 1868, the Bulgarian national organizations regained their power and accelerated their struggle against the Ottoman rule and also the Greek Patriarchate. One of the most important achievements of Bulgarians after 1868 was the official recognition of the independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church by an imperial edict on March 11, 1870. According to it, the Bulgarian National Church (Exarchate) would be independently in charge of the religious affairs of the Bulgarian community.<sup>19</sup> The re-establishment of the national church infused new power in the Bulgarian national movement.

After gaining religious independence, Bulgarians continued to fight for their national freedom by two strong revolutionary attempts in 1875 and 1876. These revolts against the Ottoman rule might be considered as continuation of the Bosnia-Herzegovina revolt in 1875. This was a turning point in the Balkans, which ended up

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<sup>17</sup> İlber Ortaylı, "Midhat Paşa'nın Vilayet Yönetimindeki Kadroları ve Politikası", *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler Tartışmalar Edirne: 8-10 Mayıs 1984*, (Ankara: TTK 1986), pp.227-228.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Üss-i İnkılâp*, edited by Tahir Galip Seratlı, (İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2004), p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850-1875), pp. 220-221.

with a disastrous defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-78.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the fact that these rebellions were a complete failure as a revolutionary action against the central power, it was all Russia needed to intervene in the situation and to convince the European powers to organize an international conference in Istanbul in order to discuss the future of the Balkan nations (September 1876). During the conference Midhat Pasha was assigned as the Grand Vizier and thanks to his efforts, four days after his appointment, the first Ottoman constitution was declared on December 23, 1876. This was supposed to ease the high tensions between the Ottoman rule and the Great Powers insisting on autonomy for the Balkan nations or establishment of independent states there.

Another considerable objective of the constitution was that Midhat Pasha wanted to obtain the support of Britain not only against the unacceptable demands of Russia but also against the sultan, Abdülhamid II, who was not in favor of a constitutional regime. However, he could not attain the expected gains from the proclamation of the constitution owing to the Russian sympathies of the British representative, Lord Salisbury.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the Great Powers gave an ultimatum to the Ottoman Empire which included the final decisions made in the conference. According to this ultimatum, Bosnia and Herzegovina would be separated and they would be given autonomy and have their own military forces. Bulgaria would be divided into two parts (East and West) which would be governed by Christian governors and they would also be given autonomy. In addition, a commission consisting of the representatives of the Great Powers would be set up in order to directly deal with the reforms and the new administration, which would be

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<sup>20</sup> Mithat Aydın, *Balkanlar'da İsyân*, (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005), p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> Mithat Aydın, "Osmanlı-İngiliz İlişkilerinde İstanbul Konferansı (1876)'nın Yeri", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi, Cilt XXV Sayı 39*, (Ankara: Mart 2006), p. 110.

established in Bulgaria. Furthermore, 5000 Belgian soldiers would be in charge of protecting this commission. Moreover, the Ottoman Empire would have to withdraw its military forces from Serbia and Montenegro whose borders would be extended.<sup>22</sup>

The response to this ultimatum by the Ottoman government was determined by the grand vizier Midhat Pasha and then sent to the Parliament. Midhat Pasha was not in favor of accepting the decisions made in the conference. In his famous speech in the parliament he explained the details of the ultimatum and pointed out that these demands could not be acceptable for the Ottoman government. He knew that the rejection of them would cause a possible war with Russia but according to him, fighting with Russia would be far more honorable for the empire.<sup>23</sup> The Parliament made up of 237 members from different regions and religious communities discussed the issue and rejected the ultimatum. Thereupon, the representatives of the Great Powers demonstratively left Istanbul.<sup>24</sup> Afterwards, although they organized a new conference in London, they could not solve the problem, which led to the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878. As a result, the Ottomans lost about a third of the empire's territory and over 20 percent of its population.

### **II.3 The Life of Midhat Pasha and His Career until His Nomination to the Governorship of the Nish Province**

The memoirs of Midhat Pasha, together with the numerous documents in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and Sofia, are the main sources providing researchers with a great deal of information on Midhat Pasha and his period. These memoirs are

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<sup>22</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789–1914)*, (Ankara: TTK 2003), p. 513.

<sup>23</sup> The full text of his speech in the parliament was included in his memoirs, *Tabsıra-i İbret*. See *Midhat Paşa'nın Hatıraları: 1, Hayatım İbret Olsun [Tabsıra-i İbret]*, edited by Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1997), pp. 288–295.

<sup>24</sup> Ali Haydar Mithat, *Hatıralarım 1872–1946*, (İstanbul: Güler Basımevi, 1946), pp. 17–18.

composed of two volumes which are called *Tabsıra-i İbret* and *Mirat-ı Hayret*.<sup>25</sup> They are not only the accounts of Midhat's personal life and experiences but also a valuable overview of the political, social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. In addition to them, Midhat Pasha's son, Ali Haydar Midhat, also wrote a book telling the story of his father's life.<sup>26</sup>

Midhat Pasha's life might be divided into four main periods: a record of his services, political reforms, banishment and judicial execution. He was born in Istanbul in October 1822. His father, Hacı Ali Efendizâde, was a native of Rusçuk. Midhat's real name was Ahmet Şefik but after memorizing the Quran by the age of 10 he was called as Hafız Şefik. He started to take the usual education provided by the local schools. In 1833 because of his father's nomination to Vidin as a regent he moved there with his family. After a year they returned to Istanbul and Midhat began to work as a clerk in the Imperial Council (Divan-ı Hümayun) thanks to the favor of Akif Pasha who was the minister of Foreign Affairs. Then he was given the name of Midhat, which was how he would be called afterwards, because of his success in this office. Soon after this, he had to take a break from his work since his father was appointed to the regency of Lofça, one of the main towns in the Danubian Bulgaria. He returned to Istanbul in 1836 and after a few years obtained a position in the Secretariat of the Grand Vizier's office, from where he was promoted to higher ranking employment in the provinces. He worked as an assistant director of the register office in Damascus for two and a half years and then, after a short interval in

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<sup>25</sup> For the transliteration of them to Latin Alphabet see, *Midhat Paşa'nın Hatıraları: 1, Hayatım İbret Olsun [Tabsıra-i İbret]*, edited by Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1997); *Midhat Paşa'nın Hatıraları: 2 Yıldız Mahkemesi ve Taif Zindanı (Mir'at-ı Hayret)*, edited by Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1997). In this study, the transliteration of the first volume is abbreviated as "Tabsıra-i İbret" and the second one as "Mir'at-ı Hayret".

<sup>26</sup> Ali Haydar Mithat, *Midhat Paşa: Hayat-ı Siyasiyesi, Hidemat, Menfa Hayatı*, (İstanbul: Hilal matbaası, 1909, [1325]). This book was also translated to English and French. See, Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street W. 1903); Ali Haydar Midhat, *Midhat-Pacha; Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre. Par Son Fils, Ali Haydar Midhat, Bey*, (Paris: Stock, 1908).

Istanbul, he proceeded to Konya as secretary to Sami Bekir Pasha's Council in 1844. Afterwards, he was nominated to Kastamonu with the same position and then returned to Istanbul. In 1848 he was appointed as an inspector to the reporting office of the Supreme Council (Meclis-i Vala), with the favor of Rıfat Pasha, the president of this council. Soon he was promoted to the highest rank in the office which was called *Başhalife*.<sup>27</sup>

After passing through various grades of office, Midhat was chosen for two important missions, which had a great impact on his career. At that time, the government was having difficulties in collecting the taxes from Cezayiroğlu Mıgırdıç and Sarraf Misak, the tax farmers of these Custom Houses of Damascus and Aleppo. Midhat was dispatched there as an inspector to settle the question of the Customs in the favor of the government. His second mission was to solve the problems with the conduct of the commander-in-Chief of army of Arabia, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha. The young inspector completed both of these missions successfully. A great amount of money from the Custom Houses was restored to the Ottoman Treasury and Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha was dismissed from the command of the Syrian army as a consequence of his report. The Grand Vizier of the day, Reşid Pasha appreciated Midhat's success and appointed him to a confidential post in the Supreme Council, which he maintained during Grand Vizierate of Reşid, Ali, Rıfat and Rüştü Pashas.<sup>28</sup> In 1854 when Şekib Pasha was the president of the Supreme Council, the secretary of this council was separated into two departments, one for Anatolia and one Rumelia, and Midhat was appointed to the department of Anatolia as the assistant director.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, p.32; *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 19–21.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp.32–33.

<sup>29</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Tezahir 13-20*, edited by Prof. Cavid Baysun, (Ankara: TTK 1991), p.104. For detailed information about the *Meclis-i Vala* see, Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, *Tanzimat Devrinde Meclis-i Vala (1838-1868)*, (Ankara: TTK 1996).

On the other side of the huge empire, toward the end of 1853, the Crimean War broke out between Russians and the Ottomans. Russia occupied Wallachia and Moldavia, and soon after began to organize some groups of brigands in Nish in order to provoke the Bulgarians to fight against the Ottoman rule. Soon after, this rising brigandage of the local Christians turned into a well organized revolt.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha, who was dismissed from the command of Syrian Army Corps as a consequence of Midhat's report, became the Grand Vizier in 1854. Then, he appointed Midhat Pasha to the Balkans with the mission of pacifying this part of the state. In this way, he planed Midhat's failure as an appointed Ottoman official in this problematic region in the Balkans. However, Midhat Pasha took the disturbed region under the control by arresting 284 people who played active role in these events. After their trial, four of them were executed. Following their suppression, Midhat Pasha prepared a report on the necessary precautions that had to be taken to solve the problems in the Balkans as whole. His point was the reconstruction of the provincial administration with the establishment of the Temporary Council (Meclis-i Muvakkat) with full power in order to provide security in each province in the Peninsula. Midhat submitted his report for approval of the government. In the meantime, Reşid and Ali Pashas drew up regulations for the government of the provinces. Midhat's plan was accepted but because of the continuing Crimean War and the governmental problems, the execution of this reform plan was delayed until 1864.<sup>31</sup>

After completing his mission in the Balkans, Midhat was assigned to Bursa where a horrifying earthquake happened in 1855. His task was to help the victims by organizing an aid campaign. He made great efforts to rebuild the important city in a

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<sup>30</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), pp.115–119.

<sup>31</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 23–24.

short period of time. Then, in 1856, he went to Vidin and Silistre along the Danube River as a special commissioner to inspect these regions, where there were uprisings against the central authority. He prepared a report on the administration of Muammer Pasha, the governor of Vidin, and Mirza Sait Pasha, the governor of Silistre, as he had previously done in Syria. As a result of his report, the two Pashas were dismissed from their positions but they complained to Sultan Abdülmecid about Midhat's report. Thus, with the order of the sultan, another functionary, Fahreddin Efendi, was appointed to these provinces with the same mission as Midhat's. However, he also submitted the exact same report to the government and the result did not change. Meanwhile, Reşid Pasha passed away and Ali Pasha ascended the Grand Vizierate. After all these events, Midhat Pasha decided to travel to Europe for six months, with the permission of Ali Pasha, in order to improve his French, which was the language of bureaucracy of the time, and to learn more about the European administration system. In this short period of time, he went to Paris, London, Vienna and Brussels and obtained valuable information. Then, he returned to Istanbul and was nominated to the Supreme Council as the chief secretary.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha ascended to the Grand Vizierate again and soon after, he made an investigative trip to the Balkan provinces, especially the towns of Rusçuk, Nish and Vidin. The discontent from these regions had risen sharply because of the problems with so called *Gospodarlık* regime, special kind of landholding system that spread in the Balkans in the mid nineteenth century. In this system, the peasantry was obliged to pay not just the state taxes and but a rent to the landlords and to do corvee labor in their private farms (*çiftlik*s). This situation along with the increasing Russian influence on the Balkans created serious problems

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. pp. 23–24.

for the Ottoman administration both in the interior and international arena. As a consequence of the survey trip, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha realized that the financial and administrative problems had an equal impact as the Russian influence on the uprisings and the rise of underground revolutionary activities among Bulgarians. National movements in Serbia also had a significant influence on the Bulgarian nationalism. In addition, the increasing number of Muslim refugees from the lost territories and the problems with the establishment of the Bulgarian National Church constituted the other important part of the problems in the Ottoman Balkans.<sup>33</sup> That's why; he nominated Midhat Pasha to the governorship of Nish in 1861 because of his previous successes in the missions he completed in the Balkans. In this way, Midhat Pasha was promoted to the administrative class from a clerical office with the Ottoman bureaucratic rank of *vezir*.<sup>34</sup> After this, he was called with the title of Pasha, indicating his status in the Ottoman administration.

#### **II.4 Midhat Pasha's Governorship in Nish, 1861-1864**

Although Midhat Pasha was appointed to the governorship of Nish on February 4, 1861, he arrived there on March 20, 1861. During this period, Osman Pasha, former governor of Nish, nominated by Kıbrıslı Mehmet Pasha, replaced him.<sup>35</sup> Midhat Pasha was not fond of using armed forces to pacify the province. Instead of this, he wanted to gain the confidence of the local Bulgarians by cooperating with them in solving their problems. Thus, soon after his arrival, he invited the notables of the districts and listened to their complaints in order to

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<sup>33</sup> Yonca Köksal and Davut Er, "Tanzimat Döneminde Bulgaristan: Kıbrıslı Mehmed Emin Paşa'nın Rumeli Teftişi", *Uluslararası Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk-Bulgar İlişkileri Sempozyumu 11-13 Mayıs 2005*, (Eskişehir: Odunpazarı Belediyesi Yayınları 2005), pp. 371-372.

<sup>34</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 13-20*, p.104. *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>35</sup> BOA, A.MKT.UM, Dosya no: 453, Gömlek no: 48.

identify the reasons behind the turmoil in the province and also the migrations from this region. Then, he pointed out the reasons as: lack of security that the high tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims caused, the rampant banditry which made life and property insecure, heavy tax burden which were not assessed fairly and equitably, debts of farmers who borrowed great amounts of money from the *gospodars*, absence of roads, bridges and other means of transportation, which made it difficult to find markets. Midhat Pasha also paid great attention to the cruel treatments of the troops to the *reaya*, especially those in the Serbian border<sup>36</sup>

Pasha's next step was to take precautions against these problems and priority was given to the security problem. He initially changed the positions of the high ranking military officers who misused their authority by collecting illegal taxes from the locals. On the other hand, he increased their salaries to a certain amount allowed by the provincial budget since they had been complaining about their low salaries. Then, he ordered the troops in the villages back to their barracks and it was forbidden for them to live among the local people. A new big barrack in the province and blockhouses along the borders were constructed in order to provide the troops with regular accommodation, food and equipment.<sup>37</sup> In addition, Midhat Pasha ordered repair of the existing barracks.<sup>38</sup> Thanks to these regulations, the pressure of regular and irregular troops on the people in the province was eased and the elaborate system of blockhouses all along the Serbian frontier put an end to the incursions of the armed bands of Serbians, which had fostered and sustained disturbance in the

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<sup>36</sup> Bekir Koç, *Midhat Paşa 1822-1884*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, (Ankara: 2002), p.15.

<sup>37</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 21461; 24519.

<sup>38</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 21115.

province. Therefore, those who had immigrated to Serbia now began to return to their former dwellings.<sup>39</sup>

At the meantime, an extensive operation was carried out against brigands, without need for additional military forces from the center. The bandits arrested in the operation were penalized with dissuasive punishments including death penalty.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, a new prison was built instead of the existing one, which was in bad condition.<sup>41</sup> In this way, following the stronghold policy the brigandage was entirely pacified in a short period of time.

After solving the security problem, Pasha dealt with the difficulties in transportation since people had problems in finding markets to sell their products because of the absence of roads and bridges. Thus, he initiated a comprehensive project of constructing a transportation network within the province. A number of paved roads (Şose) were laid out in every direction. The first one was constructed in Nish-Sofia-Pazarçık direction, which was considered as a mother road. Then, the roads in the directions of Nish-Kumanovo and Sofia-Dobnice-Salonika were repaired, and three big bridges were constructed over the Morava River together with many small ones over the other rivers.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, police stations (karakols) were established in order to secure transportation on these newly opened directions and to guarantee the peaceful collection of taxes.<sup>43</sup> The construction of the roads and bridges provided people with a good transportation network in the province. Thus, the trade routes had been changed to the new directions instead of the one along with the Danube River. Previously, the products from Europe and Istanbul were

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<sup>39</sup> Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, p.36.

<sup>40</sup> Koç, *Midhat Paşa 1822-1884*, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Nejat Göyünç, "Midhat Paşa'nın Niş Valiliği Hakkında Notlar ve Belgeler", *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, XII, (Istanbul: 1982), p. 286.

<sup>42</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 21874.

<sup>43</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 22455.

distributed to the province over Serbia because of the lack of roads but now this route changed to the inner side of the province over the Çorben road. In addition, a car factory was also founded to foster the transportation and the economic activities within the province.<sup>44</sup>

Another important problem in the province was the settlement of the refugees from the lost territories. About 2000 immigrants from Belgrade came to Nish and they were settled in the houses of volunteers and the empty buildings within the province. An aid campaign was organized to help these refugees and new residences were constructed for them.<sup>45</sup> In those years, a number of the Circassian and Tatar refugees, exiled from their homeland, had come to the Ottoman territories and Russia provoked the Bulgarians by claiming that the Sublime Port was planning to replace them with Tatar and Circassian refugees. Therefore, about 20.000 Bulgarians, influenced by this propaganda, ventured to Russia from the Vidin region. After a while, because of the hard economic and climatic conditions they rapidly wanted to come back to their homelands. In the first stage, 24 Bulgarian families, consisting of 137 members, returned to Vidin and the mufti together with the notables of the region welcomed them as their in order to prevent the spread of bad ideas and propaganda against the Muslims from the Russian side.<sup>46</sup> Since they spent all their money and possessions during the migration, the Ottoman government allocated a steamship for them to return. After their arrival, the agricultural lands that they previously possessed were given back to them with oxen and necessary agricultural equipments.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Tabşıra-i İbret*, p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> BOA, A.MKT.MHM. no: 247/50; Koç, *Midhat Paşa 1822-1884*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>46</sup> BOA, B.I. No.77.

<sup>47</sup> BOA, B.I. no: 76; Midhat Pasha, "Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali", p.15.

Midhat Pasha also concerned with the debts of farmers to the local *gospodars*. They borrowed considerable amounts of money from them with a high interest, and their debts together with regular taxes, which they had to pay to the state, turned into a heavy burden that they could not afford to pay. Thus, Midhat Pasha removed many vexatious taxes and eased their tax burden, and then he established Agricultural Credit Cooperative (Menafi-i Umumiye Sandıkları), which formed the origin of the agricultural bank of Modern Turkey. The first one was established in Pirot (Şehirköy) in 1863. It was the first foundation in Ottoman history supplying credits for the farmers to promote agriculture. Its funding was provided by opening some arable state lands within the province, which had not been cultivated till then for farming. The income of these lands was collected for the foundation and then allocated for the farmers with a low interest, no matter whether they were Muslim or Christian.<sup>48</sup> In this way, farmers would have enough capital to use without paying high interests to the local *gospodars*, and it would develop solidarity and cooperation among them.

In addition to all of these regulations, Midhat Pasha wanted to ease the high tensions between different ethnic and religious groups in the province. Soon after his appointment to the governorship of Nish he established a Governmental Council in order to diagnose the problems, especially those of non-Muslim subjects, in the province. Thanks to this council non-Muslim groups had a chance to state their complaints to the local government. Afterward, the region of Prizrend inhabited by Albanians was included in the province but a traditional vendetta had existed among them for centuries and caused huge problems for the local order. Therefore, Midhat Pasha established a Temporary Council (Meclis-i Muvakkat) and then invited

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<sup>48</sup> Seçil Akgün, “Midhat Paşa’nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası’nın Kökeni”, *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler Tartışmalar Edirne: 8–10 Mayıs 1984*, (Ankara: TTK 1986), pp. 189–191.

Albanian leaders and the notables of the district along with high ranking officials and religious leaders. Then, they solved this problem by constituting a permanent commission to settle money for bloodshed.<sup>49</sup>

Midhat Pasha also made great efforts to increase the education level in the province. He encouraged families, especially refugees, to send their children to schools but he also realized that the orphans and poor children suffering from miserable life conditions also needed to be educated. Therefore, he initiated a project of establishing a specialized school, which was a kind of reformatory, offering elementary education for Muslim and Christian children alike and training them as artisans.<sup>50</sup> It was assumed that in this way, orphans and poor children, no matter Muslim, Christian or Jewish, would be gathered, protected and educated under the state control. The object in view was to bring the young people of the different creeds into closer sympathy. Thus, in 1860 Midhat Pasha constructed the first of these schools in Nish and after his appointment to the governorship of the Danube province; two more were established in Sofia and Rusçuk. These reformatories were funded with the donations of local notables together with the budget allocated by the state.<sup>51</sup>

Consequently, in spite of Midhat Pasha's important achievements in Nish,<sup>52</sup> the problems in the provinces of Vidin and Silistre grew worse because of the continued and systematic interference of Russia by means of her consuls and underground revolutionary organizations. That is why, he was summoned to the capital in 1864 and then after the establishment of the Danube province, which

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<sup>49</sup> BOA. I.DH. no: 36825; Bekir Koç, "Midhat Paşa'nın Niş ve Tuna Vilayetlerindeki Yenilikçi Valiliği", *Kebikeç*, Sayı 18. (Ankara: 2004), pp. 410–411; *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 38.

<sup>50</sup> BOA. I.DH, no: 36231.

<sup>51</sup> Osman Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, (İstanbul: Osmanbey Matbaası 1939), p. 524.

<sup>52</sup> For Midhat Pasha's report on his governorship in Nish see, BOA, A.MKT.MHM 274/ 37.

combined Nish, Vidin and Silistre into a single government, he was nominated to the governorship of this newly founded province.

## CHAPTER III

### LAND AND POPULATION

#### III.1 The Land and Its Geographic Characteristics

The Danube Province was comprised of seven districts, which included Rusçuk, Varna, Sofia, Vidin, Tulça, Tırnovο and Niş, extending from Eastern Serbia to the Black Sea and from the Greek lands to the Danube River, covered 91,624 km<sup>2</sup> of territory.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the size of Modern Bulgaria, 110,912 km<sup>2</sup>, the Danube province consisted of a rather large area.

The province land is rather rich in terms of fertile plains. The most important one is the Lower Danubian plain stretching from the ridges of the Balkans Mountains to the Danube River. Although there are some low hills and plateaus, it has rather flat lands, which are of great importance for agricultural activities. In addition, the Danube River, originating in the German lands and flowing into the Black Sea after passing through several Central and Eastern European city centers, constituted the major trade and passenger route between Western Europe and the Balkans. Thus, there were a number of port cities on the Lower Danube such as Vidin, Nikopol, Rusçuk etc. That is why; this area of the province was highly populated. The Dobuca region, the northeastern region of the Danube delta between the Black Sea and the

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<sup>1</sup> A.N. Moshenin, "Pridunasyskaya Bulgaria (Dunayski Vilaet) [Danubian Bulgaria (Danubian Vilayet)], *Slavyanskii Sbornik, Vol.II.*, (Saint Petersburg 1877), p.348.

Danube River, is another important part of the province covering the important towns of Silitre, Tulça, Pazacık and Hacıoğlu. Among the seven districts of the province, Sofia has the highest mountains along with many high plains. The Nish region in the west has more hills and low mountains but has the fertile valleys of the Nisava and upper Morava rivers, which were densely populated.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to fertile plains, rich water sources with a number of rivers and a temperate climate, the Danube region was an ideal place for cultivation of grains such as wheat, barley and especially maize. Along with the commercial port cities on the Danube River and the Black Sea coast it constituted an important part of the Balkans.

### **III.2 The Ottoman Conquest of the Region and Its Geopolitical Importance for the Empire**

In the mid-fourteenth century, the Ottomans began their career of conquest in the Balkans, which was supported by the decline of the Byzantine ruling model and the rise of feudalism in the Peninsula. During this period, Tsar Ioan Alexander, ruler of Bulgarian Kingdom was compelled to divide the state between his two sons because of the disorder and dynastic struggles. In the 1340s, he lost control over the Dobruca region to a local lord named Balik. After Ioan Alexander's death, the division of the state was officialized when his sons started to rule their regions independently. In the historiography, this period is known as "Three Bulgarias", the Vidin region ruled by his direct successor Stratsimir (1370-96) and central part in

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<sup>2</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p.32.

Tirnova remained under the control of Tsar Ioan Shishman (1371-93), and the Dobruca region governed by Balik.<sup>3</sup>

With the disintegration of Bulgaria, the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans grew intensely over this region. Prior to the end of 1360s the Ottomans gained control over the upper Thrace with its main cities, Plodiv (Philipopolis-Filibe) and Stara Zagora (Eski Zagra). Sultan Murad I. captured Sofia (1385) and Nish (1386). The Ottoman conquest continued in the Northern part of the state between Balkan Mountains and the Danube River under the guidance of Çandarlı Ali Pasha. In 1389, Murad was killed on the battlefield of Kosovo and his son, Bayezid I, replaced him on the throne. In a short term, he captured the two important centers along the Danube River, Vidin and Nikopol, in 1393. The Ottomans also conquered the capital town of Tirnova and Shishman fled to the Nikopol region and Stratsimir, on the other hand, reaffirmed his vassalage. Afterwards, Hungarian King Sigismund organized a crusade against the Ottomans in 1396 but Bayezid defeated them in Nikopol and then invaded Stratsimir's lands. With Vidin's fall, Bulgaria disappeared from the political map of the Balkans as an independent state.<sup>4</sup>

The Danube River was of great geopolitical importance for the Ottoman Empire, as being a natural northern border for centuries against the enemies from the North and northwest. Thrace. Nikopol and Vidin were the main military strongholds along the Danube River. There is no historical evidence about the existence of the Ottoman town under the name of Rusçuk in the lower Danube during the first centuries of the conquest in the Balkans. This part of the region was defended by the

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<sup>3</sup> Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism*, (New York: Palgrave 2002), p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism*, pp.108-113; Halil Inalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: the Classical Age 1300-1600*, (London: Phoenix Press 1988), pp.14-16.

medieval castle of Çerven.<sup>5</sup> In the course of time, the military and economic importance of the area increased somewhere in the 1640s one can find the region mentioned as *kaza* (county) with its center in Rusçuk.<sup>6</sup>

There were a number of reasons why Rusçuk had gained importance beginning in the first half of the seventeenth century. Firstly, it served as a gateway opening to the Eastern European countries and the Black Sea Basin thanks to the bridges constructed over the Danube River that the Ottoman troops passed over. Furthermore, the rise of Imperial Russia with Peter the Great in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century constituted a significant threat for the Ottoman Empire in the north. Thus, the Ottoman military strategy changed to focus on the northeastern frontier where the possible Russian attacks would come. Most of the Janissary garrisons stationed in the inner part of the country moved to this region, comprised of Rusçuk, Silistre, Varna and Shumnu, which would be called as the “Security Quadrangle” in the military history. Rusçuk played the most vital role in it, functioning as a firewall against Russian attacks, thanks to its geopolitical position. Russian military forces never managed to move into this well protected zone, even during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, which ended with a complete defeat of Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, the Danube River, extending from German land in the West to the Black Sea, passing through Austria, Hungary, Wallachia, Serbia, and Bulgaria, was the backbone of economic and social relations between Western Europe and the Ottoman territory thanks to its role as a natural route. Merchants transported their products from the West to the port cities on the Danube River in the Balkans, namely

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<sup>5</sup> Çerven is a small place close to the town of Ruse (Rusçuk) in Modern Bulgaria.

<sup>6</sup> Teodora Bakardjieva, “Ruse and the Ruse Region in the Context of Demographic Processes in the Lower Danube Region /end of 14<sup>th</sup> –beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> c.”, *Uluslararası Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk-Bulgar İlişkileri Sempozyumu 11-13 Mayıs 2005*, (Eskişehir: Odunpazarı Belediyesi Yayınları 2005), pp.39-48; BOA. TTD. no: 771.

Vidin, Nikopol, Rusçuk and Silistre. However, after the first half of the seventeenth century Rusçuk became a significant commercial center having good connections with the important port cities of Silistre on the Danube River, Varna in the Black Sea coast and Istanbul by sea or over Shumnu and Edirne. Especially in the nineteenth century, Rusçuk turned into the economic and administrative center of the entire Danube region. When the Ottoman Empire signed an agreement with the British railroad, on January 23, 1857, for construction of the railroads within the empire, the Istanbul-Edirne-Shumnu-Rusçuk line was considered as the first and very essential railroad in the Balkans.<sup>7</sup> Afterwards, in November 1866, the Rusçuk-Varna railroad, which connected the two important port cities, began to function.<sup>8</sup> In 1864, with the establishment of the Danube province, Rusçuk became its center.

### **III.3 The Ethnic and Religious Structure**

The Ottomans tried to follow a systematic settlement policy in the Balkans, beginning from their early conquest. The mass Turkish migration and settlement in the Peninsula began from the second half of the fourteenth century onwards. When the Mongols gained control over Anatolia in the thirteenth century a big wave of migration took place from the East to the western Anatolia. Later on, as a result of Timur's invasion in the beginning of the fifteenth century a considerable number of people entered the Ottoman Balkans. As a consequence of these migration movements, Thrace, eastern Bulgaria, the river valley of Maritsa, and then the Dobruca region became thickly populated by Turks. The evidence of the Ottoman

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<sup>7</sup> Vahdettin Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları*, (Istanbul: Eren 1993), pp. 45-46.

<sup>8</sup> BOA, I.ŞD, no.62.

population and tax registers indicate that Muslim Turks constituted a large part of the population in these regions in the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The ethnic and religious structure of the Danube province in 1864 (when it was created) reveals a great diversity. The Orthodox Christian Bulgarians and the Sunni Muslim Turks formed the main ethnic and religious components. The population of the province also included the Sunni Tatar and Circassian refugees who migrated from the lands lost to Russia in Crimea and Caucasus, the Roma (Gypsies) who were divided into Muslim and Christian subgroups, Sephardic Jews, Orthodox Wallachians and Greeks, and Gregorian Armenians. In addition to these groups, there were some small communities such as Pomaks (Bulgarian speaking Muslims), Gagauzes (Turkish speaking Christians), Bulgarian Roman Catholics, Shiite Muslims (Alevi and Bektashi Muslims), Russian old believers, Ukrainian Cossacks, Ashkenazi Jews, and Protestant Armenians etc.<sup>10</sup>

Midhat Pasha also gives some information, in his already mentioned article, about the population of the Danube province. According to him, the number of the total population was about 2 million.<sup>11</sup> In the 26 administrative units of the province the Christian Bulgarians constituted the majority as 60-80 percent of the total population.<sup>12</sup> However, this was 70 percent for the Muslim population in the towns located in the eastern side of the Yantara River, which was a sort of natural

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<sup>9</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Rumeli", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, CD version, VIII:607b.

<sup>10</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p. 40. About the Muslim population in Modern Bulgaria see, Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Fadeeva also gives the same number, Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha: Jizn i deyatelnost [His Life and Career]*, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> The 26 administrative units included Zishtovi, Yanbolu, Rabova, Lum, Vidin, Adiliye, Belgradcık, Berkofca, Vraca, Lofca, Pluna, Selvi, Tırnova, Gabrova, Ihtiman, Samokov, Izladi, Orhaniye, Sofia, Dobniçe, Radomir, Köstendil, Leskofca, Nish, Iznebol and Prut

border between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.<sup>13</sup> Even some towns were entirely composed of Muslim population.<sup>14</sup> The rest of the population in the eastern side included Bulgarians, Armenians, Greeks and Jews etc.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The main towns in the eastern side of the Yantara River consist of Rusçuk, Razgrad, Osmanpazarı, Shumnu, Tutrukan, Silistre, Tulca and Varna.

<sup>14</sup> They are Karlova, Tuzluk, Osmanpazarı, Hezargrad and Hacıoğlupazarı which are in the Deliorman region located Shumnu- Silistre line.

<sup>15</sup> Midhat Pasha, "Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali", p.27. In 1874 the date for ethnic and religious diversity in the Danube province from the census started by Midhat Pasha in 1866 was published in the provincial newspaper. For the summery table of the date see, Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868*, p.42. For the table of Muslim-non-Muslim population from the yearbook of the Danube province dated 1290 (1873-74) also see, Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, pp.143-147.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DANUBE PROVINCE AND THE REFORMS**

#### **IV.1 The Establishment of the Danube Province (Tuna Vilayeti)**

The Danube region where different ethnic and religious groups managed to get along with one another over centuries turned into the one of the most problematic parts of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century because of the rise of nationalism. The Bulgarians took important steps in their struggle for religious and national independence, while all the ordinary in the countryside, traders and producers of the towns' people suffered from the increasing anarchy, terrorism and banditry in the Balkans. On the other hand, Russia was taking the problems in the Balkans to an international platform in which it might make direct interventions by presenting itself as the protector of the Orthodox Slavs.

The Ottoman administration perceived this situation as an alarming threat to the integrity of the empire and the safety of its subjects in the Balkans. Thus, Ali and Fuad Pashas, successors of Mustafa Reshid Pasha, were making great reform efforts in the provincial administration. They appreciated the reforming talents of Midhat Pasha who served as an inspector after the uprisings of 1854 in the Vidin region and then had been the governor of Nish since 1861. They summoned him to Istanbul in

1864 in order to consider with them a general organic law for the government of the provinces of the empire.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, they reached the conclusion that a new province would be established by combining the provinces of Silistre, Vidin and Nish into a single government under the name of the Danube Province (Tuna Vilayeti). Then, they declared the establishment of the new province together with a set of regulations (Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi)<sup>2</sup> dealing with the provincial administration. Accordingly, Midhat Pasha was appointed to the governorship of this province.

This fundamental reform movement and the nomination of Midhat Pasha for the implementation of it in the province faced an opposition of the conservative groups headed by the Sheikh-ul Islam Saadettin Efendi because they thought the new system, in which all the subjects would be represented in the councils and the judicial system for the non-Muslims was incompatible with the religion and the regime.<sup>3</sup> Sururi Efendi, the regent of Rusçuk, also supported this conservative group. However, the influence of Fuad Pasha managed to overcome all such oppositions and they could not prevent the approval of the reforms and the nomination of Midhat Pasha to the governorship of the new province in the Council of Ministers (Meclis-i Vükela).<sup>4</sup>

Another opposition came from Nusret Pasha who had personal problems with Pasha. He was in charge of the settlement of the Circassian and Nogay refugees in the Balkans and he went against the reforms because he thought that the reforms

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<sup>1</sup> Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, p.37.

<sup>2</sup> See *Vilayet Nizamnamesi*, Düstûr 1. Tertip (Istanbul 1289), pp. 608-624, and also *Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi*, BOA, I.MMS no:1245. Also see Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), pp. 253–271 for the differences between these two copies of the regulations and their transliteration to the Latin alphabet.

<sup>3</sup> They mainly opposed to the establishment of the Provincial Appellate Court that they considered as closing down the şer'î courts.

<sup>4</sup> BOA, I.DH, no: 36825. Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, p.38.

would not be helpful to solve the problems, especially those of the settlement policies. Before the *Nizamname* of 1864, the refugees were not accepted as the subjects of the sultan and they had a separate administration by Nusret Pasha. That is why he behaved like their governor. For example, when local administrators imprisoned some of the refugees he attacked on the prison and rescued them as if they were the citizens of a different government.<sup>5</sup> Then he was banished from his position since he continued to act arbitrarily.<sup>6</sup> After all these oppositions were subdued successfully, Midhat Pasha accelerated the implementation of the radical reforms throughout the province.

Meanwhile, Russia paid a special attention to all these developments and became horrified because of Midhat Pasha's appointment to the governorship of the Danube province. Pasha was considered as a dangerous obstacle to the Russian interests in this significant part of the Balkans because of his achievements in the province of Nish. Thus, Cont N.P. Ignatiew, a passionate pan-Slavist and director of Asian affairs of Russian Foreign Ministry, was nominated to the Russian embassy in Istanbul in 1864 to pressure the Ottoman government for removal of Midhat Pasha from his position in the province.<sup>7</sup>

## **IV.2 The Ideological Bases of the Reforms of 1864 and the Reforming Cadres**

The reform movement of the Tanzimat initiated by Mustafa Reşid Pasha was furthered by his successors, Fuad and Ali Pashas. The next generation led by Midhat and Cevdet Pashas followed them and advanced this movement to its peak with the declaration of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876. These great reformers of the

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<sup>5</sup> BAO, I.DH. no: 37109- 37120.

<sup>6</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı devleti'nde Tuna Vilayeti (1864-1878)*, p. 34.

Tanzimat, symbolizing a new mentality in an old empire making efforts for its modernization, had liberal ideas that the conservative bureaucrats of traditional Ottoman regime strongly resisted. For instance, they were in favor of a constitutional regime, in which all the subjects of the sultan would be equally represented.

In 1864, Midhat Pasha played the major role in formulating the administrative reforms, together with Fuad and Ali Pashas, because of his administrative talents and the experience he gained as the governor of Nish. The foundation of the Danube province would be the first step in the reconstruction process of the provincial administration in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> His main intention was to strengthen the local governments and to modernize the province, while keeping the central authority powerful and pacifying the local elements that supported the nationalistic organizations.

The Danube province was considered as a pilot region and the reforms introduced to this newly established province would be carried out as examples for the rest empire. It was assumed that if they become successful, they would be applied to other provinces as well. Afterwards, the same reforms were introduced to the other significant parts of the empire such as Baghdad, Edirne and Aleppo.

The most outstanding difference of the new provincial administration system from the classical one was that the authority of the governor had increased to cover all the provincial affairs. Although the French “Département” system was replicated in the new system, the regulations of 1864 indicated a more centralist tendency than the French one.<sup>9</sup> It pointed out that the ministries of the Ottoman government in Istanbul, rather than the governor of the province, would be in charge of nominating and appointing high-ranking provincial officials. For instance, the provincial

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<sup>8</sup> L. Leouzon Duc, *Midhat Pasha*, (Paris: 1877), p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *Türkiye İdare Tarihi*,(Ankara: Türkiye ve Orta Doğu Amme İdaresi yayınları 1979), p. 290.

accountant (muhasibeci) was nominated by the Ministry of Finance, the director of the foreign affairs (umur-u ecnebiye müdürü) by the Foreign Ministry, the official of the judicial affairs (umur-u şer'iyye memuru) by the Sheik-ul Islam in Istanbul. According to a Bulgarian researcher, Midhat Pasha, as governor, had a virtual free hand in all bureaucratic appointments in the province. However, although he was in charge of the provincial police forces and border patrols, he had no authority over the military chain of command in the Imperial Second Army (which was stationed in the province, with its headquarters in Shumnu), nor is there evidence that Midhat Pasha ever had (or sought to have) any influence in military appointments.<sup>10</sup>

However, it is known that when Midhat Pasha was the governor of Nish he changed the positions of the high-ranking military officers, who misused their authority by collecting illegal taxes from the *reaya*. Pasha ordered the construction of a large barrack in the province and also blockhouses along the borders providing housing for the military. Since then it was forbidden for the troops to stay in the villages.<sup>11</sup> All of these indicate that Midhat Pasha also had an authority over the appointments of the high-ranking military officers and the army in the Danube province.

On the other side, the lower and middle level officials of the provincial bureaucracy -the county governors (kaza müdürs), the scribes in the various district councils, the managers of the local branches of the Agricultural Credit cooperatives, police officers, etc- were often holdovers from the previous administration. This situation reflects a degree of cadre continuity in the administrative body of the province. That is to say, the bureaucratic transition from the old system to the new one was not smooth and conflict-free. Thus, Midhat Pasha dismissed majority of the

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<sup>10</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, pp.54-55.

<sup>11</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 21115.

county governors, except of those who proved to be trustworthy (bittecrübe eminiyetbahş).<sup>12</sup>

Midhat Pasha came to the Danube province together with a very cosmopolite cadres like Armenian Odiyan Efendi, the director of the foreign affairs, Albanian Ismail Kemal Bey, the director of official record office (tahrirat müdürü). Most of them were from different nationalities but sharing a common ideology of Ottomanism (Osmanlılık).<sup>13</sup> However, Pasha was not able to compose his own group of officials to carry out the reforms in the Danube province. The government in Istanbul nominated most of the high-ranking officials, including Sururi Efendi, the regent of Rusçuk, and Senih Efendi, the chief secretary of the province, who actively took part in the opposition to the reforms of 1864 and Midhat Pasha's appointment as a governor. They attempted to mislead the other officials such as Nazif Efendi, the Inspector of judges (Müfettiş-i Hükkam), by telling them that the establishment of the Provincial Appellate Court (Temyiz-i Hukuk Mahkemesi) would mean the closing down of the traditional Islamic courts and the removal of the legal principles of Islam but the mufti of Rusçuk, Mehmet Efendi, managed to prevent them.<sup>14</sup> Along with Nusret Pasha they made it difficult for Midhat Pasha to implement the reforms. That is why he removed them from their positions in the provincial administration soon after their appointments, thanks to the support of Fuad Pasha in the center.<sup>15</sup> Nazif Efendi was replaced with Necip Efendi, Senih Efendi with Rıfat Efendi.<sup>16</sup>

As a reformist and radical governor Midhat Pasha would be able to cooperate with neither the conservative bureaucrats of the Ottoman Empire nor the Bulgarian

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<sup>12</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p. 64; BOA, I.MVL. no:24978.

<sup>13</sup> Ortaylı, "Midhat Paşa'nın Vilayet Yönetimindeki Kadroları ve Politikası", p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> BOA, I.DH. no: 37120 -37109.

<sup>15</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>16</sup> BAO, I.DH. no: 37109- 37120.

nationalists in the towns or countryside in order to modernize and to pacify the province. Thus, he chose to work together with the reformist Grand Vizier, Fuad Pasha, and the local notables, who were not fond of separatist movements, in diagnosing and resolving the problems. He appointed the local economic and cultural elite to the various positions in the provincial administration and cooperated with them. His main intention was to create a Turkish and Bulgarian intelligentsia and his own reforming cadres in the province thanks to the schools, reformatories, (which would transform into Industrial schools) and printing houses he established. For example, after 1864, a number of Bulgarian students, such as D. Minchov, Dagorov, C. Georgiev, Kirkov, Tachov, Chomakov etc., were sent to the Ottoman Imperial School (Mekteb-i Sultani) in Paris to study French, geography and history.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Ahmet Midhat Efendi, who would be the chief editor of the provincial newspaper and a famous Turkish journalist, and Dragan Tsankov, who was the director of the provincial printing house and would become the prime minister of independent Bulgaria later on, were two examples of intellectuals of the Danube province that appeared during the governorship of Midhat Pasha.

The Russian ambassador in Istanbul, Ignatiew, carefully followed these developments in this part of the Balkans with a great care, while providing all the detailed information to the center, which came from the Russian spies spread through out this region. According to one of his reports, Sabri Pasha, governor of Rusçuk appointed by Midhat Pasha, was in contact with a prominent person from the clergy, called Ioan, helping him cooperate with Bulgarian bourgeoisie in Rusçuk. It also pointed out that the target group of the Ottoman rule was the wealthy city dwellers,

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<sup>17</sup> Raia Zaimova, "The Sultan's Subjects at the Ottoman Imperial School" after the Crimean War", *Uluslararası Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk-Bulgar İlişkileri Sempozyumu 11-13 Mayıs 2005*, (Eskişehir: Odunpazarı Belediyesi Yayınları 2005), p.271.

who were well educated, speaking both Bulgarian and Turkish.<sup>18</sup> Midhat Pasha also appointed some Bulgarians to high positions in the provincial administration and awarded those successful ones with imperial medals. For example, Hacı Ivancho Efendi (the head of the Court of Commerce) was promoted to the higher office called *Kapıcıbaşı* with the second rank of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Karagözoğlu Stefan Efendi (a member of the provincial administrative council) was also honored with the same position. Mihaylovski Efendi (the head of educational staff in Tırnovo), Dimitroki Efendi (a physician in Rusçuk), Mösyö Andonaki (a physician in Samakov) were also awarded the fifth rank imperial medal (Mecidiye Nişanı). In addition to them, Mr. Vacha from the Austrian shipping agency in Rusçuk was also granted the third rank imperial medal.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Midhat Pasha tried to create such a sort of Bulgarian bourgeoisie attached to the Ottoman rule and supportive of his reforms in the province.

### IV.3 The Administrative Structure

The Danube province, which was composed of parts of Northern Bulgaria and Eastern Serbia, was divided into seven *livas* (districts), namely Rusçuk, Tulca, Vidin, Nish, Sofia, Tırnova and Varna, and 48 *kazas* (counties). Each of these *kazas* was separated into *nahiyes* (communes) and *karyes* (villages) in accordance with a systematic hierarchy.<sup>20</sup> However, the number of *nahiyes* was kept rather low, because according to the Vienna protocol of 1855 in which Russia and Austria participated, the *nahiye* administrations had to be improved by local councils

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<sup>18</sup> A report of the Russian Embassy in Istanbul in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry of the Imperial Russia cited by Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha: Jizn i deyatelnost [His Life and Career]*, (Moscow: 1977), p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> BOA, I.DH. no: 38984.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix II; The Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 3, 4, 5.

consisting of their own members chosen from their inhabitants. They would be set up in all the *nahiyes* and led by someone elected among their members. Thus, Midhat Pasha perceived this as a danger in the regions where the non-Muslim population was dense, since it would pave the way for separatist organizations. In spite of the fact that the number of the *nahiyes* should have been more than one hundred in comparison with the number of *livas* and *kazas*, just 15 localities had the status of *nahiye*.<sup>21</sup> Rusçuk became the capital of the new province because of its importance as a port city, commercial center having good connections with Black Sea region and military base in the lower Danube.<sup>22</sup>

The administrative staff of the Danube province was described in the *Nizamname* (Regulations) of 1864 as follows:

**Table IV.1: The Administrative Staff of the Danube Province**

<b>Vali</b> (Governor)
<b>Vali Muavini</b> (Assistant governor)
<b>Kaymakam or Mutasarrıf</b> (Governor of the districts) <sup>23</sup>
<b>Defterdar</b> (Chief financial officer)
<b>Muhasebeci</b> (Accountant)
<b>Umur-u Şer'iyye Memuru</b> (Official of judicial affairs) with the title of <i>Müfettiş-i Hükkam-i Vilayet</i> (Inspector of judges of the province)
<b>Mektubcu</b> (Chief Secretary of the province)

<sup>21</sup> Ortaylı, “Midhat Paşa’nın Vilayet Yönetimindeki Kadroları ve Politikası”, *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler Tartışmalar Edirne: 8–10 Mayıs 1984*, p. 230.

<sup>22</sup> According to some authors the Ottoman administration had two different ideas about the name of province and its capital. One of them was that the name of the province would be the Bulgarian province and Tırnova would be the capital. Other one was that the name of province would be the Danube province having Rusçuk as the capital. The second option was chosen by the Sublime Port because of the Bulgarian national movements and the Russian threat. Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Midhat Pasha replaced some terms, which had been used in the Ottoman bureaucracy, with the similar ones such as kaymakam instead of mutasarrıf, müdür instead of kaymakam because according to Midhat Pasha the word “mutasarrıf”, which means law owner or governor of districts, is so despotic. Ortaylı, “Midhat Paşa’nın Vilayet Yönetimindeki Kadroları ve Politikası”, p. 230.

<b>Umur-u Ecnebiye Müdürü</b> (Director of foreign affairs)
<b>Ticaret, Ziraat ve Nafia Müdürü</b> (Director of commerce, agriculture and public works) <sup>24</sup>
<b>Defter-i Hakani Müdürü or Tahrirat Müdürü</b> (Director of the cadastral office)
<b>Maarif Müdürü</b> (Director of education)
<b>Evkaf Müdürü</b> (Director of pious foundations)
<b>Alay Beyi</b> (Head of gendarmerie)

In addition, in the ottoman accounts one can find the names of some administrative staff mentioned as:<sup>25</sup>

**Table IV. 2: The First Appointed Officials.**

<b>Vali:</b> Midhat Pasha, the former governor of Nish.
<b>Mektubcu:</b> Senih Efendi, the former director of the Mühimme Odası (Bureau for the management of pressing affairs of importance in the government ministry).
<b>Muhasebeci:</b> Rif'at Efendi, the former accountant of Konya.
<b>Politika Memuru (Official of Politics) or Umur-u Ecnebiye:</b> Odiyan Efendi, the former Chief Secretary of the foreign affairs. <sup>26</sup>
<b>Umur-u Şer'iyye Memuru or Müfettiş-i Hükkam-i Vilayet:</b> Hafız Necib Efendi.
<b>Kaymakam of Vidin:</b> Sabri Pasha, the former governor of Tulça.
<b>Kaymakam of Nish:</b> Süleyman Pasha, the former governor of Lazistan.
<b>Kaymakam of Tulça:</b> Ahmet Rasim Pasha, the former governor of Sofia.
<b>Kaymakam of Rusçuk:</b> Mahmud Fâiz Pasha, the former governor of Yeni-Pazar <sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, some of the governors of the seven districts between 1864 and 1868 were as the following:<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> At first there were director of commerce and agriculture and that of public works independent of each other but later on they were combined together.

<sup>25</sup> *Vak'a-Nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi, Vol. X*, edited by Prof. M. Münir Aktepe, (Ankara: TTK, 1988), pp. 126–127.

<sup>26</sup> Şentürk gives a different name for this responsibility, which is Pavlaki Efendi, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), p.172.

<sup>27</sup> There are different information about the name of this official. Şentürk mentions it as Nazif Molla Efendi, see, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), p.172.

<sup>28</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, pp.105-108.

**Table IV. 3: The Governors of the Districts, 1864-68.**

<b>Ruşuk:</b> Mahmut Faiz Pasha (1864), Ahmet Necip Pasha (1865), Esad Pasha (1866), Hilmi Efendi (1867) and Tahsin Efendi (1868).
<b>Vidin:</b> Mehmet Sabri Pasha (1864) and Aziz Pasha (1867).
<b>Sofia:</b> Fehim Pasha (1864) and Esad Pasha 1867.
<b>Nish:</b> Süleyman Pasha (1864) and Abdurrahman Pasha (1867).
<b>Tırnova:</b> Hasan Tahsin Pasha (1864), Ahmet Necip Pasha (1865), Cavit Pasha (1865), Ali Bey (1867) and Hilmi Bey (1868).
<b>Varna:</b> Mustafa Mustafa Arif Efendi (1864), Asim Pasha (1865), Abdurrahman Pasha (1867), Rifat Efendi (1868).
<b>Tulça:</b> Ahmet Rasim Pasha (1864) and Süleyman Pasha (1867).

In addition to these appointed officials and governors, the local councils, which had lost their power and became symbolic authority acting as puppets in hands of local powers,<sup>29</sup> were reconstructed with the *Nizamname* of 1864. Various administrative and judicial councils, made up of elected Muslim and non-Muslim members, were set up within the province in order to prevent the misuse of local councils and to provide cooperation between the governor and the inhabitants. Since it was the first time in the Ottoman history that the local Christians were represented in the councils, this reform constituted an important step in the development of parliamentary system, which was strongly desired by Midhat Pasha and the other statesmen of the Tanzimat. Although the Ottoman Empire experienced a constitutional regime in 1876, for the first time in its history, thanks to the great efforts of the Midhat Pasha, the Danube province was the region where the early practices of such a regime were carried out.

The *Nizamname* of 1864 clearly described the functions and authority of these councils together with the administration of the districts, *kazas*, *nahiyes* and *karyes*, and the electoral system that would be used in the new administrative system as the following:

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<sup>29</sup> İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1992), p.77.

## 1- The Provincial General Assembly (Meclis-i Umumi-i Vilayet)

This assembly was made up of regional delegates, two Muslim and two non-Muslim from each district,<sup>30</sup> and met once a year in Rusçuk under the leadership of the governor in order to discuss reform proposals by the governor and the complaints and petitions of the *reaya* in respect to the important issues such as construction of roads, trade, agriculture, education, taxation etc. Each meeting took no more than 40 days.<sup>31</sup> It functioned as the Ottoman Council of State (Şura-yı Devlet) in Istanbul, which received regular annual legislative recommendations from each annual provincial representative assembly and was divided into five departments Administration- Police-Military, Finance- Endowments, Justice, Public Works- Trade-Agriculture, and Education.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the Provincial General Assembly reviewed the governmental policies with the delegates chosen from *livas* and *kazas* and took advice from them. In this way, all Muslim and non-Muslim groups played a significant role in policy making by representing themselves in the Provincial General Assembly, which might be considered as a sort of parliament.

## 2- The Council of Provincial Administration (Meclis-i Idare-i Vilayet)

This council headed by the governor was comprised of the *Müfettiş-i Hükkam-ı Şeriye*, the *Mektubcu*, the *Defterdar*, the *Umur-u Ecnebiye Müdürü* and three Muslim and three non-Muslim delegates chosen from the *reaya*.<sup>33</sup> It was the highest administrative council in the province, which mainly dealt with four issues,

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<sup>30</sup> Article 82 pointed out that three delegates from each district would join the assembly. Thus, although 28 delegates from the districts should have been in the assembly only 21 delegates from the districts, together with the governor and the high-ranking officials totally 35 members, attended in the meeting of the Provincial General Assembly, BOA, I.MVL, no: 26162 cited by Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tuna Vilayeti (1864-1878)*, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları*, (Ankara: TTK, 1991), pp.261–262. Articles of the 1864 Nizamname no: 27, 28, 29,63,64,74.

<sup>32</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, “The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement before 1876”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, V.1, No.1, (January 1970), p. 74.

<sup>33</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 13.

the civil service (Mülkiye), foreign affairs (Hariciye), public works (Bayındırlık) and agriculture (Ziraat). It covered broad responsibilities such as purchasing the things ordered by the government, preparing the official agreements, tax collection, hospitals, reformatories, cemeteries, market places, mining, police force, municipalities etc.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, this council was also in charge of solving the problems among the governmental offices and officials, while listening to the complaints from the *reaya*.<sup>35</sup> However, it had no right to intervene in the judicial courts.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, at least five members out of ten were required to start discussions in the Council of Provincial Administration and two third of the total votes were required to make decisions. In the case where votes were equal, the governor's vote would determine the decision.<sup>37</sup>

### 3- The Appeal Court and The Criminal Court (Meclis-i Temyiz-i Hukuk and Meclis-i Cinayet ve De'vâi)

According to the *Nizamname* of 1864 an appeal court and a criminal court were established.<sup>38</sup> However, afterwards these courts were combined together while keeping their responsibilities independent of each other since the number of issues concerned with the Appeal Court was rather limited.<sup>39</sup> Since it was the highest judicial council- made up of six elected members, three Muslim and three non-Muslim, and the *Müfettiş-i Hükkam*, it decreased the authority of the Islamic courts. Thus, the conservative groups strongly opposed to the establishment of this court. It was in charge of judicial issues which could not be successfully concluded in the

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<sup>34</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 77.

<sup>35</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 78.

<sup>36</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 79.

<sup>37</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 83.

<sup>38</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 13-24.

<sup>39</sup> BOA, I.MVL no:23773.

Islamic courts, the religious courts of the minorities or the Court of Commerce (Meclis-i Ticaret).<sup>40</sup>

#### 4- The Court of Commerce (Meclis-i Ticaret)

This court was a special court for commercial trials established in the center and the districts in order to solve problems in the commercial activities.<sup>41</sup>

#### 5- The Municipal Councils (Belediye Meclisleri)

In spite of the fact that the establishment of the municipalities was not included in the *Nizamname* of 1864, it was materialized, for the first time in Ottoman history, about one year later, on November 13 1865, with Midhat Pasha's proposal to the Sublime Port. Although European examples were modeled in the municipalities it was difficult to establish exact replicas. Thus, the first of them was established in the center of the province, as a model. As a consequence of its success in this "pilot region", it was introduced to all the *livas* and some *kazas*.<sup>42</sup> This issue was discussed in the Provincial General Assembly on October 24, 1867 and concluded with the decision to establish municipal councils in the *livas* and *kazas* with the *Talimatname* (Regulation) drawing up their responsibilities, which mainly included infrastructural works, like construction of roads, streets, pavements, sideways and their maintenance, controlling buildings under constructions; manipulating the shops, shopkeepers and market places to provide fair economic activities; ensuring hygiene and cleanliness and supplying fire departments.<sup>43</sup> These municipal works and services were rather close to the modern ones.

At the same time, municipal councils were composed of some officials with at least two and at most six elected members, who were mostly the notables and

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<sup>40</sup> BAO, I.MMS, no:2371.

<sup>41</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 25.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 24362.

<sup>43</sup> BAO, I.MVL, no: 26138-24362.

wealthy people of the region. In addition to them, an engineer and regent would serve as consultants for the council. The functionaries and an infantry group from the army would be ready in the command of municipal council, which would be directly headed by *kaymakams* or by an appropriate official appointed by them.<sup>44</sup> The number of appointed members of the municipal councils was rather high in comparison with that of the elected ones, which were from both Muslim and non-Muslim population. This indicates that these councils were highly controlled by the government.

The taxes assessed on buildings and real estates together with fines constituted the major revenue sources for the municipalities. While the head and members of the councils worked for free, the engineer, regent, some other functionaries and infantry troops were paid by the government. It was the council's responsibility to send a report of its incomes and expenditures to the center of the province, which would evaluate it in the administrative council and then send a copy of the budget for the following year to the municipal council after its approval by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (*Dahiliye Nezareti*) in Istanbul.<sup>45</sup>

#### **IV.3.1 The administration of the Livas, Kazas, Nahiyes and Karyes**

The administrative staff of the *livas* included a *kaymakam*, a *muhasebeci*, and a *tahrirat müdürü*. In addition to them, the administrative council comprised of *kaymakam*, *muhasebeci*, *tahrirat müdürü*, *kadı* (Muslim Judge), mufti, the religious leaders of the non-Muslim minorities and six elected members, three Muslim and three non-Muslim, was established in the districts. This council would deal with the

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<sup>44</sup> BAO, I.MVL, no: 26138-24362.

<sup>45</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 24362.

civil service, public works, treasury, tax collection, police forces, agriculture and cadastral office.<sup>46</sup>

In respect to judicial affairs, a *kadı* was appointed by the Sheikh ul-Islam in Istanbul and the Appeal Court and the Criminal Court were also set up in the *livas*.<sup>47</sup>

In the *kazas*, the *müdür* was in charge of governing the *kaza* and *kaza katibi* dealt with financial and cadastral affairs there. The Appeal Court and the Criminal Court were also established in the *kazas*.<sup>48</sup> Governor of *nahiye* (*nahiye müdürü*) would administrate the *nahiyes* in the centers, which were close to villages and farms (*çiflik*s), along with the Council of *Nahiye*, made up of two Muslim and two non-Muslim members, which met twice a week.<sup>49</sup> In the villages, there would be two elected head of villages (*muhtars*), who would be attached to the *müdür* in the *kaza*. However, those less than 20 houses would have just one *muhtar*. The Council of Elders (*Ihtiyar Heyeti*) would also be set up in the villages in order to assist the *muhtar* in the administration.<sup>50</sup>

### IV.3.2 Electoral System

The election system in the Danube province varied from one administrative unit to another in accordance with its status such as *karye*, *nahiye*, *kaza* or *liva*. First of all, the subjects of the sultan inhabiting in the villages, at the age of 18 or above and paying at least 50 *guruş* taxes to the state per year, had right to vote for *muhtar* and the Council of Elders. The candidates for *muhtar* and membership of the village

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<sup>46</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 31,32,33,34,35,36.

<sup>47</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46.

<sup>48</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 48,49,50,51,54 ,55; *Vak'a-Nüvis Ahmed Lütü Efendi Tarihi, Vol. X*, pp. 126–127. BOA, I.MMS, no: 1245 cited by Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), (Ankara: TTK, 1992), p.172.

<sup>49</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>50</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 58,59,60,61,62.

council had to be among the subjects of the sultan inhabiting the same village, at the age of 30 or above and paying at least 100 *guruş* taxes. These elections were held once a year and the members of the council could participate in the elections as candidates again. In the case that the *muhtar* is dismissed or the members of the council including the *muhtar* pass away, the elections might be held earlier than its normal time. After the *kaymakam* approved the results of the elections they started to work.<sup>51</sup>

The *Müdür* and the members of the administrative council in *nahiyes* were elected among the subjects of the sultan at the age of 30 or above and paying at least 100 *guruş* taxes to the state per year and the *müdür* had to be literate. If the nahiye was comprised of both Muslim and non-Muslim populations the *müdür* would be from the majority group and the assistant *müdür* would be from the other group. The imams, priests, teachers and officials could not be the *müdür* or the member of the administrative council. The results of the elections had to be approved by the governor through the *kaymakams*.<sup>52</sup>

The election of members of administrative and judicial councils in the *kazas* were held every two years by a commission (Tefrik Cemiyeti), organized by the *kaymakam*, the high ranking officials and the leaders of the religious communities. This commission's duty was to prepare the lists of the proper candidates -among the Ottoman subjects at the age of 30 or above, paying at least 150 *guruş* taxes to the state per year and if possible literate- and to submit them to the Council of Elders in the villages within the *liva*. These lists contained three times more names than the number of seats. The candidates were equitably divided between Muslims and non-Muslims. If there were more than one non-Muslim group then the non-Muslim

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<sup>51</sup> The Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 67, 68, 69,70.

<sup>52</sup> BOA, I.MMS, no: 2382, articles 10, 11, 12, 13.

candidates were also divided among these groups. Then, one third of names on the lists were eliminated by the votes of the Council of Elders. After that, the kaymakam of the district eliminated half of the names on the newly prepared lists and the remaining names were considered as elected.<sup>53</sup> The same procedure with some slight differences was applied to elect the members of the administrative and judicial councils in the districts and capital of the province. For instance, higher property qualifications, those paying at least 500 *guruş* taxes to the state per year, were required to be a candidate and the governor specified the final list and submitted it to the Sublime Port for approval.<sup>54</sup>

The important point in the election system and the administrative and judicial councils in the Danube province was that the non-Muslim minorities would be included in the provincial administration but the central authority would remain highly influential over the whole province. Midhat Pasha was a great statesman who had liberal ideas. He wanted to try a kind of parliamentary system in which all the subjects of the sultan would be represented. That is why, for example he established, in Rusçuk, the Provincial General Assembly having equal Muslim and non-Muslim members. However, in the Council of Provincial Administration, the number of Muslim members outnumbered the non-Muslim ones (7 Muslim to 4 non-Muslim members).<sup>55</sup> Although Midhat Pasha tried to integrate the local powers to the administration to pacify the separatist feelings the number of Bulgarian officials placed into key positions in the administration was also kept rather limited.<sup>56</sup> In this way he kept his authority in the province. For instance, the councils in the *kazas* and the province center in comparison with those in the village and *nahiyes* were

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<sup>53</sup> The Articles of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 71,72,73,74,75.

<sup>54</sup> The Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 81.

<sup>55</sup> Skender Rızaj, "Midhat Pasha'nın Rumeli'de Vilayetler Kurulmasındaki Rolü", *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler Tartışmalar Edirne: 8-10 Mayıs 1984*, (Ankara: TTK 1986), p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 154.

favorably more controlled by the authority of the governor thanks to this election system.

Furthermore, these councils set up in the newly established province were devoid of political and administrative authority to make important decisions since they had to be approved by the center. However, they concerned with all of the important provincial affairs and assisted the governors in diagnosing the problems of the people in respect to the issues such as administration, education, taxation, commerce, agriculture, crime and courts etc. In other words, they functioned as an advisory and consultative body to the administration. For example, with their help all the property in each district was valued equitably and fairly, and the taxes based on this assessment were collected efficiently without complaint from the *reaya*. In spite of the abolition of many vexatious taxes and the increased salaries of the responsible officials, the new revenue of the province showed a considerable and increasing surplus.<sup>57</sup>

#### **IV.4 The Economic Reforms**

One of the most essential issues that the Tanzimat reforms focused was to solve the problems dealing with taxation and land use. In the Ottoman Empire the state was the absolute owner of the lands called *miri* (State owned) but the sultan granted the revenues of these lands to some statesmen or commanders for their services, especially for their military services, under the name of *tumar*, which was a form of land tenure. In this way, they became the tax collectors of a given region. If they did not follow their military and administrative obligations or the peasants

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<sup>57</sup> Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*, p.39.

complained about them the sultan would take “their portion” of revenue away from them. However, this system began to lose its importance as a consequence of the socio-economic developments of the seventeenth and the Ottoman administration had to alter fiscal institutions together with the military changes in the process of the imperial consolidation. Thus, *timar* system left its place to another form of taxation, well known in the Ottoman history as *iltizam* (tax-farming), in which individuals having liquid capital lent to the government and in return they had right to collect the state taxes and revenues of a given region for a certain amount of money. It attempted to maximize revenue through competitive bidding that bidders undertake to supply an agreed upon sum regardless of the actual yield of the revenue source. If the revenue source is higher than the contracted amount, the tax farmers benefit from the discrepancy. Tax farming is a high risk and high yield investment.<sup>58</sup> However, wealth succeeded to be advantageous from the system.

Moreover, in the *iltizam* system, the tax-farmers mostly concerned with maximizing their personal profit in tax collection instead of providing the state with a steady cash flow. That is why they were frequently replaced with new ones. In this situation, the peasants and farmers had difficulties in paying taxes in cash, which they paid in kind before, not only in the bad harvest but also in the good one since there was no enough market within the empire to sell their products. In addition, there was not an institution to provide the farmers with seeds, animals and credit for their agricultural activities. Thus, they had to resort to loan sharks to borrow money. On the other hand, in the times of financial crisis, the state had to sell the ownership of the state lands. Therefore, in order to solve these problems and to secure regular

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<sup>58</sup> Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660*, (Leiden-New York-Köln: E.J.Brill 1996), pp. 1-21, 119-120. For an example of a mukata registers see, St. St. Cyril and Methodins National Library, Sofia, Oriental Department, CK 9-4.

cash flow from the provinces the Ottoman administration introduced a developed form of tax farming system called *Malikhane* in 1695. According to this system, the state would farm out the revenue sources on a lifetime base with a great amount of initial payment and then regular annual payments. This lifelong ownership would pass directly to the son.<sup>59</sup> In this way, in the eighteenth century the tenants became the permanent owners of these lands and a new social group called *ağa*, *bey*, *ayan*, *voyvoda*, *gospodar*, emerged in the provinces between the state and the *reaya*.

These new landowners were a lot different from those of *tumar* holders and tax farmers of the seventeenth century, who were directly under the state control. They also had high authority over the land and peasants living there and so began to collect taxes illegally to raise their profit. The state could not manage to manipulate these rising powers of this new class, instead it made agreements with them to keep them under the justified state authority. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire faced financial crisis because of the continuous wars and defeats, which caused total discontent and uneasiness in the Balkans. The unjust treatment of the local land owners and the abuses in the tax collection brought about anarchy in the Balkans and the emergence of local bandit groups, which were called *haydut*.<sup>60</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the *ayans* (powerful local notables) appeared as the de facto rulers of the provinces. Some of the most outstanding examples of the influential *ayans* in the Balkans were Pazvantoğlu Osman in Vidin, Tirsenikli İsmail Ağa in Rusçuk, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha in Albania etc., who symbolized an obvious reflection of decentralization in the Ottoman

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<sup>59</sup> Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, (Istanbul: Ötüken 2000), pp. 105-108. For an example of Malikhane registers see, St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia, Oriental Department, D 235 fol. 1-20.

<sup>60</sup> Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria*, p. 29.

Balkans. Pazvantoğlu himself, for instance, was one of the wealthiest notables of Vidin, who had considerable amount of *çiftlik*s (farms). Furthermore, especially Vidin, Belgrade and Bosnia were very important military bases, where a number of Janissary garrisons stationed and the mentioned Pazvantoğlu Osman was one among the most influential of them and considered himself as the leader of centrifugal movement in this part of the Balkans. He revolted against the central power, controlled the Vidin region- northwestern Bulgaria and eastern Serbia- and even defeated the forces sent by the sultan against him in 1794. That is why; Sultan Selim III was forced to nominate him to the governorship of Vidin.<sup>61</sup>

These powerful groups from the Janissary origin managed to obtain lease rights to extensive holdings and carried out a number of functions such as collecting taxes, raising troops and keeping internal order.<sup>62</sup> In 1826, the Janissaries, who frequently threatened the central authority and opposed the reforms, were destructed mostly in the capital but many of their garrisons remained in the Balkans, especially in the Vidin, Belgrade and Bosnia region. However, they lost their political and economic strength. Thus, they needed to transform themselves to the local landowner class known in the history as *gospodar*. They suppressed the peasants and established their own *çiftlik*s over the land they took by force from the local peasantry. These *gospodars* were in favor of the old traditional regime and they opposed to the Tanzimat reforms, even in some cases they directly supported the revolts against the reformist central power.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Vera Moutafchieva, *L'Anarchie dans les Balkans à la Fin du XVIIe Siècle*, (Istanbul: ISIS 2005), pp. 27-44; Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Dağlı İsyanları*, (Ankara: AÜDTCF Yayınları 1983), pp. 79-84.

<sup>62</sup> Halil İnalçık, "The Ottoman Decline and Its Effects", *Aspects of the Balkans, Continuity and Change. Contributions to the International Balkan Conference held at UCLA, October 23-28 1969*, ed. Henrik Birnbaum & Speros Vryyonis Jr., Mouton, The Hague 1972, p 352.

<sup>63</sup> İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, pp.8-10.

By 1839, the problems with banditry, *gospodars* and their abusive way of taxation rose drastically. The Ottoman government introduced a set of reforms with the Tanzimat to solve these problems in the Balkans. On March 5, 1840, Christian *kocabaşıs* appointed by *çorbacıs* (Bulgarian notables) were given the responsibility of tax collection from the non-Muslims, instead of Muslim tax collectors, in order to prevent any abuses in tax collection. In 1851 the *cizye* tax, which was paid by non-Muslims, was considered to apply to all of the subjects but the reform on this was realized with the reform edict of 1856 when the *cizye* tax was transformed to a military service tax to provide equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, these measures were not enough to maintain order in the province. In 1849-1850 the *reaya* in the Vidin region revolted against *gospodar* regime. It was not directly towards the Ottoman rule but to the local administrators, *çorbacıs* and *gospodars*. This revolt was suppressed by the irregular bandit groups called *başıbozüks*, which were organized by the local *gospodars*.<sup>64</sup>

As the Tanzimat promised the taxes that would be levied equitably in accordance with the assessment of the wealth, the privileged Muslim and non-Muslim groups, the *gospodars*, *çorbacıs* or *kocabaşıs*, were not in favor of losing their privileges and paying high amounts of money. They complained about the high taxes assessed on wine and rakı. Then, they forced the *reaya* to stand against the taxes by saying that they would not give them jobs in their vineyards and they also would not buy the grapes grown by them.<sup>65</sup>

Consequently, the Vidin revolt indicated that the *reaya* expected the tanzimat reforms to be solved in its favor but the local powers did not want to lose their

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<sup>64</sup> İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, pp. 7-11. With this edict non-Muslims were also required to fulfill military service and after a long refusal they accepted to pay a fee to be exempted from the military service.

<sup>65</sup> İnalçık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler", p. 642.

control over the land. Thus, this situation turned out to be a dilemma for the Ottoman administration, which realized that the only way to do reforms and to prevent the peasant revolts in the Balkans was to remove the power of the *gospodars*, who were strongly against the reforms. Thus, the Imperial Edict, which made it possible to sell the lands of *gospodars* to the *reaya* in the Vidin region, was issued in 1851. However, this edict also was not enough to solve problems since the real intention of the *reaya* was to gain the land for free. During the Crimean War the *reaya* from the Vidin region revolted again by appealing the support of Russia and Serbia but it was also suppressed in short period of time. However, the situation there remained as troublesome for the central authority.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, in 1857 the *çorbacı* institution was regulated by the government in order to reduce their rights since they misused their power over the Christian *reaya*. Even they continued to collect illegal taxes from them. On the other hand, they gave loans to peasants with high interest and in the harvest time they took their agricultural products in low prices and they sold these products with high prices.<sup>67</sup>

Another important development of the Tanzimat period was the transformation of the *miri* lands to private ownership. Although some regulations on this issue had been done in 1847 and 1851, the fundamental reforms were carried out with the *Arazi Kanunu* (Land Law) of 1858, which regulated the use of *miri* lands and paved the way for private ownership and passing it to their children through inheritance. Later on, the civil code, (Mecelle), prepared by Ahmet Cevdet Pasha between 1869 and 1876, also revised the principles of private ownership and inheritance. However, the transformation to the private land ownership could not be achieved in a short period of time since the *reaya* could not afford to buy lands or

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<sup>66</sup> İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, pp. 104-107.

<sup>67</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), pp. 128-129.

real estates.<sup>68</sup> This process continued even after the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

While these economic, political and social problems still continuing in the Balkans, Midhat Pasha was nominated to the governorship of Nish in 1861 and then to the Danube province in 1864. Thus, his economic and agricultural reforms in this part of the empire will be analyzed in this historical context.

#### **IV.4.1 The Agricultural Credit Cooperatives Bank (Menafi Sandıkları or Memleket Sandıkları)**

Although the economy of the Ottoman Balkans was highly dependent on agriculture there were no institutions like those in Europe offering loans to the farmers and meeting their needs such as seeds and animals. The loan sharks and *gospodars* benefited from the lack of such an institution by lending money to the peasants with high interest rates. In this situation, the peasants had no chance to advance their agricultural activities, which were highly dependent on these loan sharks and land owners. Midhat Pasha was aware of this problem. That is why he observed the examples of agricultural organizations in Europe. Thus, in 1863, when he was the governor of Nish, he established an experimental agricultural credit cooperative called *Memleket Sandığı* in Pirot (Şarköy or Şehirköy), to provide the farmers with credits in low interest rates, seeds and animals, to create cooperation among them and to promote the agricultural production to a higher degree independent of the *gospodars*.<sup>69</sup> It was the first agricultural credit cooperative in

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<sup>68</sup> Halil Cin, *Miri Arazi ve Bu Arazinin Özel Mülkiyete Dönüşümü*, (Ankara: Çağ Üniversitesi Yayınları 2005), pp. 347-351.

<sup>69</sup> BOA. I.DH. no: 36970.

Ottoman history that would form the origin of the agricultural bank of Modern Turkey.

According to some authors, these cooperatives were modeled on the network of rural credit unions that Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen established in Prussia in the late 1840s.<sup>70</sup> However, Midhat Pasha created an original agricultural institution that had not appeared even in Europe. Only after the 1880s and 1890s such institutions began to emerge in Austria, Belgium, Italy and Hungary.<sup>71</sup>

As a result of the success of the first cooperative founded in Nish, in 1863, Midhat Pasha continued to extend this project after his nomination to the Danube province in 1864 but he knew that the center would not be able to fund this project. Thus, these cooperatives had to be self-funded and his plan was to use a system known as *imece* (collective labor) in which the peasants work together in a plot allocated by the government as half *dönüm*<sup>72</sup> for each house to generate income for the cooperatives together with collecting five percent of *öşür* taxes.<sup>73</sup> The provincial government opened some arable state lands within the province, which had not been cultivated till then, for farming or, if no arable land available, rented some lands in order to plant wheat, barley and especially maize, which suited the best with the climate and land in the Danube region. The peasants would shoulder the labor work by *Imece* system that they would work in their off days, Sundays for the Christians-Fridays for the Muslims. After harvests the Council of Elders in the villages would be in charge of collecting the production and selling it on auction in the *kazas*. The revenue from this sale would directly come to the treasury of the cooperative and then be allocated to the farmers as loans with the interest of 1 % per month. The

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<sup>70</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p. 75.

<sup>71</sup> Akgün, “Midhat Paşa’nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası’nın Kökeni”, p. 201.

<sup>72</sup> A land measure of 1000 square meters.

<sup>73</sup> Öşür taxes were collected from the agricultural products of the Muslim population.

farmers who wanted to borrow money from this foundation had to submit a document approved by the Council of Elders saying that they were eligible for it. In addition, they had to have guarantors for their debts. After this process, farmers might borrow money from the cooperatives no more than 2000 *guruş* that had to be returned in a year. One third of the money received as interest would be included in the budget of the cooperative, while the villages shared the rest of income to be spent for their infrastructural works and schools.<sup>74</sup>

As a regulation, Midhat Pasha prepared a *layiha* (explanatory document), consisting of twenty principles about the foundation of the agricultural credit cooperative, its funding, loan rules and the use of its revenue, and delivered its copies to the *kazas*, while submitting a copy of it to the Supreme Council in Istanbul. As a result, the central government officially approved the establishment of these agricultural credit cooperatives on February 7, 1865.<sup>75</sup> Afterwards, a *Nizamname*, comprised of the principles of this *layiha* and nine additional principles, was issued on July 19, 1867 in order to extend the establishment of these cooperatives within the whole empire.<sup>76</sup>

Four officials, two Muslim and two non-Muslim, were appointed for the administration of the cooperatives along with two secretaries, one Muslim and one non-Muslim. They worked under the guarantees of two Muslim and two non-Muslim trustworthy merchants. The government appointed an inspector to these cooperatives once or twice a year to check their accountancy. New buildings were constructed for the cooperatives, which would be opened once a week in the beginning. As a result

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<sup>74</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 49-50; BOA. I.DH. no: 36970.

<sup>75</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, p. 110.

<sup>76</sup> BAO, I.DH. 36970. For the text of the *Nizamname* of Memleket Sandıkları see, Düstür I. Tertip. V.2. pp. 387-398. For its transliteration see, Akgün, “Midhat Paşa’nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası’nın Kökeni”, pp. 202-211.

of high demand for loans they worked at least twice a week and even more when it was needed.<sup>77</sup>

The first agricultural credit cooperatives was established in Rusçuk, Nish, Cuma-i Atik, Şehirköy and Leskofça.<sup>78</sup> Their activities were announced in the provincial newspaper, *Tuna Gazetesi*. For instance, in May 1865, it was announced that the capital of the cooperatives increased to 226,000 *guruş* that 198,000 *guruş* of it was lent to the farmers as loans for purchasing oxen.<sup>79</sup> This amount rapidly increased to 20 millions *guruş* in three years and to 60 millions *guruş* in the end of 1876.<sup>80</sup>

Although these cooperatives were successful in supporting the farmers Midhat Pasha wanted to establish an institution functioning like the European banks, in which people could save their money and gain profit with interest. In this way, the city dwellers would also benefit from this institution. Thus, he projected it and submitted it to the Sublime Port for approval. The central government approved Midhat Pasha's project after long discussions but pointed out that the name of the institution had to be changed to *Emanet Sandığı* (Safe Box). In this way, the first one was opened in Rusçuk as an example on January 20, 1868 and then spread within the province. If people invest the amount of money between 20 and 500 *guruş* in the *Emanet Sandığı* they would gain in return 9% percent profit per year and this money would be lent to the farmers with interest of 12% per year.<sup>81</sup> The *Emanet Sandığı* in Rusçuk constituted the backbone of the modern Ottoman banking system.

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<sup>77</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no: 26172.

<sup>78</sup> *Tuna Gazetesi*, issue: 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Tuna Gazetesi*, issue: 7.

<sup>80</sup> For the table showing the budgets of the cooperatives see, Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, pp. 113-115.

<sup>81</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no:26200.

Until the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1878 the institutionalization process of the *Memleket* or *Emanet Sandıks* in the Danube province continued but after this war the region, where they were highly institutionalized, came under the Russian governance. With the Berlin Treaty in 1878, most of the region constituted the newly founded Bulgarian Princedom. Until 1903 these cooperatives existed in the Princedom of Bulgaria and after that time, they were transformed to Bulgarian Agricultural Bank. The rest that remained in the Ottoman Empire were modernized and, in 1888, became *Ziraat Bankası* (Agricultural Bank), which still exists with the same name in Modern Turkey.<sup>82</sup>

#### **IV.5 The Improvement of Transportation**

Despite the developments in agriculture, the absence of an elaborated transportation network within the Danube province made it difficult for people to find markets to sell their products and also to reach the goods coming from Europe and Istanbul. Midhat Pasha, as the governor of Nish, had already initiated a comprehensive project of constructing paved roads (*Şose*) and bridges in essential directions in the province.<sup>83</sup> This project was one of the main priorities of his governorship in the Danube province as well. According to the laws issued by the Ministry of Public Works, the financial burden of roads and bridge construction would be shouldered by the local inhabitants. All the expenditures and labor would be levied on the peasants and city dwellers but in practice it was a difficult task for the governor to carry out such a project. Midhat Pasha's way to execute it was to measure length of the roads and to specify the people who would benefit from them,

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<sup>82</sup> Akgün, "Midhat Paşa'nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası'nın Kökeni", pp. 199-200.

<sup>83</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 25981.

and then divide the labor into portions among the villages in accordance with their population.<sup>84</sup> Although he tried to encourage people to work voluntarily, everyone was required to work. Local authorities had to mobilize the population and raise manpower necessary for the road building in their territory, even by using police force if necessary.<sup>85</sup> Since the corvée labor had been officially abolished with the advent of the Tanzimat reforms and Midhat Pasha approved this after his arrival to Rusçuk, so the peasant workers were paid a wage of six *guruş* per day. However, this system did not work properly because of the tardiness of the government in supplying funds for such wages and venality of local intermediaries such as foremen and engineers.<sup>86</sup> Although it was assumed that the inhabitants would work 5-6 days on road constructing, in reality they had to work 30-36 days. In some cases, farmers complained that the scheduled work time was not convenient for them because of their own agricultural season. This project had a considerable contribution to the infrastructure of the province but Russian propaganda benefited from the situation by provoking people to stand against the work load and taxes imposed by the government.<sup>87</sup>

At the same time, a considerable number of bridges within the province were built and their expenses were mainly compensated by the donations from the local notables. Two important bridges were constructed over the Yantara and Rositsa rivers and the population living along the road between the towns of Tirnova and Razgrad provided the necessary materials for them.<sup>88</sup> These bridges are still functioning in Modern Bulgaria.

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<sup>84</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 24965. *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> *Tuna Gazetesi*, issue:1.

<sup>86</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p. 83.

<sup>87</sup> Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], p. 109; Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha: Jizn i deyatelnost*, p. 25.

<sup>88</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 48; BOA. I.MVL, no: 25533; 23958; 23400.

Within three years, in the Danube province closely 3000 kilometers *şose* roads and 1.420 bridges, including those in Nish, were constructed.<sup>89</sup> The biggest one called Bele was constructed over Yantara. The five new bridges constructed over the Morava and Iskar rivers as well.<sup>90</sup> After that, in October 1867, Midhat Pasha submitted a report of the new road network to the central government and pointed out the need for workers to care and repair the already constructed roads and bridges. He was aware of the fact the local people would not want to do this job since they were tired of the work load that had been imposed on them before. Thus, his plan was to hire 200 full-time workers and a chief to organize them. This system was modeled after Europe. He considered that the new roads had a 450 hours length and a worker was needed in every 2 hours distance. Each worker would be paid a wage of 1200-1500 *guruş* per year and the chief would receive 3000 *guruş*. The wages and the purchase of necessary equipments such as shovels, picks and carts would be compensated by a one *guruş* additional tax to the regular taxes that each household used to pay. If the poor families could not afford to pay this additional amount the wealthy ones had to pay for them. All of these were estimated on the basis of 200,000 tax paying households in the province.<sup>91</sup>

Another important project of Midhat Pasha to enhance the transportation system within the province was to establish a company, which would make it easier to transport loads, cargos, mails and passengers.<sup>92</sup> It was founded it in Rusçuk and began to work in the Rusçuk-Varna-Shumnu line. Afterwards, with the construction of new roads and bridges the transportation company also served in the other

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<sup>89</sup> According to some authors, the number of the bridges was an exaggeration and the real number was 230. Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], p.109.

<sup>90</sup> Tuna Gazetesi issue: 1; *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 48; Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], p. 108.

<sup>91</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no: 25981 and 24965.

<sup>92</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no: 24899.

directions as well, in accordance with the regional demands.<sup>93</sup> The destinations and fares were regulated and announced in the provincial newspaper.<sup>94</sup> The company offered 250 shares and each of them valued 20 liras. After a short period of time it became a good profit yielding company distributing 2 liras profit to each of its shareholders. The number of horse-drawn carriages increased to 133 and the number of horses doubled. Together with its real estate, its capital rose up to 10,000 liras.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, he also established a factory producing horse-drawn carriages, phaetons and their equipments to meet the needs of the transportation company. The factory increased its capital and began to meet the demands of other consumers rather than this company.<sup>96</sup> A general director along with a secretary and regional officials managed the transportation company and the carriage factory, which hired a number of workers, drivers and officials dealing with the post services.<sup>97</sup>

Midhat Pasha was also concerned with the freight transport on the Danube River, the major route between the central Europe and the Black Sea, which was highly dominated by Austria. The Ottoman Empire made use of a few number of ships only for military purposes. However, Pasha's project was to purchase numerous steamships and to take part in the trade network on the Danube. He resorted to different means, which was necessary to raise money for this project. First of all, he decided to put some state-lands on sale.<sup>98</sup> He allowed the construction of buildings and shops in the fairgrounds within the province. Since the famous fair in Cuma had always been held in a narrow but convenient place close to the town, Midhat wanted to move it to a more suitable region, where a number of buildings,

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<sup>93</sup> BAO, I.DH. no: 37383.

<sup>94</sup> Tuna Gazetesi, issue: 9.

<sup>95</sup> Tuna Gazetesi, issue: 48.

<sup>96</sup> Tuna Gazetesi, issues: 27, 10, 48.

<sup>97</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>98</sup> BAO. I.MVL. no: 24614; 24714.

consisting of about 2000 shops, would be constructed. The *kaza* of Cuma would pay for expenses of the construction of the fairground and after the sale of the shops, which was supposed to generate 100,000 *kese guruş*, the invested money would be taken back.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Karasu fairground was also sold with high prices and this operation provided 3,000 liras. Moreover, some heavily forested lands in the Tirново region, which created problems among local villagers, were also sold to people living there. The first sale was carried out in the region of Dobreval, which supplied 4,000 liras to the provincial treasury. These additional incomes enabled Midhat Pasha to purchase initially two steamships named “Nish” and “Seyyare” and then two more named “Sofia” and “Midhat” Pasha.<sup>100</sup> Another three steamships, named “Vidin”, “Lom” and “Ziştovi” together with nine cargo-ships were bought from Europe by Akif Pasha. Afterwards, two more steamships named “Abdülaziz” and “Ruşçuk” were also ordered.<sup>101</sup>

The Ottoman trade and passenger fleet came into being as a state department related to the provincial administration was established under the title of *Idare-i Nehriyye* (River Administration).<sup>102</sup> It was be in charge of operating freight transport on the Danube River. It began to function with the first four steamships in spring 1867<sup>103</sup> and provided the government with a great income.<sup>104</sup>

Along with the paved roads, bridges and steamships, the province needed a railroad between the two important port cities, Rusçuk and Varna. In the nineteenth century Rusçuk became a commercial center, which was of great significance as a port city on the Danube River. The government made an agreement with a British

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<sup>99</sup> BOA, I.MVL no: 26288.

<sup>100</sup> *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp.50-52.

<sup>101</sup> BOA. IMMS. no:1697.

<sup>102</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 25520.

<sup>103</sup> BOA. IMMS. no:1697; *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 52.

<sup>104</sup> BOA. I.MVL. no: 26277.

shareholders' company for the construction of the railroad. The peasants provided cheap labor for the project. During the first two years of its construction fifteen thousand workers worked on the project.<sup>105</sup> In November 1866, the Rusçuk-Varna railroad began to function.<sup>106</sup> According to the report of the Russian consul, A.N. Moshin, in Rusçuk, the profit from the railroad between 1869 and 1870 was as follows:<sup>107</sup>

**Table IV. 4: The Profit of the Rusçuk-Varna Railroad**

Years	Number of Passengers	Profit from the passengers and the post services (in Francs)	Amount of crop transportation (in tons)	Profit from the crop transportation (in Francs)	Total Profit (in Francs)
1869	62,122	751,376	775,222,106	472,359	1,223,735
1870	66,285	685,124	990,521,820	505,101	1,138,288

Midhat Pasha had a great contribution to the development of the transportation network during his governorship in the Danube province. Both the Sublime Port and foreign observers in the province appreciated his projects, especially the *Şose* one. A German engineer by the name of Presel, stated that “Midhat Pasha granted such a well planned and successfully realized road network to the Danube province covering an extensive territory.” In addition, according to the famous Austrian journalist, F. Kanitz, “Midhat Pasha as the governor of the Danube province would be remembered in history with his comprehensive and successfully carried out road project, which had a considerable contribution to the development of Bulgaria.”<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p. 86.

<sup>106</sup> BOA I. ŞD. no:62; 402.

<sup>107</sup> Pletnyov, *Midhat Paşa i Upravlenieto Na Dunavskiya Vilayet* [Midhat Pasha and His Governorship in the Danube Province], p. 99.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, pp. 109-110.

#### IV.6 The Extension of Telegraph Lines

The first attempts to introduce the electric telegraph into the Ottoman Empire coincided with the Tanzimat in 1839. Samuel F.B. Morse developed his telegraph system, and soon after its invention, one of his associates, Chamberlain, came to Istanbul to present it to the Sultan, but his equipment failed. Then, when he was on the way back to Vienna for repairs, his boat capsized on the Danube River, and he drowned. Eight years after this failed attempt, on August 9, 1847, an American professor, J. Lawrence Smith, who was employed by the Ottoman government as a geologist, managed to conduct two successful demonstrations, which revealed to Sultan Abdülmecid and some leading Ottoman officials the usefulness of the telegraph. The Sultan was very impressed with it and ordered the establishment of a telegraph line between Istanbul and Edirne but this project could not be accomplished because of some unknown reasons.<sup>109</sup>

The construction of the telegraph lines would be realized in 1854, just after the Crimean War broke out between Imperial Russia on the one side and an alliance of France, Britain, Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Sardinia on the other. As a consequence of the need for rapid communication among the allied forces, the British, French and Ottoman governments set out to establish the essential lines to the war effort. The Ottoman Grand Vizier, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Pasha, nominated a high level task force, composed of the three civil officials and three generals, to supervise the beginning of the telegraph system. In addition, the Ottoman

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<sup>109</sup> Soli Shahvar, "Concession Hunting in the Age of Reform: British Companies and the Search for Government Guarantees; Telegraph Concessions through Ottoman Territories, 1855-58", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.38, No.4, (October 2002), p. 169; Nesimi Yazıcı, "Balkanlar'da İlk Osmanlı Telgraf Hatları", *Balkanlar'da İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri Sofya, Nisan 21-23, 2000*, (İstanbul: IRCICA 2002), pp.110-111.

government provided necessary poles and simple workmen. A French engineer, F. De la Rue, was appointed to the head of this project. The first line to be constructed was the belated Istanbul-Edirne line, which was to continue from Edirne to Şumnu. The latter line was part of the Varna-Bucharest line, then under construction by the French government. Another line, running north and west from Edirne to be built by the Ottomans, would connect with Austrian network via Plovdiv, Sofia, Nish, Aleksinac and Belgrade. Their constructions started in March 1855. By August 19 the Istanbul-Edirne line was completed and by September 6 the Edirne-Şumnu line was also completed. On the other hand, in December 1854 the Varna-Balaklava and in February 1855 the Varna-Istanbul submarine lines were constructed by the British government. In the meantime, the most eastern terminal of Austrian telegraph system reached Iasi and by the spring of 1855 the French government completed the Varna-Bucharest line, passing through Shumen and Rusçuk. After meeting the immediate communication needs of the allies, the Ottoman telegraph system connected to European capitals and the entire length from Balakava to Paris and London was opened in 1855. Consequently, a considerable contribution to this modest Ottoman telegraph system came immediately after the end of the Crimean War, with the Ottoman purchase of the French Bucharest-Varna landline and the British Varna-Istanbul submarine line.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, since telegraph was invented in the west and the first telegraph lines, those in the Balkans, in the Ottoman Empire were constructed by the French and British companies Latin alphabet was used in the telegraph communication. The Ottomans, who were using Arabic alphabet, were not familiar with it. However, according to the Agreement with De la Rue, French technicians

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<sup>110</sup> Shahvar, "Concession Hunting in the Age of Reform: British Companies and the Search for Government Guarantees; Telegraph Concessions through Ottoman Territories, 1855-58", pp.169-170.

would be in charge of training the Ottoman subjects for telegraph jobs in the early years of its introduction to the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, in 1860, a telegraph school was established in Istanbul in order to train Ottoman technicians who would be equipped with necessary skills to use it.<sup>111</sup>

Along with the telegraph lines, a number of telegraph offices were also established. According to the agreement among the British and French and Ottoman governments, the Ottomans would be in charge of constructing the telegraph offices. The British government requested a building in Varna to use as an office in the Istanbul-Varna line and the Ottoman government allocated an appropriate building for them. At the same time, a house of a merchant in Rusçuk, which cost 1000 *gurus* per month, was rented by the Ottoman government to provide the French engineers and the workers with accommodation and also to be used as a telegraph office. Another building, in Bucharest, was also rented by the Ottoman government but it was closed down in 1857 because there was a telegraph office used by Wallachians and this conflict created a heavy burden on the Ottoman government. In addition to these telegraph offices, the Ottoman government constructed seven main telegraph offices in the Balkans in order to use for domestic purposes. They were located in Istanbul, Edirne, Şumnu, Filibe, Sofia, Nish and Bucharest. On the other hand, on January 6, 1858, the Sultan ordered an imperial degree for the construction of two more telegraph lines, one from Rusçuk to Tırnovi, other one from Rusçuk to Vidin along the Danube River, passing through Zıştovi, Plevne and Lom. Meanwhile, a petition, signed by 124 Muslim and non-Muslim notables of Vidin, was sent to the capital in order to state that they would voluntarily be in charge of proving the

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<sup>111</sup> Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, p.519.

necessary poles and some expenditures in the construction of the telegraph line. The Sultan appreciated it.<sup>112</sup>

Afterwards, the process of establishing telegraph system had continued in the Balkans. As Midhat Pasha was nominated to the governorship of the Danube province in 1864 he carried out a successful project of road construction which provided the province with a practical transportation network. Soon after this, he also realized the need for spreading out the telegraph lines within the province, which were of great importance especially in trade.<sup>113</sup> Although the first telegraph lines in the Balkans were established for political and military purposes Midhat Pasha was aware of the usefulness of such a rapid communication in different functions. Therefore, Midhat Pasha specified fifteen locations, which essentially need telegraph system, namely Balçık, Pazarcık, Hezargrad, Cuma-i Atik, Lofça, Nigbolu, Rahova, Köstendil, Samakov, Dubniçe, Ivraniye, Osman Pazarı, Tutrakan, Gabrova and Ivraga. He projected the construction of the telegraph lines in those regions and cooperated with the residents and merchants of the province to materialize it. They promised to supply necessary poles and workmen together with constructing the telegraph offices. However, they asked for the compensation of the expenditures for the machines, devices and tools, which would be imported from Europe, by the government. Thus, Midhat Pasha sent a petition to the center in 1866 and requested 62.000 Francs to spend for the technical stuff of the telegraph system. The Supreme Council complied by sending the money.<sup>114</sup>

The extension of telegraph system, along with the recently developed transportation network and the agricultural reforms, advanced the flourishing economy of the Danube province to some extent that it began to create its own

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<sup>112</sup> Yazıcı, "Balkanlar'da İlk Osmanlı Telgraf Hatları", pp. 114-115.

<sup>113</sup> BOA. I.HR. no:12218; 12673.

<sup>114</sup> BOA, I.MVL no: 24647; BOA. I.HR. no:12673.

bourgeoisie and the prospect of prosperity among its inhabitants. Midhat Pasha's policy was to support the merchants and the notables of the province economically and politically in order to gain their confidence and encouragement in his reforms. That is why; he worked together with them in modernizing the province while pacifying the separatist movements within it.

#### **IV.7 Educational Reforms**

During the reigns of Selim III and Mahmut II, a number of students had been sent to Europe with the hope that they would be well educated in a modern way and then contribute to the modernization of education in the Ottoman Empire. However, owing to the internal problems with Janissaries the focus of the reforms was on military rather than educational. After the abolition of Janissaries in 1826 a new army, called *Asakir-i Mansura-yı Muhammediye*, was established and many military officers were brought from Prussia to modernize the army. In addition to this, a military school (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*) in 1834 and a medical school (*Tibhane-i Amire*) in 1827 were established in order to provide the army with trained officers and doctors.<sup>115</sup> Thus, military schools had better conditions than the others within the empire in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Despite the backwardness in education, the content of the *Gülhane* Edict of 1839 was devoid of the essential educational reforms. The establishment of the Council of Medical Affairs (*Meclis-i Umur-u Tıbbiye*) was the only outstanding achievement of the statesmen of the Tanzimat in the field of education till 1845. However, Sultan Abdülmecid realized the need for educational reforms and in 1845,

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<sup>115</sup> Hasan Ali Koçer, *Türkiye'de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi (1773–1923)*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi 1974). p. 34.

ordered new degrees of change showing his distaste for illiteracy. After that, on March 13, 1845 the Supreme Council formed a separate temporary council of education (Meclis-i Maarif-i Muvakkat) made up of members from bureaucratic, military and religious groups to develop a program for secular education. The members of the council were familiar with the western culture and education. The primary purpose of the council was to figure out the possible precautions against illiteracy and to prepare a report about them. The council assembled twice a week in the Sublime Porte, (Bâbıali) and after a while announced its report pointing out the needs for the amelioration of primary schools (Sıbyan Mektepleri); the regulations in Adolescence (Rüşdiye) schools to make them strong enough to educate the public<sup>116</sup>; the increase in the number of religious classes; the foundations of a university (Darülfünûn) and an academy (Danış) providing students with accommodations; and also the establishment of a permanent council concerning with educational institutions. After the announcement of this report, this temporary council was turned into a permanent council with the title of the Council of Public Education (Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye).<sup>117</sup> Then, in 1866 the Ministry of Public Education (Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti) was established.

Although there had been a remarkable increase in the number of schools including foreign and missionary schools within the empire it is difficult to see a consistent modernization in education until the Regulation for Public Education (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) was issued in 1869.<sup>118</sup> This regulation based on

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<sup>116</sup> The four year *mekteb* education was followed by two year *Rüşdiye* education which formed the intermediary position between the *mekteb* and professional schools. From 1855 onwards *Rüşdiye* schools followed by secondary *İdadiye* schools based on military school system in the major garrison towns.

<sup>117</sup> Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları 2003), p.71.

<sup>118</sup> For more about the modern education system in the Ottoman Empire and the details of the Regulation for Public Education in 1896 see, Koçer, *Türkiye'de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi (1773-1923)*.

the advice of French Ministry of Education. It foresaw a three-tier system of education, starting with *Rüşdiye* schools in every large village or town quarter, civilian *İdadiye* secondary schools in every town and colleges called *Sultaniye* schools, modeled on the French Lycees, in every provincial capital. These were all-male schools; but provisions for separate schools for girls were also made in the regulation.<sup>119</sup> However, even after this time, the expected developments in education could not be achieved in the countryside because of the following political instability between the years 1871-76, the experiment of constitutional monarchy in 1876 and also the Ottoman-Russian war with its heavy burden on the empire. Thus, the crucial steps in the modernization of education would be taken in the countryside after the emergence of rather stable political conditions in 1880 and afterwards.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, provincial education councils were also organized in every provincial capital under the direction of a director (*maarif müdürü*) with a Muslim and non-Muslim assistant, staff, and inspectors to tour the province to examine operations and enforce them. The councils were given the state funds available for educational purpose.<sup>121</sup>

Another important development of the nineteenth century was the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856 (*Islahat Fermanı*), which promised equal treatment for adherents of all creeds in such specific matters as educational opportunity, appointment to government posts, and the administration of justice, as well as in taxation and military service.<sup>122</sup> This reform edict along with the uprisings of the minorities and the political pressure from European powers compelled the Ottoman Empire to do

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<sup>119</sup> Zürcher. *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.65.

<sup>120</sup> Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Maarif Müdürü Radovişli Mustafa Bey'in Raporları ve müslim ve gayrimüslim eğitimi: II.Abdülhamid devri Selanik taşrasında maarif meselesi (1885-1886), *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar 2*. (Güz 2005), p. 113.

<sup>121</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, V.II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1976-77), p. 111.

<sup>122</sup> Roderic Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4. (July, 1954), p. 847.

reforms in education and to open new schools for non-Muslim minorities as well as Muslim population. As one of the multi-national imperial territories where political discontent was causing the rise of nationalism among different ethnic groups, the Danube Province was chosen to introduce new reforms by the reformist governor Midhat Pasha between the years 1864-1868. His reforms in the Danube Province were carried out as examples for the rest of the empire.

The uprisings in Nish and Vidin in 1840s and 1850s were the reflections of the dissatisfaction of the minorities with the Tanzimat reforms and also the alarming danger of the nationalism rising in the Balkans. On the other hand, Russia had been seeking the ways to benefit from this nationalist tendency among the Balkan nations. According to Midhat Pasha, the Bulgarian nation was the most backward among the Balkan nations in terms of the progress of thought (*Terakkiyât-ı Fikriye*). Fifty percent of them were farmers and forty percent of them were reapers (*Orakçı*) and shepherds raising sheep. That is to say, the level of education was so low among Bulgarians and of course Russian policy in the Balkans would not be sending teachers for the education of Bulgarian children. Instead, it was to choose the best of them to educate in Russia with the ideology of pan-Slavism and send them back to Bulgaria to carry out underground revolutionary activities and to stand against the Ottoman rule.<sup>123</sup>

Until the nineteenth century, Turkish and Bulgarian educations in the Balkans were based on religion and on the old scholastic system. Turks had primary schools (*mektep*) and also *medreses* associated with mosques. Bulgarians had their neighborhood schools (*Kiliyni uchilishta*) for each locality. The first modern Bulgarian school was opened in Gabrova in 1835. Three years later Turkish junior

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<sup>123</sup> Midhat Pasha, "Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali", pp. 16-17.

high schools called *Rüşdiye* began to open for the first time in the empire. Although the Bulgarian schools were supported by missionary organizations, Pan-Slavist committees and also by the Bulgarian people themselves, the financial burden of the Turkish schools was shouldered almost completely by the Turkish people together with some support from Waqfs (pious foundations).<sup>124</sup> Afterwards, the *Islahat Fermanı* of 1856 guaranteed the right of non-Muslims minorities to attend either their own schools or the Muslim ones. Most of the non-Muslim minorities were eager to organize and promote their own schools and orient them according to western European and Russian secular schools (in the case of Bulgaria). Bulgarian schools were free of charge and open to all children. The Bulgarian society was in charge of building maintenance and provided teaching materials, school equipment and the wages for the teachers. Teachers came from Russia to teach at these schools. The teachers were usually Bulgarians who had studied in Russia. Free books and schools utensils were also provided from Russia as well as financial aid.<sup>125</sup>

Midhat Pasha carried out a survey inspecting the current conditions of the province in 1865. He was aware of the need for educational reforms and the threat of increasing Russian influence on Balkan nations. Thus, he ordered to open new *mektebs* and reformatories together with the improvement of the conditions of the existing schools throughout the province.<sup>126</sup> For example, new *mekteps* for Bulgarian children were constructed in Filibe.<sup>127</sup> Even in some small towns which are devoid of primary schools a number of new *mekteps* were opened. For instance, in the town of

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<sup>124</sup> Bilal N. Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)*, (Oxford: K. Rustem and Brother Ltd. 1988), p 13.

<sup>125</sup> Diana Karabinova, “A Late Attempt to Find an Integrative Approach Through Common Secular Education: Midhat Paşa as a Governor of the Danube Province (1864–1868)”, *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World (12–15 April 1999, İstanbul)*, (İstanbul: IRCICA 2001), pp.240–243.

<sup>126</sup> BOA, I.DH, no: 36231 and BOA, BAD, no: 307, p.73.

<sup>127</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 25784.

Pravadi (a part of the Varna) a *mektep* for Bulgarian children was opened.<sup>128</sup> In addition to *Sıbyan Mektebs*, the number of *Rüşdiye* and *İdadiye* schools had risen sharply and Bulgarian students were also allowed to attend in the *İdadiye* schools, which were the last stage of the common education.<sup>129</sup> Alternatively, by order of the sultan a number of students chosen from the non-Muslim groups, namely Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians, were admitted to the Military School (*Harbiye Mektebi*), Marine School (*Bahriye Mektebi*), and Mathematical College (*Hendesehane*). Some of them were also sent to the Ottoman Imperial School (*Mekteb-i Osmani*) in Paris.<sup>130</sup>

Along with these new schools, Midhat Pasha also established specialized schools (*Islahhane* or Reformatory, which were later transformed to *Sanayi Mektebi* or Industrial School) to provide elementary secular education and training as artisans. The main objectives of these schools were, to increase the level of education against illiteracy; to take the orphans and poor children under protection; to contribute to the rebirth of native Ottoman industry and to provide Balkan people, especially Bulgarians, with new job opportunities rather than farming, stock-raising and reaping; and also to impose the ideology of Ottomanism as oppose to pan-Slavism in order to break down the Russian influence and to awaken a common feeling of Ottoman identity by bringing together Christians and Muslims.

The first of these entirely new schools was opened in Nish in 1860, then in Sofia and the last one was opened in Rusçuk in 1864.<sup>131</sup> These schools established by Midhat Pasha offered elementary education for both Muslim and Christian children and they were not only for males but also for females. The target group of these

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<sup>128</sup> BOA, MHD, no: 262, p. 339, article 1068. cited by Şentürk, p. 320.

<sup>129</sup> BOA, I.HR no: 11857, lef 1.

<sup>130</sup> BOA, I.HR, no: 11755.

<sup>131</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 26270.

schools was both Muslim and Christian orphans and poor children suffering from miserable life conditions. Midhat Pasha wanted to assemble the orphans and poor children in order to take them under protection and to train them as artisans.<sup>132</sup>

The Regulation for Reformatories was proclaimed by Midhat Pasha.<sup>133</sup> The first part of the Regulation deals with admissions with a particular emphasis on nationality, age and other requirements such as parental conditions, and financial statement. Children, thirteen years old and younger, seeking for admission could be Christian or Muslim and were accepted whether they lived within or outside of the province. However, they must be orphaned without parents. In the case of having a father or mother alive, if the economic condition of their family is not good enough to take care of their children, these children will also be admitted to the reformatories.<sup>134</sup> However, if their parents or relatives decide to get their children out of reformatories after their admissions, then they would be required to pay all of students expenses, including food, clothes etc. during the time that the students stayed there. Children who committed a crime and were punished with an imprisonment for a year or more would be able to get in these reformatories with an official order by the government. All other children not in these categories would also benefit from the schools, but their parents would need to pay 500 *guruş* per year. These payments would be included in the schools' income. In addition to this, the expenses of the reformatories were compensated with the public donations along

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<sup>132</sup> BOA, I.DH, no:36231.

<sup>133</sup> *Islahhaneler Nizamnamesi* (The Regulation of the Reformatories), Düstur, I.Tertip, II. Cilt, pp. 277–295.

<sup>134</sup> These rules were also valid for the female students but the only difference is that female students who would be admitted to the reformatory have to be at the age of 10 or younger than 10. BOA, Cevdet Maarif, no: 6542.

with the budget allocated by the government.<sup>135</sup> Another important target group of these reformatories were the children of the Circassian and Tatar refugees.<sup>136</sup>

Each of the reformatories located in Nish, Sofi and Rusçuk had a capacity for about 150-250 students. The amount of money set aside for each of them by the government was about 200.000 kurush. However, the one in Rusçuk had a bit more funding than the other two since it was in the center of the province. In Rusçuk, there was a storehouse built by using the funds taken from the reformatory budget and it provided the reformatory with 100,000 *guruş* annually in extra money. Thanks to this, an additional reformatory for females was constructed in Rusçuk. The one in Sofia was the poorest in comparison with the other two but its factory dealt with the production of broadcloth, which had a remarkable contribution to the reformatory budget.<sup>137</sup>

At these reformatories, students were divided into groups consisting of ten students, among whom one was foreman and one was his assistant. All of the students were under the control of their foreman or his assistant. If they do not obey the rules or if they rebel against their foreman they will be punished with an imprisonment for a certain time from 24 hours to three days or with asceticism from one day to one week without food in accordance with the guilt.<sup>138</sup> In the mornings after the bell rings, all of the students had to get up. The Muslim students had to go for ablution and then attend the morning prayer. The Christian students also prayed according to their religion. In every student's room, one or two students would stay to clean the rooms. If the rules are broken once it will be forgiven but if they do it for the second time the student will be punished with one day asceticism. If they repeat it

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<sup>135</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 1, 2, 3. also see, Şentürk, p. 176.

<sup>136</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 26270, lef 5.

<sup>137</sup> *Tabsıra-i Ibret*, p. 53.

<sup>138</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 32.

again then the punishment will be extended for two days and if there is a fourth time it will be three days.<sup>139</sup>

After praying, a bell rings for the breakfast time and students go to kitchens and to eat bread and soup. Breakfast is then followed by roll call.<sup>140</sup> Soon after, students go to classrooms for lectures and writing lessons. The content of the lectures include alphabet (*Elifba*), Quran, catechism (*ilmihal*), moral education, literature, writing (the Ottoman types of writing such as *rik'a* and *sülüs*), note taking, computation (adding, subtracting, etc.) and Bulgarian.<sup>141</sup> Theoretical classes were planned to be performed for two hours in the mornings and in the afternoons students would go to practice working in accordance with their specializations. For example, students went to the provincial printing house, to learn lithography, typesetting and bookbinding. Some of students were trained with masters in the schools as tailors, carpenters, tanners and shoemakers. Female students mostly engaged in textile, weaving and embroidery. Students trained untill 10:30 or 11 pm.<sup>142</sup> They usually took a break toward evening and would sometimes leave the reformatories to visit their families and relatives.<sup>143</sup> In order to provide discipline in the reformatories there were always imprisonments or asceticism punishments for crimes such as smoking, stealing, making noise, fighting with other children, etc.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 33.

<sup>140</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 34.

<sup>141</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), p. 177; and Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, p. 525. The content of the classes in the reformatories are rather similar to those in the Mekteps except of Bulgarian lessons and artisanship training, Nafî Atuf, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Hakkında Bir Deneme*, (Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi 1930), p. 169.

<sup>142</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 10.

<sup>143</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 39.

<sup>144</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 38, 41.

The staff of the reformatory in Rusçuk was recorded in the year book (Salname) as:<sup>145</sup>

**Officials:** Accountant, policeman (Zabıta), secretary, cashier (Sandık Emını), steward (Vekilharç)

**Teachers and Masters:** Mathematics (Ulum-u Riyaziye), geography, Arabic, Bulgarian and writing teachers, and tailors and shoemakers.

**Students:** 85 Muslim, 51 Bulgarian and 1 Jewish student.

In addition to this reformatory, another reformatory was built for female students.<sup>146</sup> The Bulgarian and Turkish teachers of the male reformatory also taught there. This reformatory consisted of 27 Muslim, 21 Bulgarian and 3 Muslim paid students. These students were mostly directed to sewing.<sup>147</sup>

The education system in the reformatories was based on a five year program. The first year is considered as the fifth level of the education and students take annual exams. They graduate after completion of the fifth year, which was first level and some successful students are awarded with a certain amount of money. After obtaining a degree, they can work in the reformatory and in return they receive some amount of money or they will be allowed to open their own shops with the capital borrowed from the reformatory.<sup>148</sup> These three schools that opened in the Danube province trained a number of students as typesetters and bookbinders for province newspaper; as craftsmen for carriage factories; and many other artisans in different

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<sup>145</sup> Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, p. 525.

<sup>146</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no 26270.

<sup>147</sup> Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, p. 525.

<sup>148</sup> Articles of the *Nizamname* of Reformatories, no: 50, 51 and 52.

fields.<sup>149</sup> In addition to this, female students had an outstanding contribution to the cloth and dress production to meet the needs of the Danube army.<sup>150</sup>

The news in the Danube province's newspaper, *Tuna Gazetesi*, indicates the importance given to education in this province. It is as if an education campaign had been launched. The *Tuna* newspaper began to announce in its early issues that children above the age five or six should be sent to school, otherwise the parents will be held responsible: it states "If children above the ages of five or six, in other words, if little male and female children are not sent to school instead of being allowed to be idle, and if older ones are not sent either to schools or for vocational training, the parents will be held responsible".<sup>151</sup>

Immediately after it began to be published the *Tuna* newspaper was distributed free among junior high school students in various towns in order to enhance reading ability. The students of the Vidin junior high school expressed their thanks for this and their letter of thanks was published in the newspaper. The *Tuna* newspaper gave priority to news about schools in almost all of its issues. For instance, the newspaper stated that in the Danube province, a junior high school (Rüşdiye) was going to be opened in every town, and that a senior high school (Idadiye) was going to be opened in every district center, and that the provincial assembly was discussing this issue. In its issue dated 21 July 1865, the *Tuna* newspaper published the instructions Midhat Pasha had sent to the deputy mufti of Plevne. According to Pasha, schools are important above all. The deputy mufti must resort to any means which is necessary to improve education, if financial resources are not available, he should create them. No child was to be left out. Children who

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<sup>149</sup> BOA, IDH, no:36231.

<sup>150</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi* (1850–1875), p.177. Osman Ergin, *İstanbul Mektepleri ve İlim, Terbiye ve Sanat Müesseseleri Dolayısıyla Türkiye Maarif Tarihi Vol.I-II*, p.525.

<sup>151</sup> Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)*, p.14.

were left without guardians should be sent to reformatories. It was obligatory for parents to send their children to school. Schools and education were a duty for everyone in this world and in the next.<sup>152</sup>

Consequently, there had been a remarkable increase in the number of both Muslim and Christian schools in the Danube province during Midhat Pasha's governorship. These schools strove to bring Christian and Muslim communities together under a common Ottoman ideology contradicting the *Millet System* in the Ottoman Empire, which allowed all the non-Muslim and Muslim minorities to regulate their own religious and educational affairs. However, they contributed to the modernization of educational institutions and the rise of literacy and also slowed down the expansion of the Russian pan-Slavist ideology in the Balkans. However, it is difficult say whether or not Midhat Pasha's attempted school reform reached its goals and became successful. His governorship in the Danube province could not be exceeded four years and in 1868 he was unexpectedly withdrawn from his position owing to the Russian pressure on the Ottoman Empire. He was also confronted with opposition from the rising Bularian nationalism, which made it difficult for him to perform his entire plan.

#### **IV.8 The Printing House and the Danube Newspaper (Tuna Gazetesi)**

The development of the press in the Ottoman Empire differs from the one in Europe, which evolved itself gradually. In the seventeenth century in Europe, newspapers, newsletters and broadsheets emerged as a consequence of interest of the rising bourgeoisie in acquiring news and information. After the second half of the nineteenth century this turned out to be a way of massive communication along with

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid. p.14.

manipulating the society politically and culturally. However, the purpose of the press in the Ottoman Empire was not to meet the need of such an elite group but to enlighten the society from the top in the process of modernization.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, the policy of the Ottoman government in the Tanzimat era was to establish printing houses in each province. However, the first of them would be realized in the Danube province only after Midhat Pasha's appointment to this province as a governor in 1864.

According to the Regulations of the *Vilayet*, a printing house would be established in the capital of the province.<sup>154</sup> Since there was no printing house in the Danube province most of the books and publications including educational and religious materials for Bulgarians came from Russia and Austria and this situation made it easier for Russia to impose her pan-Slavist and pan-Orthodox ideology on Bulgarians, to set up underground revolutionary organizations within the Danube province and to provoke them to rebel against the Ottoman rule. That is why; Midhat Pasha founded a printing house having two lithography machines in 1864.<sup>155</sup> It was equipped with Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, French and old Slavic letters to publish in these languages. Soon after its establishment, it began to publish school materials, office supplies, religious books, newspapers, journals, yearbooks and some literary works of outstanding Turkish and Bulgarian writers in both Bulgarian and Turkish. It provided schools with some educational and religious materials for free and offered a ten percent reduction from the normal prices for commercial publications.<sup>156</sup> The Ottoman government paid special attention to publication of the religious books and

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<sup>153</sup> Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, "Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi", OTAM 2 (January 1991) p. 141.

<sup>154</sup> Article of the *Nizamname* of 1864, no: 9.

<sup>155</sup> In 1877 the number of lithography machines increased to four, and together with the other printing machines the printing house had ten machines. Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, p. 133.

<sup>156</sup> BOA, I.DH, no:37115, lef.1.

materials, which the Bulgarians used in their religious ceremonies, in order to ease the Russian influence on them. Thus, 100,000 *guruş* was allocated from the Treasury to obtain and publish them for the Bulgarians.<sup>157</sup>

The printing house was in the superintendence of the chief secretary of the province.<sup>158</sup> Its staff consisted of both Bulgarian and Turkish employees. The first director of the printing house was Dragan Tsankov, who was a printer and journalist in Istanbul. He was also the French teacher of Ahmet Midhat Efendi, who would be a famous Turkish journalist and the chief editor of the provincial newspaper, the *Tuna Gazetesi*. After the Bulgarian independence, he became the leader of the liberal party and then the prime minister of Bulgaria. Another Bulgarian writer of the printing house was Ivan Çorapçiev, who was in charge of editing the Bulgarian publications. He also prepared Turkish alphabet and French grammar books for Bulgarian children. The lithographer of the printing house was Yusuf Ziya Efendi, who would be the director later on. The printing house also served as a school, training a number of students coming from reformatories, as lithographer, binder and writer. In addition, twenty-five prisoners came to the printing house from the province prison every morning in order clean and to do the hard work of the printing house.<sup>159</sup> According to the yearbook of the Danube province dated 1869, the staff of the Danube printing house was as the following:<sup>160</sup>

The director: Ethem Efendi

Subeditor: Cenap Bey

French interpreter: Midhat Efendi

Accountant: Selim Efendi

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<sup>157</sup> BOA, BI, no:91.

<sup>158</sup> Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Tuna Vilayeti 1864-1878*, p. 133.

<sup>159</sup> İsmail Eren, “Tuna Vilayet Matbaası ve Neşriyatı (1864–1877)”, *Türk Kültürü*, Vol. III (January 1965), pp. 313–315.

<sup>160</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, “Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi”, p.145.

Bulgarian interpreters: (two persons)

Lithographer: Yusuf Ziya Efendi

Turkish chief editor: Hafız Zühtü Efendi

Bulgarian chief editor: Nikola Efendi

One of the most considerable achievements of the printing house was publication of the *Tuna* newspaper, which was an influential way of informing the inhabitants of the province about the continuing reforms in the province and news from all over the world. The first issue of the newspaper was published on Wednesday, March 8, 1865 and the last one on June 1, 1877. It was published in both Bulgarian and Turkish. Each issue was composed of four pages. The first two pages were in Turkish and the last two pages were in Bulgarian. The chief editor of the Turkish part was at first Ismail Kemal and then Ahmet Midhat Efendi. The chief editors and interpreters of the Bulgarian part were Ivan Çorapçiev and Stoil Popov. There were three columns in each page, whose size was 37 cm X 26 cm in the first 8 issues and afterwards four columns in each page, whose size changed to 54 cm X 36 cm, it was published twice a week. In its fifth issue *Tuna* announced the number of its subscribers as 529 and in the tenth issue this number increased to 1300. In comparison with the circulation of the province newspaper of Bursa, *Hüdavendigâr*, which was about 80-100 in 1869, the circulation of the *Tuna* newspaper was rather high. The price of the *Tuna* newspaper, its first 52 issues, was 40 *paras*. This amount was quite higher than that of *Hüdavendigâr*, which cost 40 *paras* but cheaper than that of *Envar-ı Şarkiyye* of the Erzurum province, which was 60 *paras*.<sup>161</sup>

The content of the newspaper was divided into four main sections. The first one, called *Havadisat-ı Dahiliye* (Domestic News), was to give information about the

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<sup>161</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, “Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi”, pp.143–144.

continuing reforms and activities by the government. The second one, called *Mevadd-ı Umumiye* (General Matters), was to inform people about events taking place within the province. The third one, called *Havadis-i Hariciye* (Foreign News), was to state the news from other countries. The last one, called *İlanat* (Announcements), was to notice official and private announcements.<sup>162</sup>

Moreover, eleven special editions of the *Tuna* newspaper, which included orders, laws, and regulations, were also published in the end of every month, beginning from April 8, 1871 to January 30, 1872. During its twelve and a half years existence, the Danube printing house managed to publish one more newspaper and four periodicals together with all other publications. In 1875 another newspaper called *Güneş- Le Soleil* (The Sun) was published in both Turkish and French. However, since it could not finance itself, after a short period of time it was closed down. Ismail Kemal published a literary periodical, which was called *Mecra-yı Efkar-Istoçnik Mneniya* (The Course of Ideas), as two-three issues in 1867 and 1868. It was also in both Bulgarian and Turkish. In addition, between 1867 and 1876 *Tuna Vilayet Salnamesis* (The Danube Province Yearbooks) were published in the printing house as ten issues. At the same time, T.H. Stançev published a religious and moral periodical, which was called *Onur-Slava* (Honor), twice a month between 1871 and 1872. Furthermore, R.I. Bliskov published an educational and pedagogic journal in Bulgarian, which was called *Uçilişte-Okul* (School). It was also published twice a month, between 1872 and 1874.<sup>163</sup>

Consequently, the Danube printing house, which was the first official printing house in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, worked by developing itself, and the *Tuna* newspaper, which was the first provincial newspaper, was published until the

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<sup>162</sup> BOA, BAD, no: 308, p. 29.

<sup>163</sup> Eren, "Tuna Vilayet Matbaası ve Neşriyatı (1864–1877)", p.316.

Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. The printing house was hit by a Russian missile in 1877 and then plundered first by Russians and then Bulgarians. Afterwards, in 1877, the first Bulgarian printing house was established in Rusçuk.

#### **IV.9 The Revolutionary Movements: Eşkiyas, Çetes and Komitas**

In the 1860s Bulgarian national movements grew to be very powerful in the Danube province, especially with the establishment of the Bulgarian revolutionary committees in Bucharest. The bandits (eşkiya), armed bands (çete) and the Bulgarian underground revolutionary organizations (komita) became a serious threat for the Ottoman administration.<sup>164</sup>

In the 1867, Russia activated the Bulgarian revolutionaries, most of who were educated in Russia with Pan-Slavist ideology and situated in some centers such Bucharest, Ibrail, Kalas, Yerköy, Wallachia and Besarabya to revolt against the Ottoman rule. Serbian bandits also supported them.<sup>165</sup> Midhat Pasha was given full authority by the Grand Vizier Ali Pasha to take the necessary military and administrative precautions against the *komitas*, which were moving into the province to provoke the Bulgarians. After secretly taking precautions, the Pasha began to wait for the revolutionaries.<sup>166</sup> The first of the 1867 bands appeared in April. It included thirty members under the command of Panaiot Khitov. They crossed the Danube River and proceeded to the inner side of the province by passing through the Deliorman region, which was thickly populated by the Muslims. However, the local people and administration did not realize the existence of such a *çete* until it reached to the Balkans Mountains since they did not attempt any military action. Then, some regular and irregular troops were sent to smoke it out but the *çete* members rapidly

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<sup>164</sup> BOA. I.DH. no: 40670.

<sup>165</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi (1850–1875)*, pp. 200-201; BOA, B.I. no: 93.

<sup>166</sup> Tabsıra-i İbret, p. 63.

run into Serbia without any fight with them.<sup>167</sup> In those days, the Serbian border became the core of the bandits moving into the Bulgarian land. The soldiers under the commander of Ömer Pasha in Vidin were dispatched to the region to block them.<sup>168</sup>

In May 1867, a Bulgarian *çete* of 25 people, including some Serbian and Albanian members, under the command of Filip Totiu crossed the Danube River and moved into the region of Zıştovi after finishing their preparations on a small island in the river.<sup>169</sup> It was a small band that would not constitute a big threat for the Ottomans but their plan was to create a comprehensive revolt by provoking the Bulgarians. While moving to the south they started their bloody attacks by killing five Muslim shepherd boys, aged between eight and ten, to create an atmosphere in which the Muslims would attack on the Christians to take the revenge of the boys.<sup>170</sup> However, Midhat Pasha calmed them down and prevented any aggressive action between Muslim and Christian people. Meanwhile, some Muslim villagers realized the bandits and fought with them but they moved to Tırnovo. Midhat Pasha learned about these events and sent some military forces to the region.<sup>171</sup> The number of the bandits rose to 180-200 but the regular Ottoman troops and irregular forces composed of villagers surrounded them. In the fight most of the bandits were killed and Totiu was wounded but he managed to run away with his remaining comrades. They reached to Balkan Mountains and then escaped to Serbian lands.

Soon after suppressing the revolutionary movement by Totiu' *çete*, a temporary court (Meclis-i Muvakkat) made up of six Muslim and six non-Muslim members, was set up in Tırnovo to penalize the arrested band members and those that

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<sup>167</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868*, p.237.

<sup>168</sup> BOA, I.MMS, no: 1430.

<sup>169</sup> Tabsıra-i İbret, p. 63; BOA. I.MMS. no:1430.

<sup>170</sup> Midhat Paşa, “Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali”, p. 16.

<sup>171</sup> BOA, I.MV, no:25929.

were supportive of them. Those accused of murders and wounding were immediately executed and the rest of them were punished with penal servitude (kürek cezası) and exiled to Diyarbekir.<sup>172</sup> Although some Bulgarians supported the Totiu's movement there were many that fought against it. The court judged all the people who took active role in the uprising and punished them with severe punishments. Even some foreigners who sympathized with the *çetes* were also deported.<sup>173</sup>

Thanks to Midhat Pasha's great efforts and strict precautions, the uprisings were subdued and the bandits were pacified. The governors who successfully arrested the band members were also awarded by him.<sup>174</sup> When Sultan Abdülaziz came to the province in August 1867, after his visit in France, he appreciated the Pasha's achievement in suppressing the separatist organizations and creating a province as modern as those in Europe.<sup>175</sup>

In those days, another outstanding *çete* movement, known as the "steamship event" (Vapur Hadisesi), took place. Midhat Pasha had been informed, thanks to his spies spread among the revolutionary groups, two *çete* leaders, one Sebian and other one Bulgarian, were coming to Rusçuk with an Austrian steamship called Cermanya (Germany) in order to organize the revolutionary groups. When they arrived to Rusçuk they faced the police forces waiting for them in the port. It would be an international problem for the Ottoman government to arrest them in an Austrian steamship. Thus, Midhat Pasha's plan was to send two officials to do a passport check to find them and it worked. After a short fight one of the *çete* leaders was

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<sup>172</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 26079; Koç, *Midhat Paşa 1822-1884*, p. 41.

<sup>173</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 26070; compare with Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868*, pp. 238-239; Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi (1850-1875)*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>174</sup> BOA, I.MVL, no: 24476.

<sup>175</sup> BOA, I.DH, no: 39696.

killed and other one was captured but he also died since he was severely wounded, while one policeman died and another was wounded.<sup>176</sup>

Despite the fact that the bands were not powerful enough to lead to a big revolt in the Balkans, Midhat Pasha followed a strict policy to suppress them. That is why the Slavic *komitas* even intended to assassinate him three times. In the most serious one, a Serbian revolutionary named Ivan pretended that he converted to Islam and then wanted to serve in a position close to the Pasha. However, his real plan was revealed by discoveries of with secret letters to the Serbian leader along with his suspicious insistence on being close to Midhat Pasha. After finding this out, in November 1867, the local government wanted to execute him but because of Ignatiew's pressure he was punished with a life long penal servitude in Diyarbekir.<sup>177</sup> Afterwards, on March 6 1868, the central government in Istanbul removed Midhat Pasha from the governorship of the Danube province by appointing him to the Presidency of the State Council.<sup>178</sup> It was considered that Ignatiew played the major role in this appointment. However, Ali Pasha's plans to develop this council also had a great impact on it.

#### **IV.10 Police Stations (Karakols)**

The rise of national revolutionary organizations, banditry and armed bands in the Balkans made it inevitable for the Ottoman administration to take strict precautions against them. Midhat Pasha paid a special attention to this issue and during his governorship in Nish he initiated an extensive project for the

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<sup>176</sup> Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha:Jizn i Deyatel'nost [Midhat Pasha: His Life and Career]*, p. 38; Tabsıra-i Ibret, pp. 73-75.

<sup>177</sup> BAO, I.MVL. no: 26048.

<sup>178</sup> Şentürk, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bulgar Meselesi (1850–1875)*, p. 209.

establishment of the police stations within the province.<sup>179</sup> Many blockhouses along the Serbian border were also constructed in order to prevent the bandits from moving into the Bulgarian lands. After his nomination to the Danube province, he extended the police stations within the whole Danube region, while repairing and reconstructing the existing ones.<sup>180</sup> The priority was given to the region along the Danube River and the Serbian border. Although there were a number of Serbian and Wallachian police stations in the other side of the river there were a few in the Ottoman side. Thus, Midhat Pasha projected the construction of sixty police stations along the Danube River. They would be comprised of the local Muslims, Bulgarians and refugees. About 700 people applied to serve in the police stations and they were divided into ten parts consisting of seventy people. Ten of them were reserved and the remaining sixty were divided into the groups of five members under the command of corporals. Each group would work for a week respectively during a month. The troops would be paid 1.800 *guruş* per year and 200 *guruş* would be allocated for the other expenses. The villagers would also meet the basic needs of the police stations such as wood, water etc.<sup>181</sup>

As a result of the uprisings by the *çetes* in 1867, Midhat Pasha decided to organize a new type of village militia called “Asakir-i Ihtiyatiyye” as opposed to the Bulgarian armed bands supported by Russia and Serbia. The objective of the project was to create additional military forces to the regular armies against a possible massive Bulgarian revolt. Thus, the Muslim males between the age 15 and 60 would be armed and trained every year regularly. They would not be paid for this service but when they were called for duty they would receive the wage of 40 *paras* per

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<sup>179</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no:22455; 22099; 24192, 24547; BOA. LDH. no: 39454.

<sup>180</sup> BAO, I.MVL, no: 24230; 23100; 23031.

<sup>181</sup> For the map showing the locations of the police stations and the division of the police forces, see BAO, B.I. no:102; Tabsıra-i Ibret, pp. 71-72.

day.<sup>182</sup> The creation of such a village militia required a huge amount of money that would be allocated from the central government. By the fall 1867, 40.000 rifles were ordered from the center to be distributed to the villages within the province.<sup>183</sup> The Ottoman government purchased a great deal of the “karabina” rifles from America. They were allocated for both the regular armies and the irregular village troops.<sup>184</sup> It was assumed that in this way, the government would have Muslim military forces in the villages ready to fight against the Bulgarian bands. However, in the long term, it might be difficult to control these village troops. Thus, this situation could lead to discontent among the Bulgarians and even contribute to the rise of the Bulgarian nationalism. It is difficult to say how influential the village militia was on the Bulgarian revolts of 1875 and 1876 but obviously it brought about uneasiness in the region and Russia made use of it for its Pan-Slavist propaganda in the Balkans.

#### **IV.11 The Question of the Tatar and Circassian Refugees**

The Russian pressure on the Muslim population, mainly Tatar and Circassian, in Southern Russia, Crimea and Eastern Europe, which intensified after the Crimean War (1853-56), resulted in the influx of Muslim refugees especially in 1859 and 1860. They fled to the safer places within the empire and the Ottoman government began to resettle them in both the Balkans and Anatolia, while making them involved in agriculture, trade and artisanship.<sup>185</sup> The settlement of the refugees before the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 as a historical topic has not studied in detail yet. The focus of my research also will not be on this issue but I will give an overview of

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<sup>182</sup> Tabsıra-i İbret, p. 70.

<sup>183</sup> BOA, B.I. no: 90; Tabsıra-i İbret, p. 70.

<sup>184</sup> BOA, A.MKT.MHM. no: 352/70; 440/63, 354/40.

<sup>185</sup> BOA, I.MMS. no: 133/5690.

the settlement policy in the Danube region and Midhat Pasha's contribution to this policy.

In 1859-60, a considerable number of Tatar and Circassian immigrants came to the northern part of the empire through the port cities of Varna and Tulça. In 1861, the Sublime Port appointed Nusret Pasha to Varna as a settlement functionary. Until the establishment of the Danube province in 1864, the total number of the refugees reached to 175,000 but he managed to settle the refugees in the regions, mainly Varna, Tulça and Dobruca.<sup>186</sup> According to many Bulgarian historians the Ottoman settlement policy aimed at strategic and important regions, where possible Russian attacks would come. In addition, it was considered that it would strengthen the Ottoman power in the Balkans against the national movements.<sup>187</sup> Thus, Russia provoked the Bulgarians to immigrate to Russia by claiming that the real intention of the Ottomans was to replace them with Muslim immigrants. As a result of this propaganda, in the early 1860s, thousands of Bulgarians from the Vidin region moved to Russia. However, because of adaptation problems in these residences they rapidly returned to their homelands and the Ottoman administration resettled them in their former lands.<sup>188</sup>

It was obvious that the increasing number of refugees caused discontent and high tensions in the region since local inhabitants were required to meet their basic needs while building houses and sharing their land with them. Although the main expenses of the settlement of refugees were supposed to be compensated by the central government the local administration could not receive adequate financial support from the center and tried to cover them by local sources. For instance, the

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<sup>186</sup> Nedim İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, (Trabzon: Serander 2006), pp. 27-49; Midhat Pasha gives the total number of the refugees in the province as 350.000; see Tabsıra-i İbret, p.53.

<sup>187</sup> Petrov, *Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868*, p.214.

<sup>188</sup> BOA, B.I. no: 76; Midhat Pasha, "Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali", p.15; for the details of this immigration also see, İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, pp.273-277.

immigrants were given animals, seeds and necessary tools for their agricultural activities.<sup>189</sup> When Midhat Pasha was nominated to the region as a governor, the main problem was not to settle them but integrate them to the local people, while improving their living conditions. There were disabled, elderly, widows and orphans among them. Many of them suffered from poverty, which led to an increase in crime, theft, burglary, robbery etc. Thus, Midhat Pasha established a commission headed by Şakir Pasha that would be in charge of collecting *aşar* taxes from the immigrants along with the donations from the local wealthy people in order to construct schools, hospitals, mosques.<sup>190</sup> For example, during his governorship seven hospitals and three reformatories, mainly serving the refugees, were constructed together with a number of schools.<sup>191</sup> The Pasha forced them to send their children to the schools. His policy continued with including them also in the village militia, which was created as a result of *çete* events of 1867, Midhat Pasha created and so they also took part in suppression of the Bulgarian uprisings. In this way, Pasha tried to bring them together with the local people.

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<sup>189</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no: 25114.

<sup>190</sup> BOA, I.MVL. no: 24269. According to the Refugee Law of 1857, those who settled in the Balkans would be exempted from taxes for six years after their arrival.

<sup>191</sup> For the hospitals see, BOA, I.MVL. no: 23784; 24004; 24744; 24457; BOA, I.DH. no: 37589. For the schools see, BOA, I.MVL., no: 26270, leaf 5.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Midhat Pasha governed the Danube province successfully until March 6, 1868 when he was appointed to the Presidency of the Ottoman Council of State (Şura-yı Devlet). During his governorship he attempted to carry out influential reforms and improvements, which were mutually agreed upon between the local notables and the Ottoman administration in order to gain the confidence of the Bulgarians, while providing them with safety, peace and the prospect of returning prosperity. It would be fruitless to define his reform movement in this region as a complete success or failure but introducing the Tanzimat reforms to the countryside for the first time was indeed his major achievement. In this respect, his governorship in this problematic part of the empire should be considered as a great achievement that would be a model for the further reforms in the Ottoman provinces, while having a great contribution to the modernization in the Balkans.

In evaluating Midhat Pasha's reforms and projects one should pay attention to the Tanzimat ideology along with his real mission, which was to pacify the province and to bring about a better understanding among its mixed population so that the increasing Russian influence in the Balkans would be interrupted. For instance, while Russian policy was to use schools as a way of spreading its pan-Slavist ideology among the Bulgarians what Pasha did was to open specialized schools for Muslims

and Christians alike to bring the young people of different creeds into closer sympathy. The establishment of these schools was of great significance not only as a Tanzimat reform in education but also as a precaution against Pan-Slavist propaganda. Similarly, in many of the newly established institutions such as provincial councils, agricultural credit cooperatives, reformatories and printing houses both Muslim and Christian people worked together for the development of the region. In this way, Midhat Pasha tried to create such a sort of Bulgarian bourgeoisie attached to the state under the ideology of Ottomanism and supportive of his reforms in the province. Although this ideology failed in the long term, it is obvious that it was successful to a certain degree that Christians and Muslims alike perceived Pasha's reforms as if the dawn of the better days was coming.

It is important to note that the main problem with the reforms in the Danube province was that they had to be "self-financed" because the central government could not allocate all the necessary funds. Thus, the heavy burden of the projects, such as construction of the paved roads, railroads and extension of the telegraph lines, was largely compensated by the labor loads or new taxes imposed on the local population. For instance, in the construction of the telegraph lines the inhabitants of the region were in charge of providing free labor and poles, while the central government purchased the essential machines, equipment and tools from Europe. Midhat Pasha mobilized the population to raise manpower necessary in the projects, even prisoners were required to clean the printing house and the students in the reformatories also worked in the iron foundry, carriage factory, some governmental offices etc. In this way, he managed to realize monumental projects but the increasing state demands on the local people created discontent in the province.

Russia benefited from the situation by provoking the Christian subjects to stand against the newly imposed labor loads and taxes.

Thanks to Midhat Pasha's reforms, the Danube region remained stable until the Bulgarian revolts of 1875 and 1876. Although these uprisings failed as revolutionary actions, they led to the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, enabling the Russians to gain control of the region.

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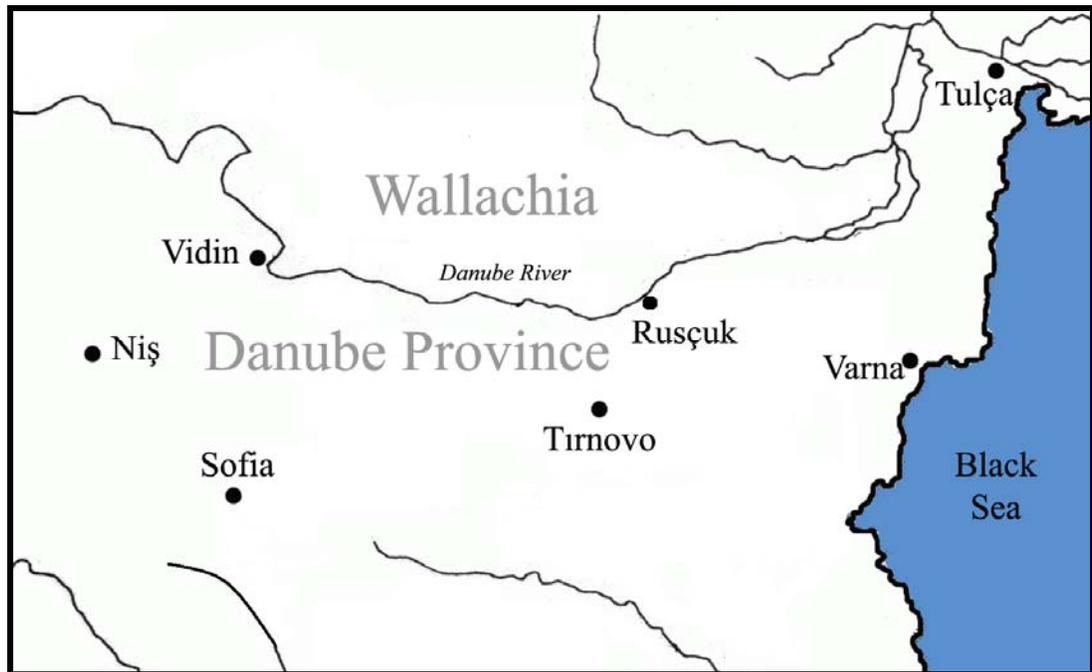
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: The District Centers of the Danube Province (1864)

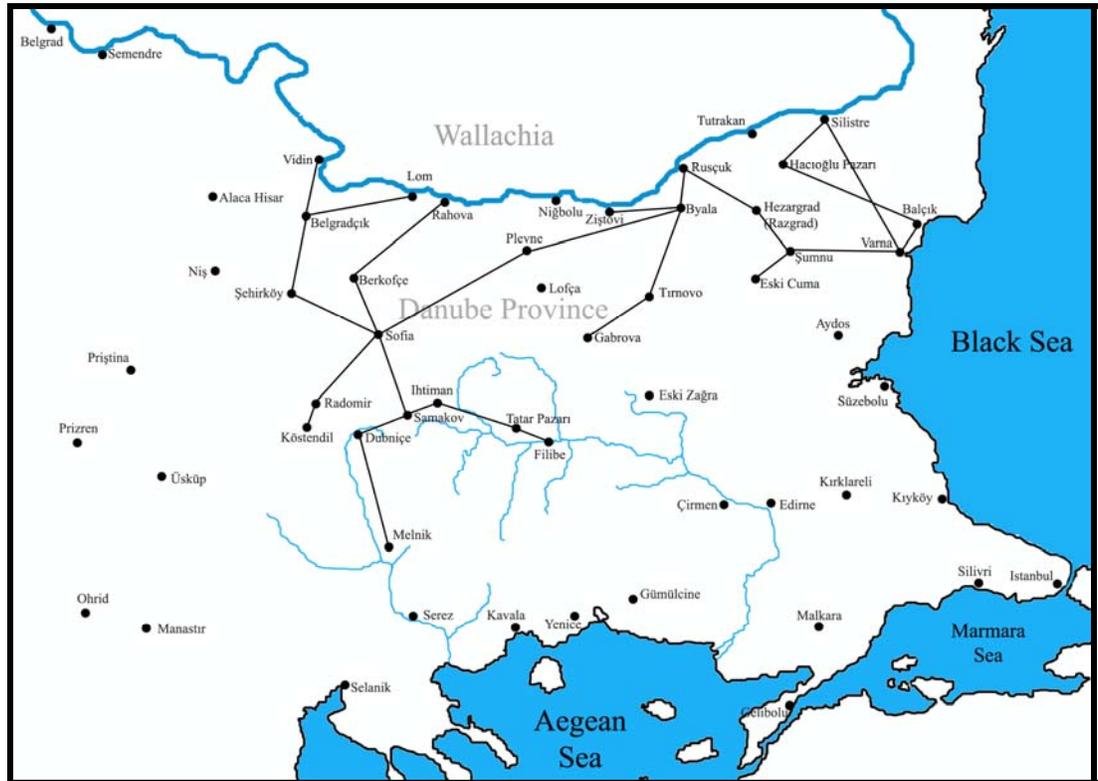


## Appendix II: The Administrative Units of the Danube Province<sup>1</sup>

<b>Ruşuk (Ruse) District</b>	<b>Tulça (Tulcea) District</b>	<b>Vidin District</b>	<b>Niş (Nish) District</b>
Ruşuk (Ruse) Kazası	Tulça (Tulcea) Kazası	Vidin Kazası	Niş (Nish) Kazası
Silistre (Silistra) Kazası	Köstence (Constanta) Kazası	Berkofça (Berkovitsa) Kazası	Şehirköy (Piro) Kazası
Şumnu (Shumen) Kazası	Babadağ (Babadag) Kazası	Lom Kazası	İvraniye (Vranje) Kazası
Hezargrad (Razgrad) Kazası	Sünne (Sulina) Kazası	Rohova (Oriakhova) Kazası	Leskofçe (Leskovac) Kazası
Ziştovi (Svishtov) Kazası	Maçin (Macin) Kazası	Adliye (Kula) Kazası	Ürgüb (Prokuplje) Kazası
Niğbolu (Nikopol) Kazası	Hırsova (Hirsova) Kazası	İvraca (Vratsa) Kazası	İznebol (Trun) Kazası
Plevne (Pleven) Kazası	Mecidiye (Medgidia) Kazası	Belgradcık (Belogradchik) Kazası	Kurşunlu (Kursumlja) Kazası
Cuma-i Atik (Turgovishte) Kazası	Kili (Chilia Velche) Nahiyesi	Adakale Nahiyesi	Palanka Nahiyesi
Tutrakan Kazası	Mahmudiye (Mahmudia) Nahiyesi		
Yenipazar (Novi Pazar) Nahiyesi	İsakça (Isaccea) Nahiyesi		
	Boğazköy (Cernevoda) Nahiyesi		
<b>Sofya (Sofia) District</b>	<b>Tırnova (Turnovo) District</b>	<b>Varna District</b>	
Sofya (Sofia) Kazası	Tırnova (Turnovo) Kazası	Varna Kazası	
Köstendil (Kiustendil) Kazası	Lofça (Lovech) Kazası	Pazarcık Kazası	
Samako (Samakov) Kazası	Osman Pazarı (Omurtag) Kazası	Balçık (Balchik) Kazası	
Dubnice (Dupnitsa) Kazası	Gabrova (Gabrovo) Kazası	Pravadi (Provardia) Kazası	
Radomir (Botevgrad) Kazası	Selvi (Selvievo) Kazası	Mankaliye (Mankalia) Kazası	
Orhaniye Kazası	Elena Nahiyesi	Koçluca (Suvorovo) Nahiyesi	
İzlade (Zlatitsa) Kazası	Diranova (Drianovo) Nahiyesi		
Cuma (Blagoevgrad) Kazası	Travna (Triavna) Nahiyesi		
İhtiman (ikhtiman) Nahiyesi	Bebrovo Nahiyesi		
Prezник (Breznik) Nahiyesi	Rahovitça (Gorna Oriakhovitsa) Nahiyesi		
Etropol (Etropole) Nahiyesi	Turyan (Troian) Nahiyesi		
Teteven Nahiyesi	Kazgan (Kotel) Nahiyesi		

<sup>1</sup> Tuna Vilayet Salnamesi no: 9-10 cited by İsmail Selimoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tuna Vilayeti (1864-1878)*, pp.141-142. Compare with Milen Petrov, *Tanzimat for The Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube*, p.53

**Appendix III: The Road Lines Constructed in the Danube Province between  
1864 and 1868**



**Appendix IV: Ethnic/religious group percentages per city (1866)<sup>2</sup>**

<b>City</b>	<b>Bulgarian</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Muslim Immigrant</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Armenian</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Catholic /other</b>
<b>Ruse</b>	37.6	51.8	-	2.2	3.7	4.7	-
<b>Shumen</b>	40.4	51.4	-	1.2	4.8	2.2	-
<b>Pleven</b>	47.3	45.1	-	5.2	-	2.4	-
<b>Vidin</b>	34.1	51.6	-	6.2	-	8.1	-
<b>Varna</b>	7.8	28.8	-	1.3	7.9	0.7	41.6 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Sofia</b>	37.6	38.7	-	4.0	-	19.7	-
<b>Tŭrnovo</b>	65.0	33.2	-	1.8	-	-	-
<b>Vratsa</b>	73.2	24.0	-	1.7	-	2.0	-
<b>Svishtov</b>	57.1	37.9	-	5.0	-	-	-
<b>Samokov</b>	65.9	25.3	-	3.9	-	4.9	-
<b>Dobrich</b>	11.6	32.5	48.5	4.0	3.4	0.1	-
<b>Tulcea</b>	28.6	5.1	5.3	0.8	2.8	7.9	49.5 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Lovech</b>	36.2	60.3	-	3.5	-	-	-
<b>Razgrad</b>	27.5	67.6	-	3.8	-	1.1	-
<b>Tŭrgovishte</b>	34.7	62.9	-	2.4	-	-	-

<sup>2</sup> Data taken from Milen Petrov, *Tanzimat for The Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Greeks and Turkish speaking Christians (Gagauzes).

<sup>4</sup> Most of the others listed in this column would have belonged to Greek and Romanian communities and a smattering of small groups such as Ukranian Cossaks and Russian Old Believers (Lipovan)

### Appendix V: Overall Population Figures<sup>5</sup>

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Total males (AH 1285 <i>Salname</i>)</b>	<b>Total population (sex ratio = 100M:95.6F)</b>
<b>Ruse</b>	234,526	458,733
<b>Varna</b>	79,458	155,42
<b>Vidin</b>	149,905	293,214
<b>Sofia</b>	171,505	335,464
<b>Tŭrnovo</b>	175,918	344,096
<b>Tulcea</b>	57,062	111,613
<b>Nish</b>	155,135	317,41
<b>Totals</b>	1,023,509	2,015,950

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<sup>5</sup> Data taken from Milen Petrov, *Tanzimat for The Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube*, p.37.

## Appendix VI: Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali<sup>1</sup>

“Şehid-i hürriyet Midhat Paşa merhumun Rusya ile icra ettiğimiz 1293 harbine müteakib Londra’da iken bir İngiliz gazetesiyle neşr ettikleri makale-i mühimmenin tercümesidir.”

Şark meselesinin Avrupa âmal ve menâfiine muvâfık bir suretde halline intizâr edenler, zuhur eden her dürlü teşevvüşat karşısında bugün yanılmalarının sebebi, aldanişlarının sebep-i hakikisi hakikat halde neden ibaret bulunduğunu anlamağa çalışmalıdırlar.

Bence bunun sebebi yegânesi, Devlet-i Osmaniye’yi teşkil eden akvâm-ı muhtelifenin tebâyi’ine, âdat ve âmâline, Devlet-i Osmaniye’nin vaziyet-i coğrafiye ve etnografyesi ile vekâyi-i tarihiye dair ezmine-i muhtelifede istihsal olunan haberlerin mübhem ve nâ-tamam elde edilen malûmatın mütenakız ve gayri vazih olmasından ibaretdir.

Filhakika malûmat-ı mezkûre, siyaset, din ve teşkilat-ı ictimâiyye gibi üç nokta-i nazardan yek diğeriyle kâbil-i telif olmayan ecnâs-ı muhtelifenin efkâr ve temayülât-ı muhsusasına nazaran tebeddül etmektedir. Hakikat-i hal ise ara sıra bu te’sirat-ı mütezaddeye düçâr olarak ekseriya gayri malûm kalmakta veyahud mübhem ve gayri mekşûf bir ziyâ-i hakikat altında nümâyân olmaktadır.

Fakat âmal ve menâfi, efkâr ve ihtirasâtın müsâdemât-ı dâimesi ortasında yekdiğeriyle te’lif kabul etmeyen akvâmdan her birinin kendi menâfiine olmak üzere nasıl ki efkâr-ı âmmeye karşı dâima mütenakız malûmat vücuda getirmesi tabii ise, Türkiye’yi ömründe görmemiş veyahud Türkiyeyi ziyaret ederek hüküm edeceği mesâile dair açık ve vazih bir fikir peyda edinceye kadar Türkiye’de ikâmet etmemiş muharrirlerin yazmış oldukları eserlerde dâima hakikate tekarrüb edememiş olmalarını da nazar-ı taaccüble görmemelidir. Binaenaleyh hiç şübhe yoktur ki, Şark’dan bahs edebilmek için Şark’ı iyi tanımak lazım olduğu gibi Şark’a müteallik mesâile dair sâlim bir hüküm ita edebilmek için de hâdisât-ı şarkiyye üzerine malûmât-ı mevsûkeye mâlik olmak iktiza eder.

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<sup>1</sup> Midhat Pasha’s famous article published in London, in May 1878. It was published in French and English. “La Turquie: son Passé, son présent, son avenir”, *La Revue Scientifique*, 2e série 7, no. 49 (June 8, 1878), pp.1149-1154; “The Past, Present and Future of Turkey”, *The Nineteenth Century* 3, no. 16 (June 1878), pp. 981-993. Later on it was translated to Ottoman Turkish as “Türkiye’nin Mazisi ve İstikbali”, by Ahmet Refik, (Istanbul: Tab’ı ve Naşiri Kitabhane-i İslam ve Askeri, Artin Asaduryan Matbaası, 1326 (1908–1909). This is the transliteration of the one in Ottoman Turkish.

Yakın vakte gelinceye kadar saffet-i kalb sahibi bazı kimseler, Rusya'nın cesim bir harbi göze aldirmek fedakârlığında bulunması, sırf Şark Hıristiyanlarının ıslah-ı hâli maksadına matuf olduğuna zâhib olmuşlardı.

Acaba Rusya'nın maksadı yalnız bundan mı ibaret idi? Bu bahane altıda şerh ve izahata hacet olmayan daha sâir mekâsıd da mevcut değil mi idi? Bugün harbin hâdisât-ı âhiresi bütün hakikati sahâ-i aleniyete çıkarmış olduğundan bu bâbda ne dürlü mülâhazada bulunmak lazım geleceğini herkes bilir.

Fakat düşmanlarımız Hıristiyanların dâima esaret altında bulduklarını ve onları marûz buldukları bâri-t tahakkümden kurtarmak Avrupa'nın vazifesi bulunduğunu iddia etmekden hâli kalmadıkları gibi birçok kimseler de Hıristiyanların hakikaten böyle bir muâmele gördüklerine zâhib olduklarından, Türkiye'de Müslümanlarla Hıristiyanlar beyninde mevcut münâsebatdan ve bilhassa da hükümetin teb'a-i gayr-i Müslimesi hakkındaki muâmelâtında tâkib eylediği meslekden bahs ederek bu ithâmâtın hata olduğunu isbât etmek iktiza eder.

Sevâbık-ı tarihiyeye nazar etmek ahvâli büsbütün meydana çıkarabilir.

Evvela şurasını bast ve temhîd edelim ki, diyânet-i İslamiye müsâvât ve hürriyet üzerine müessesdir. Devlet-i Osmaniye'nin usul ve idaresi ise bu kâide üzerine te'sis edilmiştir. Bunun için bilcümle teb'a-i Osmaniye nazarından hür ve müsâvidir.

İşte yine bu kâideye mebnidir ki kâffe-i edyân Memalik-i Osmaniye'de her zaman taht-ı emniyetde bulunmuşlar. Gerek icrâ-yi âyin ve gerek idare-i ruhaniyelerinin menâfiini istedikleri gibi idarede son derece serbest bırakılmışlardır. Bundan başka, malumdur ki din-i İslam âmir-i adalet olduğu gibi dâire-i adâletinden inhiraf edeni de en şedid mücazât ile tehdid eder.

Müessesin-i Saltanat-ı Osmaniye muvaffakiyat-ı harikuladeyi silahlarının kuvve-i kâhiresinden ziyâde herkes için ve herkes hakkında izhâr eyledikleri adâlet sayesinde iktisâb eylemişlerdir. Anlar nüfuz-u ibtidâiyelerini adâlet sayesinde tevsî eylemişler ve silahlarıyla taarruz etmedikleri memleketleri manen feth ve zabt ederek nüfuzlarını bütün civar memâlike isâl eylemişlerdir. İşte, te'sir-i adâlet bu derece bir azamet göstermiştir.

Rumeli kıt'ası kabzâ-i Osmaniâne geçtiği zaman Hıristiyanlara cebren İslamiyeti kabul ettirmek bu koca fatihlerin yed-i iktidarlarında idi: anlar kat'iyen buna tevessül etmediler. Takib etdikleri desâtir-i necibâne dâhil dâire-i hükümetleri

olan akvâmın efkâr ve vicdanı üzerine hiçbir te'sir, hiçbir tazyik icrâ etmemege anları mecbur ediyordu.

İşte bunun için Osmanlılar idâre-i ruhaniyeleri umûrunu istedikleri gibi idâre etmek ve hükümetin hiçbir kontrolü altında bulunmamak üzere istedikleri gibi mektebler te'sis eylemek imtiyâzâtını, mağlublara her zaman bahş eyledikleri gibi dinlerini, lisanlarını ve mallarını da muhafaza eylemelerine müsaade etmişlerdir. Padişahlarımız bu güne kadar her dürlü mezâhibin hâmisi bulunmak ve olmakla iftihâr edebilirler. Hatta o derece ki muhafaza-i edyân hususundaki müsamahamız misilli sâir hükmüne girmiştir.

Padişahların Hıristiyanlar hakkındaki riayetine bir misal irade etmek için müddeiyatıma esas olmak üzere iki vakıa-yı tarihiye zikr edeceğim.

Fatih Sultan Mehmed Han-ı Sâni İstanbul'u feth ederek intizamı iade, afv-ı umûmiye ilân eyledikten sonra bir dîvan akd edilmesini emr etmiş ve bu dîvana Rum Patrikini davet eylemişti. Hatta Patrik-i istikbal için bütün vüzerâsını göndermişti. O zamanlar padişah, hiçbir kimseye ve hele mağlub bir milletin reis-i ruhaniyesine kat'iyen ayağa kalkmazdı. Fakat Fatih bu sefer bütün kaideyi lağv etmiş, ve mevkiinden kalkub Patrik'e doğru on adım ilerlemiş, Patrik'in elinden tutarak anı yanına oturtmuş, nüfuz-u ruhaniyesinin ihyâsına alâmet olmak üzere bir de âsâ vermiştir ki, bu âsâ hatta bugün bile müdebdeb âyinler esnasında Patrik'in önünde bir papas tarafından taşınılmaktadır.

Yine aynı padişah daha sonralar, İstanbul'da te'sis eylediği mahkemelerin İslamlarla Hıristiyanlara aynı suretde muâmele edüb etmedüğünü anlamak ve sübhesiz akvâm-ı mağlubeyi henüz alışmadıkları bir davadan dolayı kalblerine gelecek korkudan vikâye etmek için, kendisine erbâb-ı vukuf ve malûmatdan iki papas tavsiye etmesini rica etmiş ve anlara bütün muâmelâtdan kendisini haberdar etmelerini tenbih ederek bazılarının rivayetine göre bir sene, bazılarının rivayetine göre de üç sene müddetle mezkur mahkemelerin teftişine memur eylemiştir.

Rivayete göre papaslar vazifelerini ifa eyledikten sonra zât-ı padişahîye beyan-ı malûmât için saraya gelmişler ve takdim etdikleri raporda ber vech-i âti ifâdâtda bulunmuşlardır.

“Zât-ı Padişahîleri tarafından hükümetin eyâletlerinde te'sis buyurulan mahkemelerde buradaki gibi ifa-i vazife eder ve bu halde devam edecek olursa, zât-ı Şâhâneleri emin olsunlar ki, şanlı ve satvetli hükümetleri pek az bir zaman içinde mertebe-i kusvâ-i şerife vâsıl olacak müddet-i hükümetleri medîd ve teb'a-yı

sâdikalarının refah ve saadeti bî-pâyân olacaktır.” Hükümet-i Osmaniye icrâ-yı adâletle nüfuzunu te’sis ve tahkim eylediği sırada Avrupa’nın bir ucundan öbür ucuna kadar bütün akvâm harb ve ihtilâl ile tevellüd eden mesâib içinde pûyan oluyorlardı.

Akvam-ı Garbiye ve Şimaliye henüz hal-i vahşetden kutulmamışlardı. Bu sebebdan dolayı tafradan fevc fevc gelen mülteciler Memalik-i Osmaniye’ye dehâlet ediyor, Osmanlılardan melce ve himâye talep ediyorlardı. Mezâlîm ve istibdaddan kurtulmak için birçok Yahudilerin İspanya’dan firar ettikleri; Ermenilerin mezâlîm-i nâ-lâyika giriftâr olmamak ve Kazakların da Rusya esaretinden kurtulmak için geldikleri tarih mütalaa edenlerce malûmdur.

İşte bütün bu muhâcirîn, hürriyetlerini ancak Osmanlı toprağında bulabiliyorlardı. Anlara izhâr olunan mihmân-nüvâzilik, anlara bahş edilen himâye, bugün bu muhâcirîn evlâd ve ahfâdının da aynı imtiyazâta mâlik olduklarını, düşmanlarımızın da tasdik kerdesi olduğu üzere aynı saadet-i hakikiyeye mazhar olduklarını tahattur etdirmelidir.

Muhtasaran beyân eylediğim şu hal, onsekizinci asra kadar devam etti. Bu müddet esnasında Avrupa intizam kesb etmiş, tadrîcen tarik-i terakkiye dâhil olmağa başlamıştı. Bu asrın evâhîrine doğru metîn ve pâyidâr bir gayret, medeniyet-i hazıra’ya bir terakkî-yi cedîd bahş ediyor. Hükümetlerin şekil ve tabiatını değiştiryordu. Fakat Devleti-i Osmaniye, icrâ olunan projelerin mükemmeliyetini ve memlekete bir hatve ileri atdırmak ihtiyacını idrâk edecek zevâtın fikdânından dolayı hâl-i tevakkufda kalmış ve nizâmât-ı kadîmesi büsbütün duçâr-ı iğtişâş olarak tebdil-i usûl ve mesleke fevkalade muhtac bulunmuş olduğu halde nizâmât-ı kadîmesinden hiçbir şey tebdil etmemişdi. İhtilâlât-ı dâhiliye ile Rusya’ya karşı icra edilen harblerden dolayı hükümetin kuvve-i mâddiyesi de perişan olmuşdu.

İşte bu suretle günden güne duçâr-ı zaaf olarak asırlarca dünyanın en muazzam hükümetlerinden mâdud olduğu halde derece-i saniyede hükümetler sırasına tenezzül eylemişdi.

Avrupa medeniyeti, nizâmât-ı cedîde ile iktisâb eylediği hürriyetlerin zalâl-i dilarâmından azâmet ve i’tilâ-i kesb eylediği sırada bu nimetlerden külliyyen mahrum olan Türkiye, kuvvâsının tenâkus etdiğini görüyor ve duçâr olacağı tehlikeleri bizzat idrâk etmeğe başlıyordu.

İşte bu tehlikelere meydan verilmemek ve hükümete şevket-i sâbıkasını îade etmek için Reşîd, Âli, Fuad ve daha sair zevât gibi ricâl-i hükümet-i Osmaniye,

hükümet-i nizâmât-ı cedîdeye nâil ederek idare-i sâbika suistimâlâtını mahv etmege çalışdılar.

Vakıa tamamıyla ihrâz-ı muvaffakiyet edemediler ise de, mesâileri yine akım kalmadı, Türkiye'nin son harbinden evvelki hâli bundan otuz sene evvelki hâliyle mukayese edilirse, memleketde husule gelen tebeddülât-ı nafia kâmilten tezahür eder.

Bu tebeddül başka memleketde bir asırlık mesâi neticesinde bile kuvveden fiile gelemeyecek derecede şayan-ı hayretidir. Fakat etrafımızda vukua gelen terakkiyat o derece seri olduğundan bu ıslahat az zaman içinde gayri kâfi bir halde bulunmuşdur.

Halbuki memleketde ıslahat icra olunduğu halde ahâli arasında bir nevi adem-i memnuniyet hüküm-fermâ olarak bazı şikâyetlere sebebiyet veriyor, bu şikâyetler de Hıristiyanlar vasıtasıyla Avrupa'ya neşr ediliyordu.

Acaba bu adem-i memnuniyet neden neş'et ediyordu, bu şikâyetlerin esbâbı neden ibaretdi? Hıristiyanlar müsâvat-ı tâmmeye mazhar olmuyorlar diye mi? Hâlbuki ıslahat icra olunduğu andan itibaren Hıristiyanların ahvâli his olunacak derecede dahi her dürlü intizarın fevkinde ıslah edilmişdi. İçlerinden birçoğu hükümetin en mühim memuriyetlerine kabul edilmişlerdi; müdüriyyetlerde, mehâkimde, umur-u hükümetde ifâ-yi vazife ediyorlar, fazla olarak İslamların nâil olamadıkları bazı imtiyâzâta da mazhar olmuş bulunuyorlardı.

Acaba bunlar hakikaten iddia olunduğu gibi Müslümanlardan şiddetli bir tazyik görüyorlar mıydı? Buna inanmak hatadır. Hıristiyanlar suistimâlât-ı idareden müteessir oluyor idi iseler, bunların ıztırabâtına Müslümanlar da hedef oluyor, hâl-i hazırın tebdilini şiddetle arzu ediyorlardı.

Fakat bâlâda beyan etdigim vechile bu ıztırabâtdan şikâyet eden en ziyade Hıristiyanlar olduğu için Avrupa yalnız Hıristiyanların meşakkat çekdigine zâhib oluyordu.

Acaba Şark'dan ara sıra sudûr iden bu şikâyet-ı müttehidenin sebep-i hakikisi neden ibaretdi? Bunun izahı pek basitdir: Bâbîâli elîm, fakat kendisi için medâr-ı iftihâr bir tezâdd eseri olarak ecnâs-ı Hıristiyaniyeye İslamlardan daha ziyade bir hürriyet, daha ziyade vesâit-i tedrisiyye bahş etmişdi, hükümetimizin düşman-ı kadîmleri ise bu halden kemal maharetle istifade ederek ecnâs-ı mezkûreden bazılarına efkâr-ı infirâdperverâne telkin etmege muvaffak olmuşlardı.

Bunun için, Avrupa'da Hıristiyanlar tarafından işidilen şikâyetler hakikaten Müslümanlar tarafından icra edilen tazyikât ve mezâlimden neş'et etmiyor, bunların

mukaddemâ lisana almağa cür'et etmedikleri âmâl ve ihtirâsâtın tahrik edilmiş olmasından ileri geliyordu.

Binaenaleyh, ıslahata teşebbüs olunduğu zaman, daha bidayetde bütün bu anasını yekdigeriyle birleştirecek vechile anları metânet bahş ve mahiyye-i hayat bir idare etrafına toplamak ve bu ecnâs-ı muhtelifeyi telkînât-ı hariciyeye karşı ademü-t teessür bir hale getirecek bir vatan-ı müşterek vücuda getirmek lazımdı. Bu vazife ise Türkiye'de idare-i meşrûta ilan olunduğu sırada meclis-i Meclis-i Mebusan'ın görüldüğü üzere pek müşekkeldi.

Bundan başka, bir taraftan Rusya da müşkilât-ı cedîde ikâ etmekden hâli kalmıyordu.

Rusya hükümeti, 1854 senesinde bizimle harb etmek için Kaynarca Muahedesine müracaat ettiği gibi, 1856 Muahedesini mahvetmek için de daha müdhiş ve daha sehlü-l isti'mâl yeni bir silaha müracaat etmişti, o da Slav ittihadı idi.

Kâffe-i desâisinde mahirâne hareket eden Rus diplomasisi bir taraftan vazifesini ifâ eylediği gibi, diğer taraftan da Balkanlara tohum-u nifak saçmak için komitalara itimâd ediyordu.

Osmanlı toprağı müttetiklerin kıtâatından tahliye edildiği günün hemen ertesi, Prens Gorçakof bu Bulgarların hükümet-i Osmaniyyeden tazyik gördüklerini beyan etmek için bir nota gönderiyordu.

O zaman bir tahkikat icrâ edilmiş, fakat böyle bir şey vukua gelmediği tezâhür etmişti.

Yine bu sıralarda Çerkeslerle Tatarlar memleketlerinden çıkarılarak Türkiye'de yerleşmişlerdi. Rusya hükümeti bu fırsattan istifade ederek "Babıâli'nin Çerkesleri yerlerine yerleştirmek için Bulgarları memleketlerinden çıkarmaktır" diye Hristiyanları iğfâl etmiş ve Bulgarları (Vidin) cihetlerine doğru muhaceret etmeğe teşvik eylemişti.

İşte o zaman yirmi bin kişi bu vesâyâyâ kapılarak, güzel güzel vaadlara fer-yafte olan memleketlerinden çıkmışlar; fakat az bir zaman sonra Devlet-i Âliyyeden tekrar yerlerine gelmelerini talep eylemişlerdir. Bu bîçareler ellerinde bulunan cüz'i bir meblağı da beyhude yere sarf etmiş olduklarından hükümet bunları sevk etmek için vapur tedârik etmeğe, ve kendilerine iâde olunan tarlaların zirâi için öküz ve âlat-ı zirâiye vermeğe mecbur olmuşdur.

1865 ve 1866 senelerinde, Rusya'da teşkil olunan çeteler Bulgaristan'da ihtilal zuhura getirmek için Kişinev ve Bükreş tarihiyle Bulgaristan'a geldiler. Zıştovi civarında Tuna'dan geçerek Tırnovi ile Selvi arasında Balkanlara kadar ilerlediler. Fakat Bulgarlar tarafından hiçbir muavenet göremeyince ahâlinin mazhar-ı muaveneti olan jandarmalar tarafından mağlub ve perişan edildiler. Burada şunu da ihtar edeyim ki, bu çetelerin ilk geçişlerinde irtikâb ettikleri en birinci cinayet; yolları üzerinde gezinen sekiz on yaşlarında beş biçare İslam çocuğunu katl etmekden ibaret olmuştur.

Filhakika bu müdhiş cinayetten maksad ahâli-yi İslamiyeyi Hıristiyanlara karşı ahz-ı sâra teşvik etmek ve memleketi ihtilale vererek Avrupa'da Hıristiyanların Türkler tarafından tazyik ve telef edildikleri zannını hâsıl eylemek için bunun netâyicinden istifade etmek idi. Fakat Müslümanlar buna karşı hiç seslerini çıkarmayınca, muharriklerin planı kâmilen akîm kaldı.

Komitalar, bu hali görünce manevralarını tebdil etmege mecbur oldular. Eskiden yaptıkları gibi Bulgar çocuklarını talim ve terbiye için muallimler gönderecek yerde, her sene ahâli-yi Hıristiyanıye meyânından birçok çocuklar intihab etdiler. Çocuklar Rusya'ya gönderiliyor, avdetlerinde ise memleketlerinde ittihad-ı İslav fikrini tâmim ediyorlardı. Bütün bu haller, Rusya'nın Dersaadet sefiri Rum kilisesinden ayrı olmak üzere milli bir Bulgar Kilisesi açılmak için ferman istihsaline muvaffak olduğu zamanda vâki oluyordu.

Fakat maksadım ne Rus diplomasisinin aleyhimizde yaptığı şeyleri beyan etmek, ne de komitalar tarafından icra edilüb bütün âlemin bildiği şeyleri tekrar eylemektir.

Yalnız isterdim ki, ihtilâlât ve isyanların Sultan Abdülaziz'in son senelerindeki garabetin, sarayın masârifât-ı mecnûnânesinin, bundan dolayı husûle gelen netâyic-i elîmenin, hâsılı birbirini müteakib üzerimize çöken felaket ve musibetlerin az çok aynı mebâdan neş'et etdiğini herkes bilsin!

Keza harbden evvelki ahvâle dair de bir şey söylemek istemem: Bunlar zaten malûm olduğu gibi izah ve tafsile ihtiyac göstermeyecek derecede de yenidir. Yalnız, İstanbul Konferansından bir nebze bahs etmek için şunu beyan edebilirim ki, 9 Eylül tarihinde Petersburg ceride-i resmiyesinde prens Gorçakof tarafından neşredilen tamim-i siyasi zeylinin birinci fıkrası kemâl dikkatle mütalaa edilecek olursa, Rusya hükümetinin İstanbul Konferansı ile Ayastefanos muahedesinde dermeyan eylediği

şeyler beyninde hiç fark olmadığı görülüyor ki, bunu 1 Nisan tarihli varakalarında Marki Salisbury cenabları da teslim etmişlerdir.

O halde Rusya hükümetinin muzaffer olduğu halde Avrupa'ya güçle kabul ettirebileceği bir şeye Türkiye'nin derhal muvâfakat etmeyeceğini tabii olarak söyleyebiliriz. Zaten hiç bir hükümet, bir millet yokdur ki bu şerâiti kabul etsin. Bunu bizim de kabul etmeyeceğimiz tabiidir; zira bütün ahâli her ne suretle olursa olsun haysiyet ve menâfini müdafaa etmek istiyor, beş yüz bin asker muharebe emrine intizar ederek vatan için feda-i can etmek şerefini temenni eyliyordu.

İngiltere hükümetinin, hakkında ne gibi tedabir ittihaz eylediğini Türkiye bilmiyor degildi. İngiltere kabinesi mücâdelâtımıza karışmayacağını açıktan açığa beyan etmişti. Biz bu kararı pek iyi biliyorduk. Keza Avrupa menâfi-i umumiyesi ile İngiltere menâfi-i hususiyesinin Rusya ile vukuu bulan mücâdelâtımıza son derece merbût olduğunu, İngiltere kabinesi her ne kadar bu suretle beyânâtda bulunmuş ise de İngiltere'nin er geç bu meseleye karışmaması imkân haricinde bulunduğunu da pekâlâ biliyorduk. Bu itimad-ı fevkalade, bâlâda beyan eylediğimiz esbaba inzimam ederek Rusya ile icra edeceğimiz muharebenin nukat-ı esâsiyesinden birini teşkil etmiştir. Hatta İngiltere hükümetinin bilahare vukuu bulan hareketi, Osmanlı nazarının istidâlâtını tamamen kuvveden fiile çıkarmış, filhakika anların hissettikleri gibi İngiltere hükümeti müdahale etmiş ise de tahminlerden pek geç bir zamanda müdahale etmiştir.

İşte bu mütalaatdan da müsteban oluyor ki Rusya hükümetinin şarkdaki politikasının yegâne muharriki Hıristiyanların İslamlar tarafından tazyik eylediğini vesile ederek Rusya'nın Hıristiyanlara karşı daima icra etmek istediği hakk-ı himayeden başka bir şey degildir.

Rusya hükümeti Avrupa'ya karşı hep bu fikri ileri sürmüş ve anı bize karşı daima bir silah olarak istimal etmiştir. Fakat bu bâbdaki efkârı tebdile bâdi olan bir şey varsa, o da Avrupa'nın cenub-u şarkî cihetlerinde mütemekkin Hıristiyan unsurunun komitalar tarafından istimal olunan nüfuz, elîm mefsedetle beraber bir takım siyasi nüfuzlar altında da bulunarak bazı defalar daire-i meşruiyetden harice çıkması ve iddia olunduğu gibi İdare-i Osmaniye'nin suistimâlâtından kurtulmaktan ziyade Slav ittifakı fikrini neşr ve tamim için vesait-i şedide istimal eylemsidir. Vakıa bu suistimâlât isyana vesile olmuyor degil. Fakat en son vekâyi tamamıyla isbat etmiştir ki, bu isyanlar suistimâlâtı mahv ve izale etmekden ziyade imtiyaz ve istiklâl elde etmek için icra edilmektedir. Fakat bu meyanda yalnız Bulgarlar

müstesnadır; Çünkü anlar kimin eline düşmüşlerse daima körü körüne istimal edilmiş bir alet makamına kâim olmuşlardır.

Binaenaleyh bu bâbda arzu edilen ve kemâl şiddetle takib olunan nokta, İslav ittihadını vücuda getirmek için hükümetin kuvve-yi mevcûdesini parçalamakdan, Prut'dan Karadeniz Boğazı'na, Karadeniz'den Adriyatik denizine kadar teessüs eden büyük bir hükümetin nüfuz ve te'sirinden başka bir şey degildir.

İşte Avrupa'nın mucib-i hıras olacak bir tahakküm-ü umûmi usûlünü ifham eden bu menfaat-ı azîme-i siyasiye karşısında menâfi-i Hıristiyaniye kâmilten ortadan kalkmakta veya az çok te'sirini zâyî eylemektedir. Bunun en âşikâr delili de Ayastefanos muahedesi imza olunur olunmaz Rusya'nın bize karşı âsar-ı muhabbet izhar eylesidir.

Rusya'nın Avrupa'ya karşı bizimle ittifak etmege ne derecelerde müsaraat eylediği ve bizimle icra etmiş olduğu harbi sırf Avrupa için ve Hıristiyanlara muhabbetinden dolayı icra etmekte olduğuna Avrupa'yı ne dürlü zâhib etmiş bulunduğu herkesin malûmudur.

Fakat sırf mâzi ile halden şikâyet etmek kifâyet etmez. En ziyade âtiyi de düşünmek iktizâ eder. Acaba hâli nasıl ıslâh etmeli, bu gibi hallerde ne vesâit istimal eylemeli?

Şimdiki halde bu sualin çâre-i hâli pek çok: Daha doğrusu vaziyetin müşkilâtından ve Avrupa'nın duçâr olduğu maraz-ı umûminin sebep-i yegânesini teşkil eden bir meseleyi büsbütün kapatmak hususunda zarurî ve meşru bu surette hissedilen ihtiyacdandır dolayı elyevm bir feverân-ı tasavvurât mevcuddur.

Memleketin hâli hazırında bir gerginlik peydâ olmasından biz de alâkadarız. Bu hâl Türkiye'nin bedbaht ahâlisi için artık gayr-ı kâbil-i tahammül bir hâle gelmiştir. Vaktiyle müterakki ve mesud olan vatanımız, şimdi harâbezâr halindedir. Bu hâlin bir dâire-i hak ve adalet dâhilinde izâlesi elzemdir.

Ben bu hususda bir çâre-i hal dermeyân edeceğimi iddia edemem; fakat birçok seneler Tuna eyaletlerinde valilik etdiğimden elyevm her ne suretle olursa olsun Türkiye'nin te'min-i saadeti ile meşgul olanların nazar-ı dikkatini celb etmek üzere izahat-ı muhtasarada bulunarak Rumeli ve Bulgaristan hakkında bazı mülâhazat dermeyân etmekliğim çok görülmez zannederim

Evvela şunu nazar-ı dikkate almalıdır ki, bugün en ziyade nazar-ı dikkate alınan Bulgarlar meyanında bir milyondan ziyade İslam vardır.

Tatarlar ve Çerkesler bu meyanda dâhil degildir. Bu İslamlar öyle zannedildiği gibi Asya'dan gelüb Bulgaristan'da birleşmemişlerdir. Bunlar devri istilâda ve âna takib eyleyen seneler zarfında şeref-i İslam ile teşerrüf eden Bulgarların ahfâdıdır.

Bunlar aynı memleketin, aynı tabakadan neş'et etmiş aynı cinsin evlâdlarıdır. Bunların içinde birçokları vardır ki Bulgarcadan başka bir lisan tekellüm etmezler. Bu milyonlarca insanları yurdlarından çıkarub vatanlarından baîd mahallere göndermek, bence en büyük bir insaniyetsizlikden madûddur. Böyle bir hareket ne hakka, ne dürlü bir dine müsteniden icra olunabilir? Zan edersem Hıristiyanlık buna müsâid degildir. Medeniyetin bir kanunu vardır. İnsaniyetin de nizâmâtı mevcuddur. Ondokuzuncu asır da bu nizâmâta hürmeti emreder. Bundan başka, artık Müslümanlara: “Avrupa'da durmak isterseniz Hıristiyan olunuz” denebilecek vakitlerde degiliz.

Keza şunu da diyebilirim ki, Bulgarlar terakkiyât-ı fikriyece pek geridirler. Akvâm-ı Hıristiyaniyenin terakkiyâtı hakkındaki sözlerim bunlara degil, Rumlara, Ermenilere ve sâirleredir. Bulgarların yüzde ellisi çiftçi, yüzde kırkı çoban, koyun yetiştiricisi, orakçı ve sâiredir.

İslamlara gelince bunlar tedrisat-ı diniye ve uzun müddet devam eden hükümetin tecrübesi eseri olarak mürûr-u zaman ile kabiliyât-ı fikriyece his olunacak derecede terakki etmişlerdir ki, bu terakkileri diğerlerine nisbeten fâik bir halde bulundurmaktadır, bunu Bulgarlar da teslim ederler.

Bugün dört asırdan beri hâkim bir milletin dün mahkûm ve zekâca da kabiliyeti madûm bir millet idaresine girmesini taleb etmek, Balkan şube-i ceziresinde Avrupa'nın daha bir batın devam ettiği müddetce hal-i iğtişâşda bulunmasına sebebiyet verecek bir vaziyet tevlid eylemek demektir.

Zira İslamlar, vatanlarından ayrılmazdan, mal ve mülklerini terk etmezden evvel hûn-rîzâne bir muharebe edeceklerdir ki, bu muharebe zaten başlamış olduğu gibi devam da edecektir. Hatta bu muharebe basdırılmış olsa bile tekrar zuhur ederek Avrupa ve Asya'yı iğtişâş içinde bırakacaktır. Hıristiyanlar ve bilhassa Rumlar, nefret etdikleri Bulgarların mezâlim-i tahakkümünden kurtulmak için İslam safları arasında muharebe edeceklerdir. Çünkü İslamlarla Rumların menâfii, haklarını müdafaa için tevhid-i ef'âl etmelerine lüzum gösterir.

Hayır, müsellemt-ı umûmiye için mahâzir-i fevkalade husule gelmeden yalnız Müslüman oldukları için bir milyon insanı vatanlarından ihrac etmek ve bir gün evvel tabii olanları bugün metbû'u haline irca etmek imkan haricindedir.

Şu mütalaamızdan hâl-i sabıkın asla tebdilini arzu etmedigimiz anlaşılırsa, cevaben deriz ki maksadımız kat'iyen bundan ibaret degildir. Bizim maksadımız Hıristiyanlarla İslamların ıslah-ı ahvâli için birden çalışmak, şarkda icra olunacak tebeddülâtı her iki taraf için de tedricen icra etmek, ahâlinin bir kısmına bahş olunacak ıslahatın digeri için idbâr ve felaket haline münkaleb olmasına meydan vermemekdir.

Benim fikrimce bu öyle bir mesele-i adalet ve râifetden ibaretdir ki bundan inhirâf edenler icabat-ı zamana ve asra göre hareket etmemiş olmağla itham olunacakları gibi, böyle bir asr-ı medeniyetde, âsâr-ı vahşetde bile icra olunmayan şeylerin vukua geldigini müşahede etmek beşeriyet için hakikaten elîm olacaktır. Fakat bu müşkilâtı izâle için ne dürlü bir vasıta istimâl etmelidir?

Bâlâda da beyan etdigim vechile ben bu vasıtayı bulduğumu iddia edemem, fakat bana öyle geliyor ki Bulgaristan'ı âdilâne bir suretde tahdid etmek her dürlü menâfii bir dereceye kadar muhafaza edebilir. Bu menâfiiden maksadım ahaliye taalluk eden menâfiidir.

Menâfi-yi siyasiyenin de ayrıca müdafileri ve kahramanları olduğundan menafi-yi siyasiye ile meşğul olmağa lüzum görmem.

Bulgaristan arazisi, Tuna üzerinde Rus ordusunun mahal-i müruru olan (Ziştovi) den başlayarak (Yantara) mecrasını takib edecek ve (Osmanpazarı) ile (Tırnova) beyninde geçecek ve (Gabrova) ile (Şıpka) geçidi arasında Balkanları mürur eyledikten sonra dağların sırtarını takib ederek (İhtiman)'a, badehu (Samokov) ve (Köstendil)'e gelüb (Leskofça)'ya müntehi olacak, buradan da (Morava) vadisini takib ederek Sırb hududuna dayanacakdı ki, zan edersen böyle bir Bulgaristan birçok ihtirasatı izâle edebilecekti.

O zaman, tahminen iki milyon ahâli ile meskûn olan bu hatt-ı vâsia: şimalen Tuna, garben Sırbistan ve Morava, cenûben Rumeli Vilayeti Balkanların bir kısmı, şarken de Yantara ile muhât bulunacakdı. Mevcud nahiyeleri de ber vech-i âti nevahîden ibaret bulunacakdı. Ziştovi Yanbolu, Rabova, Lum, Vidin, Adiliye, Belgradcık, Berkofca, Vraca, Lofca, Pluna, Selvi, Tırnova, Gabrova, İhtiman, Samokov, İzladı, Orhaniye, Sofya, Dobniçe, Radomir, Köstendil, Leskofca, Niş, İznebol, Prut.

Şu tâdad eyledigim yirmi altı nahiyede Hıristiyan Bulgarlar ekseriyete haizdirler. Nisbet ise mahallâta göre yüzde 60/80 dir. Bu nisbet Ruscuk, Razgrad, Osmanpazar, Şumnu, Tutrukan, Silistre, Tulca ve Varna gibi Yantara'nın şarkında kâin nevâhinin aksidir.

Buralarda nüfusun yüzde 70'i İslam, mütebakisi Rum, Ermeni, Alman, Lipovan, Kazak, Ulah, Bulgar ve sâiredir. Hatta Silistre'de Deliorman, Şumnu'da Karlıova, Osmanpazar'da Tuzluk gibi birçok mahaller sırf İslamlarla meskündür.

Bundan başka şu hudud dâhilinde bir Bulgaristan teşkili her dürlü menâfii temin etmekden ziyade yeniden yeniye vukua gelecek ihtilâfâtın izâlesine de fevkalade hizmet edecekdi, yeni prenslikte kalmak istemeyen İslamlar burada kalmak isteyen Hıristiyan Bulgarlarla mülklerini de mübadele edeceklerdi.

Sırf mevkii olan bu meseleyi fasl-u tesviye için muhtelit bir komisyon tayin olunacakdı.

Yeni Bulgaristan Babıâli'ye haracgüzâr olmak üzere, bir idare-i müstakile teşkil edecekdi. Devlet-i Osmaniye de bu prenslik idare-i dâhiliyesine müdahale etmeyeceğini Avrupa'ya karşı kat'iyen taahhüd etmekle beraber memleket-i ecânibe karşı müdafaa için Vidin ve Niş istihkâmâtını işgal etmek hakkını muhafaza eyleyecekdi.

Kala-i Erbaa dâhil olduğu halde diğer nevâhinin kâffesi eskiden olduğu gibi tamamıyla Devlet-i Osmaniye'ye tabi bulunacakdı. Bu nevâhide hiçbir tesîsât-ı husûsiye icra edilmeyecek, fakat bu nevâhi sâir eyaletler gibi Kanun-u Esasî'nin sûret-i mükemmelede tatbiki sayesinde kendilerine temin olunacak menâfi-i hakikiye ve kat'iyeden istifade edeceklerdi.

Filhakika tesîsi mümkün olan bütün tarz-ı hükümetler, tasavvuru mümkün olan bütün idare projeleri içinde Kanun-u Esasî hakkıyla tatbik olunduğu takdirde, şark için en muvafık bir tarz- idaredir. Zira bütün ecnâsın terakkiyât-ı fikriye ve maddiyesi vasıtasıyla vatanın terakkiyât-ı müstakbelesini temin etmek esası, bu kanunda mevcuttur.

Kanun-u Esasî, hükümdar tarafından millete bahş edilmiş olduğu için daima muhafaza olunacaktır.

Bu kanun, milletın mal-ı sarîhi haline geldiği gibi millet de memleketin selameti ancak bu Kanun-u Esasî'de mündemic bulunduğuna kâni olduğu cihetle ânın muhafazasına fevkalade bir kıymet bahş etmektedir.

Bu berat-ı milliyenin tamamı tatbikine şimdiye kadar bazı esbab-ı maddiyenin mâni olması ve bu Kanun-u Esasîden bazıları zarar-dide olmuş bulunması ânın kıymet ve ehemmiyetini hiçbir vakit tenkis edemez. Türkiye’de hemen herkes idare-i meşrutanın yerleşmesini, kesb-i kuvvet etmesini, nizamâtımızın ruh ve nizam-ı mürettebesine gelmesini arzu etmektedir.

Vakıa Kanun-u Esasî’nin tatbiki bazı fikirlerde elân şübheler tevlid ediyor diye itiraz olunabilir. Fakat, bu şübheler, Babîâli’nin ıslahat-ı mev’ûdadan bazılarını henüz icra etmemiş olmasından neş’et edebilir; fakat bence Babîâlinin deruhde eylediği vezâifi ifâ edeceği hengamında müsadif olduğu müşkilat-ı ale’l umum efkâr-ı âmme nazar-ı dikkate almıyor gibi görünüyor. Bu müşkilat ise her fırsatta Memalik-i Osmaniye dâhilinde iğtişâat-ı dâhiliye tevlid eylemeğe matuf olan te’sirât-ı ecnebiye ile karışık bir halde zuhur etmiş ve Türkiye’yi Avrupa’ya karşı deruhde eylediği taahhüdatı ifâdan men’ eylemiştir. Şarkda vekâyî’in tarz-ı cereyanını bir dikkat-ı sabite ile tâkib edenlerce malûmdur ki Rusya’nın en ziyade korkduğu şey, Türkiye ahvâlinde bir salah-ı hakiki nümayan olmasıdır. İşte bu sebebe mebnî Rusya hükümeti Türkiye umur-u idaresinde ıslahat-ı cedîdeye teşebbüs edenlere karşı muhtelif zamanlarda icrayı te’sir etmekden hâli kalmamıştır. Bunun için Babîâli Kanun-u Esasî’yi ilan eder etmez bir harbin feverânı da nevâ’ma tahrik etmiş demektir. Rusya hükümeti esasen bu harbi hiçbir vech ile hazırlamış olmadığı gibi Kanun-u Esasî’nin ilanı da mümkünse Türkiye’yi kâmilen mahvetmek veya bir daha kalkamayacak bir hale getirmek için Türkiye’ye taarruz etmek hususundaki kararını ta’cil etmemiş olsa idi, Rusya hükümeti ihtimal ki bu harbi bir müddet daha te’hir edebilirdi.

Keza şunu da itiraf ederim ki, bu Kanun-u Esasî hadd-i zâtında Avrupa nizâmât-ı kadîmesi derecesinde bir metanet nüfuza haiz olmadığı gibi olamazda. Fakat bu fıkdan-ı nüfuzu Avrupa pek kolay ikmal edebilir! Babîâli ekseriya haksız birçok müdahâlât ile sarsmış olan Avrupa şarkda vukuu muhtemel olan kâffe-i terakkiyâtı hülâsa eden bu Kanun-u Esasî’nin tatbiki için bir nezâret-i fa’alâne icra etmek hususunda bunu pek güzel bir fırsat ittihaz edebilir.

Bu nezaret-i müştereke, keza Rusya’nın şarkındaki nüfuzunu tecrid etmeğe de medar olur ki, bu nüfuz şimdiye kadar sırf Rusya’nın menâfiine ve Avrupa menâfiinin zararına olarak icra edilmiştir.

Hülâsa, Türkiye’de ıslahat-ı cedide tatbik etmek ecnâs-ı muhtelifeyi yekdiglerine mezc etmek ve bu imtizâcdan da hangi cins ve mezhebe mensub olursa

olsun ahâlinin terakkiyât-ı tedriciyesi istihsal edilmek istenilirse, Türkiye meşrutiyetle idare olunmalıdır.

Felâketlerimize yegâne çare, dâhili ve harici düşmanlarımıza karşı nâfi bir surette mübareze için istimal eyleyeceğimiz yegâne vasıta budur.

Takib eylediğimiz tarik-i terakkiyi sed eden müşkilâtdan bazılarını anlatıp da bize âsâr-ı samimiyet ibraz etmeyenleri hakkımızda daha az şiddet ve daha ziyade bir adaletle hareket etmeleri lazım geleceğine ikna eder ve aynı zamanda da dostlarımıza, hakkımızdaki fikr-i muhlisatkâranelerini teyid ederek itimadlarının mahalline gayri masrûf olmadığını isbâta muvaffak olursam, şu satırları yazmaktaki maksadım tamamıyla hâsıl olmuş demektir.

Londra, Mayıs 1878, Midhat

## Appendix VII: The Extension of the Telegraph Lines<sup>2</sup>

Telgraf Yapılması Lazım gelen Mahaller:

Balçık, Pazarcık, Hezargrad, Cuma-i Atik, Lofça, Nigbolu, Rahova, Köstendil, Samakov, Dubniçe, İvraca, Gabrova, Tutrakan, İvraniye, Osmanpazarı.

Atûfetlü Efendim Hazretleri

Tuna Vilayeti dahilinde onbeş mevkiden ibaret olan bazı kasabat-ı cesime ve mühimmiye müceddeden bir telgraf hattı temdidi lazım gelmiş ve mükteza direklerle telgrafhanelerin tedarik ve inşasına tüccar ve ahali tarafından izhar taleb muvafakat olunmuş idüğünden yalnız Avrupa'dan celb olunacak makine ve edevat sairenin esmanı olan 62.000 Frankın hazine-i celileden tesviyesi istizan kılınmış olduğuna binaenaleyh nezerat-i celilesiyle dahi bi'l muhabere Meclis-i Vala'dan kaleme alınan mazbata leffen arz takdim kılındı mealinden müsteban olduğu vechile saye-i mamuriyetvane hazret-i şehinşahide vilayet-i mezkurenin mamuriyet ve ... tezayud eyledikçe ihtiyacat-ı ahaliyi temsil eyleyecek bu misüllü asarın vücuda getirilmesi hususunda hükümet-i seniyyenin muavenet ve müsaade göstermesi lazımeden olmasıyla beraber iş bu edevat masarifi temettüat-ı atıye ile dahi temin olunacağından ve bu yolda vuku bulacak sarfiyatın en ziyadesini tesviye tüccar ve ahalinin arz-ı taahhüd eyledikleri anlaşıldığından salifül zikr 62.000 Frankın hazine-i celileden izasıyla hutut-u mebhusenin temdidi keyfiyetinin Maliye Nezareti celilesiyle telgraf idaresine havalesi ve direklerin rikziyle merkezlerin tehiyyat-ı maddesi dahi vilayet-i mezkure valisi devletlü Paşa hazretlerine işarı tezekkür olunmuş olmağla ol babda her ne vechile emr-ü ferman hazret-i padişahi şeref sünuh u sudur buyurulur ise ana göre hareket olunacağı beyaniyle tezkire-i senaveri terkim kılındı efendim.

Maruz-ı çaker-i keminleridir ki

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<sup>2</sup> A record of the Supreme Council: I.MVL. 24647.

Reside-i dest-i tazim olan işbu tezkire-i samiye Asafaneleriyle mazbata-i merkume manzur-u ali hazret-i Padişahi buyurulmuş ve mezkur mikdar frankın tezekkür ve istizan olduğu vechile izasıyla hutu-u mebhusenin temdid-i keyfiyetinin nezaret-i müşarunileyhe ve telgraf idaresine havalesi direklerin rikziyle merkezlerin tehiyyat-ı maddesi dahi vali müşarunileyhe işarına müteallik buyurulan emr-i irade-i seniyye hazret-i mülükdara mantuk-ı münifinden olarak mazbata-i mezkure yine savb-ı sami-i sadaretpenahilerine iade kılınmış olmağla ol babda emr-ü ferman hazret-i veliyyül emrindir.