

MURDER IN SALONIKA, 1876: A TALE OF APOSTASY TURNED INTO
AN INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

A Master's Thesis

by

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ANKARA

June 2009

To My Parents...

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AN INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

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
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in

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June 2009

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ABSTRACT

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The intent of this thesis is to narrate the Salonika Incident of May 1876 and analyze this highly politicized micro case within the framework of the 19th century Ottoman history. In the scope of this work, the event itself and its aftermath will be covered in detail.

The Salonika Incident was a Muslim public outrage caused by the kidnapping of a Bulgarian girl by Christians based on the reason that she wanted to embrace Islam, and the following public displays resulted in the murder of French and German consuls by a Muslim mob at May 6, 1876. The war of pen and ink between the Sublime Porte and the Great Powers that held the first accountable for the double crime was the consequence of this incident.

Through a detailed and meticulous account of this neglected and falsely told episode of history, this thesis aims casting light on a virgin issue, therefore to

contribute to the literature on the Ottoman Balkan History and inter-communal relations.

Key words: Ottoman Empire, Salonika, 1876, the Balkans, Eastern Question, Tanzimat.

ÖZET

SELANİK’TE CİNAYET, 1876: ULUSLARARASI KRİZE DÖNÜŞEN BİR İHTİDA HİKAYESİ

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Bu tezin amacı Selanik Vakası’nı (Mayıs, 1876) betimlemek ve bu fazlasıyla siyasallaştırılan mikro olayı 19. yüzyıl Osmanlı tarihi çerçevesinde analiz etmektir. Bu çalışma olayın kendisini, sonrasında ortaya çıkan sosyal ve siyasi sonuçlarını ayrıntılı bir biçimde kapsayacaktır.

Selanik Vakası, bir Bulgar kızının ihtida etmek istemesi üzerine Hıristiyanlar tarafından kaçırılması sonucu oluşan Müslüman halk öfkesinin bir tezahürüdür ve bunu takib eden toplu gösteriler bir Müslüman gürhununun 6 Mayıs 1876 tarihinde, Fransız ve Alman konsoloslarını öldürmesi ile sonuçlanmıştır. Bu çifte suçun sorumlusu olarak gördükleri Bab-ı Ali ile Büyük Güçler arasındaki mürekkep savaşı bu vakanın sonuçlarındandır.

Tarihin bu ihmal edilmiş veya yanlış anlatılmış perdesinin detaylı ve titiz bir izahı aracılığıyla bu tez, bakir kalmış bir alana ışık tutmayı ve bu sayede Osmanlı Balkan tarihi yazımına ve cemaatler arası ilişkiler tartışmalarına katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Selanik, 1876, Balkanlar, Doğu Sorunu, Tanzimat.

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Much of the research for this thesis was accomplished during studies in Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in İstanbul and the National Archives in London. The skillful aid of amicable staff in both archives turned this process into a pleasant one.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II: PRELUDE TO THE SALONIKA INCIDENT	6
2.1 Tanzimat in the Balkans, 1839-1856.....	6
2.2 Origins of Mass Violence in the Balkans	9
2.3 Organized Violence; Russian Penetration and War in the Balkans.....	13
2.4 The Post Crimean War System, 1856-1871	16
2.5 The Ottoman Finances Crumbles as Its Image Hits Bottom	20
2.6 1876, the Year of Three Sultans	25
2.7 From Apostasy to the High Politics.....	26
CHAPTER III: THE MURDER OF FRENCH AND GERMAN CONSULS AT SALONIKA, 5TH OF MAY 1876	29
3.1. Stephana Kidnapped from Her Village, 3 rd of May 1876.....	29
3.2. Stephana Arrives in Salonika, at 5 th of May, and Kidnapped Again.....	33
3.3. A Crisis Looming in Salonika	35
3.4. French and German Consuls Murdered by a Muslim Mob	39

CHAPTER IV: THE AFTERMATH OF THE SALONIKA INCIDENT	48
4.1. Ambassadorial Meeting at Istanbul and the Action of the Porte	48
4.2. Panic among the Christians of the Ottoman Empire	52
4.3. Antagonist or Protagonist; Consular Agent Lazzaro	56
4.4. Revolt in Istanbul.....	59
CHAPTER V: SALONIKA REVISITED	65
5.1. The Trials and Punishments.....	65
5.2. The Funerals of the French and German Consuls	73
5.3. Trials and Re-Trials of the Ottoman Officers.....	76
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION.....	84
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	90
APPENDICES.....	97

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“We know that it will furnish the matter for the most unjust accusations of our detractors, and that our enemies will not hesitate to take advantage of the opportunity to magnify the facts beyond measure, and to attach to the Salonika incident, of which we are far, on the other hand, from undervaluing the importance, an exceptionally grave character, and one which should hardly be attributed to it; that they will give it, in fact, the appearance of a movement prepared and combined deliberately as a manifestation of the hatred between Mussulmans and Christians, and of the intolerance of the former towards the other.”

Ottoman Foreign Minister Rashid Pasha to Ottoman Ambassador at London
Musurus Pasha May 13, 1876.¹

It began merely out of pure curiosity. While reading on the Balkan crises of 1875-1876, I stumbled upon the Salonika Incident.² After a scan in different books on the Eastern Question, I came upon this same event in various sources. The Salonika Incident was a Muslim public outrage caused by the kidnapping of a Bulgarian girl by Christians based on the reason that she wanted to embrace Islam, and the following public displays resulted in the murder of French and

¹ Great Britain, Parliament, Commons. *Parliamentary Papers, 1876: Turkey No. 4 (1876). Correspondence Respecting The Murder of the French and German Consuls at Salonica*, p.5 no. 12.

² In the Ottoman sources and the Turkish history books the event was labeled as “Selanik Vak’ası” or “Selanik Hadisesi,” while the Western literature adopted the name “the Murder of French and German Consuls at Salonika” to refer the same event.

German consuls by a Muslim mob at May 6, 1876. The war of pen and ink between the Sublime Porte and the Great Powers that held the former accountable for the double crime was the consequence of this incident. The available presentations of the event were mostly composed of one paragraph; furthermore, they were contradictory, vague and superficially analyzed. Two points of view existed on the incident, alas the entire literature was no more than an exact repetition of these two; in the works written by Turkish scholars, the event was pictured as an injustice done by the American Consul by orchestrating the kidnapping of a Christian girl whose sole wish was to become a Muslim and the consequent reaction of the Muslim mob to save her.³ On the other hand, in the Western literature, this event was represented as a manifestation of Muslim religious fanaticism and the Ottoman inability to protect the European representatives at Salonika. Thus, an identification of the event called for a reference to the archival sources, gradually, my quest to satisfy personal curiosity turned into this thesis.

Excavating what had happened seemed like a fool's errand at first. Monographic work on the Salonika Incident was actually non-existent. Yet, the research at the Ottoman Archives was yielding results. The Ottoman bureaucracy was more interested in the ramifications of the incident, the punishment of the

³ One of the most cited historians of the Ottoman History, Enver Ziya Karal depicts the Salonika Incident; "A Bulgarian girl arrived in Salonika to become a Muslim. She was kidnapped from the station by a man of Russian origin; Perikli Lazari [*sic*] who was the American Consul, and with his one hundred and fifty strong men. This created a great anxiety, as this event happened right before the eyes of a Muslim mob. A crowd gathered in front of the Government [House] for her delivery and demanded action from the *vali* (governor). [...] Next day the crowd gathered at Selimpaşa Mosque and insisted on the delivery of the girl. Despite the warnings, French and German consuls went to the mosque. Upon this, the crowd demanded the girl from them, [...] as a result, the enraged mob murdered the two consuls." Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, vol.VII*. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2003) p.99. The same narrative was exactly repeated even in the very recent literature, such as Sacit Kutlu's book *Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti* which was printed in 2007 was not immune to the replication of Karal. It even added more incorrect information; for instance, the American Consul was of Serbian origin in his narration. Sacit Kutlu, *Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, June 2007), p.98.

guilty and the subsequent diplomatic crisis that followed rather than the origins of the event itself. I found extensive and meticulous documents in the National Archives of the United Kingdom; they were complementary of what I had found so far in the Ottoman Archives, moreover, they included inquiries and different accounts of the mentioned parties of the event, plus precious eye witness accounts. Nevertheless, to construct a more intimate acquaintance, data on the accused American Consul was indispensable. Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909) surrendered these vital data. In this microfilm collection, along with the accounts of the American Consul of Salonika, various other versions of the event were present. Finally, what was left was to support my thesis with the accounts of the contemporary press, for that I have selected the Western press (*the Times and New York Times*) along with the Christian press of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, this thesis has been the outcome of a research conducted in the Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul, the National Archives in London and the National Archives Microfilm Publications of the United States.

Gathered documents from the archives required a critical reading. Wishful thinking and reductionist attempts to resolve the incident as soon as possible were casting their shadows on the Ottoman documents. While picking information from the British documents, words of İlber Ortaylı on the possible danger by trusting “the megalomaniac accounts of the European diplomats who claimed that they were those who shaped the Ottoman policies”⁴ never escaped consideration. Dispatches of the American ministers and consuls were significant to evaluate the event from an outsider’s perspective during these years, but they also represented

⁴ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: Alkım Yayınevi, 2006), p.25.

the accounts of those who were unfamiliar with the people and the dynamics of the Ottoman Balkans, thus entailed a more critical and mindful consideration.

Secondary sources demanded a more cautious approach. Mainstream Western literature on the 19th century Balkans is and has been dominated by oblique romantic nationalist history writing. There is no lack of terms like Muslim savagery, Turkish barbarism, oppressive Ottoman rule and downtrodden Christians of the Balkans. Subjectivity made any kind of violence perceived as norm when the Muslims were responsible, whereas violence relating to Christians was considered as exceptions.⁵ Majority of the primary sources used in Western literature when dealing with the Balkan crises of the 19th century, are British Foreign Office Reports, and -although fewer in number- correspondence among other European powers (i.e. Austria, France and seldom Russia). In most occasions, the entire crises of the Balkans were narrated without any reference from the Ottoman Archives, as if the Sublime Porte was not a side in these crises where subject matter was their lands.⁶ Conformity created by this mainstream writing, presents a mind barrier in which next generation of historians do not approach to the given data from a critical perspective, and do not feel an urge to re-interpret the events because they feel, such a reanalysis would be re-inventing the wheel. For the Turkish history writing, despite some exceptions, selective behavior of the authors when it comes to the archival materials and the repetition of state's own perspective cripples the texts' validity.

The purpose of this thesis is putting this neglected micro case into a larger conceptual framework in order to contribute to the debates on inter-communal relations in the Balkans and Ottoman diplomatic history. The event

⁵ Ruth Miller, "The Legal History of the Ottoman Empire," *History Compass*, Vol.6, No.1 (2008), pp.286-296, p.291.

⁶ See, David Harris, Vucinich, Jelavich.

itself created a great anxiety in the Ottoman Empire and abroad. It was widely referred by the politicians and press of the time, and it epitomized the appalling relations between the Sublime Porte and the European powers. Through an understanding of this event in the chain of crises of 1870s, one can also grasp the dynamics of the era which led to the unaided last stand of the Ottoman Empire against Russia in the War of 1877-1878. In addition to analyzing its relevance for the high politics, this thesis will also aim to examine the social and cultural dynamics that surrounded the Salonika Incident, which were invisible to the contemporary Europe. I assert that the timing of the political atmosphere combined with these inner dynamics of the Ottoman Balkans (namely; the question on apostasy and inter-communal relations) rendered the event from a common tension to an international crisis. Besides casting light on an overlooked and fallaciously told episode of history, I argue that by a detailed account of the Salonika Incident itself and the Sublime Porte's face-saving policy my above assertion can find solid basis.

The next chapter of the thesis follows a chronological pattern; foci are the general perspectives of Tanzimat reforms, reaction in the Balkans, and the background of the hard-pressed Ottoman Empire during the Balkan crises of 1875-1876. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a setting for the Salonika Incident, and pave the way for an importance issue; apostasy in the 19th century Ottoman Empire. The next three chapters are restricted to the event itself and they do not break the chain of chronology. The third chapter is reserved to unfold the event itself. The fourth chapter deals with the echoes of the murders at Istanbul and in the West. Finally, the fifth one re-visits the crime scene, wrapping the event as the final battles of diplomacy were resolved and the justice carried out.

CHAPTER II

PRELUDE TO THE SALONIKA INCIDENT

2.1 Tanzimat in the Balkans, 1839-1856

Locating a specific date in the long history of the Ottoman Empire and naming it the inauguration of its reform attempts is indeed an intricate task. Reordering movement, dubbed as Tanzimat, almost consensually accepted as the name of the period when the Ottoman Empire was soaked in the reform attempts in order to restore its former glory. The birthday of Tanzimat was 3 November, 1839; with the ideas proclaimed in *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* (the Hatti Sherif of Gülhane). How much original was the text of *Gülhane* is still being discussed. Evidently, it bore the characteristics of an *Adaletnâme*; a sort of document proclaimed upon the enthronement of a new sultan, usually promising remedy to the current problems and justice to entire subjects of the Empire, for this instance sultan was the young Abdülmecid (reigned 1839-1861). On the other hand, it was a revolution; as Halil İnalcik pointed out, its author Mustafa Reşid Pasha, gave the

subjects of the Empire a central role like in the modern Western states, by stating “people is not for the state but state is for the people.”⁷ The edict, although possessed references to the Islamic Law, was a charter of European kind, which heralded “Europeanization of the Ottoman superstructure.”⁸

Many tried to adopt Tanzimat as their own creation; influential foreign diplomats in İstanbul claimed that their directives coerced the Ottomans to inaugurate the Edict, others identified it as a product of Ottoman reform movement which began with Mahmud II.⁹ In any case, the certain victor, as a result of *Gülhane*, was unmistakably the Ottoman bureaucracy. The edict consolidated Mahmud II’s reassertion on the restriction (or abolition) of two most dreaded sources of insecurity for the bureaucrats of the high stratum in 1838; expropriation and arbitrary capital punishment.¹⁰ It can be asserted that when Mustafa Reşid was pronouncing the notions on the indispensability of protection of property and life of the Ottoman subjects, he had himself in mind before the subjects of the Empire. He summarized the reform as an attempt to ascertain a

⁷ For a detailed information on the analysis of Tanzimat see; Yavuz Abadan, “Tanzimat Fermanı’nın Tahlili,” in *Tanzimat I* (İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940), pp.31-58. Also see; Ogunsu, A.H., “Tanzimat ve Amillerine Umumî Bir Bakış,” *Tanzimat I*, İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940), pp.7-8; Halil İncalcık, “Adâletnâmeler,” *Türk Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, Vol.2, No.3-4 (1965); *Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Hümayunu* – Halil İncalcık, p.619. For a detailed information for the pre-Tanzimat reform attempts see, Shaw Stanford, and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Reform, Revolution and Republic, 1808-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) ; Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New : the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971)

⁸ I. Ye. Petrosyan, XIX. Asır Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Reform Hareketleri: Gelenekler ve Yenilikler, in “*Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara: 31 Ekim – 3 Kasım 1989*,” (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.21-25

⁹ The destruction of the Janissary Corps and the reestablishment of central authority in the Balkans, by Mahmud II (1808-39) are considered the antecedents of Tanzimat. Enver Ziya Karal, “Tanzimatın Evvel Garplılaşma Hareketleri,” in *Tanzimat I* (İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940), pp.13-30.

¹⁰ “Ultimately the most important of the reforms of 1838 was Mahmud’s formal reassertion of the tradition of sultanic legislation (*kanun*) with the promulgation of special penal codes (*ceza kanunnamesi*) both for officials (*memurîn*) and for judges (*kadıs*) of the religious establishment. The code for officials, of “undeserved expropriation” (*müsadere-i gayr-i icabiye*) and nonjudicial, administrative punishment (*siyaset-i örfiye*).” Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire, the Sublime Porte, 1789 – 1922*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.145-146.

système immuablement établi, in which the Sultan's authority was checked by the bureaucracy. Thus begun a new period which would last until 1871; an era of stability and under the de-facto rule of a strong cadre of bureaucrats headed by three men; Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Mehmed Emin Âlî Pasha, and Keçecizade Mehmed Fu'ad Pasha, shaped the policies of the Empire alongside with the Sultan.¹¹

Among promises of the Edict on the abolition of tax-farming, equality of all subjects regardless of religion, reform on the military service, - considering the others were partially failed- what shook the foundation of the very fabric of the Ottoman society was the equality before the state and the law for the Muslims with non-Muslims. It was an innovation (*bid'at*) for the Muslims, which stripped them of their superior position vis-à-vis to other religions in the Empire.¹² Because their power was compromised, Muslim clergy, local land holders (i.e. *ağas*) and even governors agitated the Muslim population against the proposed reforms. The reforms received support from the lower classes; in some cases, the middle class found themselves allied with the Porte against local notables.¹³ On the other hand, the Christians in the Balkans, who were now anxious and restless, had great expectations. Despite the presence of those who defined these new equality laws as sand thrown in the eyes of the Western states to blind them of the Ottoman Empire's internal problems, one of the main objectives of Tanzimat movement was to bind these Christian subjects to the Empire. Christians had their

¹¹ Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008) p.213. Also see; Carter V., *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: a Social History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

¹² Halil İnalcık "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Hümayunu; Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," *Belleten*, Vol.28, No.112 (October, 1964) p.619. Roderic H.Davison, "The Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century," in *Roderic H. Davison Essays in the Ottoman Turkish History*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p.121.

¹³ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in Late Ottoman State*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. p.98.

own doubts about Tanzimat as well; they argued that new obligations counterbalanced the removed obligations. Also, their spiritual leaders were against Tanzimat, because of its doctrines which reduced their power over their followers.¹⁴

2.2 Origins of Mass Violence in the Balkans

Although they gained evident intensification after 1840s, neither the discontent nor the interests of the foreign powers were new phenomenon in the Ottoman Balkans.¹⁵ Since the havoc caused by Napoleon I, there existed some restlessness among these people who constituted the westernmost part of the Empire.¹⁶ On the other hand, foreign schemes dated back to 15th century but it

¹⁴ Even the slight references to the Islam in the text of the *Hatt*, were not enough to save it from the wrath of the ulema. The *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* was received with some jubilation, especially by the western Christian powers, although it was seen by the Russian ambassador at the Porte as a successful “theatrical stroke.” Salâhi R. Sonyel, “Tanzimat and Its Effect on the Non-Muslim Subjects of the Ottoman Empire,” in *Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara: 31 Ekim – 3 Kasım 1989* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.353-389, p.367. For a detailed information on the reaction to Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire also see; Halil İncalcık, “Tanzimat’ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri,” in *Tanzimat, Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, Halil İncalcık – Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (ed.) (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, September 2006) p.127; Salâhi R. Sonyel, “Tanzimat and Its Effect on the Non-Muslim Subjects of the Ottoman Empire,” in *Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara: 31 Ekim – 3 Kasım 1989* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994) pp.353-389, p.368. For a detailed information on inter-religious relations in the Ottoman Empire see; İlber Ortaylı, “Tanzimat Döneminde Tanassur ve Din Değiştirme Olayları,” in *Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara: 31 Ekim – 3 Kasım 1989*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.481-489, p.481.

¹⁵ Stavrianos claims that; “Balkan nationalism was stimulated not only by Ottoman decline but also by certain economic developments that affected the entire peninsula. Outstanding among these developments was the breakdown of the timar landholding system established at the time of the conquest and its replacement with the infinitely more onerous chiflik system.” L.S. Stavrianos, “Antecedents to the Balkan Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Dec., 1957), pp. 335-348, p.340.

¹⁶ Despite the common knowledge of that the Greeks were not the first to initiate a nationalist rebellion against the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, the Serbs were before them. Stanford J. Shaw, “The Ottoman Empire and the Serbian Uprising, 1804-1807,” in *Studies in Ottoman and Turkish History, Life With the Ottomans* (İstanbul: Isis Press), pp.71-94.

only became possible after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), that is; when the Ottoman Empire was put on the defensive by the Christian powers.¹⁷ In order to apply the clauses of Tanzimat, priority was given to the provinces of the Ottoman Empire where its rule was absolute; it was after these new applications bore fruits, they were implemented to other (and outer) provinces.¹⁸ Simultaneously, in the eastern and western provinces of the Empire, revolts broke out, but the characteristics of the revolts in those provinces were dissimilar. In the Eastern Anatolia (Van, Hakkari, Erzurum) local Muslim landlords who were de-facto rulers of the region in the name of sultans, rose against the applications of the new taxes, in favor of the old ways.¹⁹ Reactions against Tanzimat in the Balkan Peninsula came not so long after its inauguration. In the Western Balkans, Christian and Muslim landlords (i.e. Christian *çorbacı*s, Muslim *ağas*) rebelled under the same motivations as it was in the Eastern Anatolia, but these insurrections swiftly turned into nationalist-political movements, in which external powers to the highest degree got themselves interested in. Tanzimat coincided with the increasing interests of the Great Powers in the Ottoman Balkans hence the Peninsula became the center of their attention and power politics.²⁰ These powers considered in their rights to intervene into the internal affairs of the Sublime Porte, perhaps due to the impression of a right to do so given to them by Tanzimat itself.

Risings in the Ottoman Balkans, right after Tanzimat, shared some common points regarding their underlying motives; they were a result of

¹⁷ Mark Mazower, *The Balkans*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000) p.79.

¹⁸ Musa Çadırcı, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanışında Karşılaşılan Güçlükler," in Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (ed.), *150. Yılında Tanzimat* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), pp. 97-104.

¹⁹ Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Sürecinde Ülke Yönetimi*, Tülay Ercoşkun (ed.), (Ankara, İmge Yayınevi, 2007), p.193.

²⁰ There was no single monolithic definition of the interests of the Great Powers, often Habsburg's interests conflicted with Russia, or Britain had totally different policy to follow of their own.

deprivation of strong control of the Sublime Porte, frustration of the population due to over-taxation, and oppression of the Muslim and Christian overlords who considered the peasants on their lands nothing more than slaves bought.²¹ Moreover, extensive banditry, Russian penetration in the area since the War of 1828-1829, and the encouraging examples set by independent Greece and Serbia promoted the tension in the Peninsula.²² Nevertheless, the whole Ottoman legal system in the area did not seem tyrannical until the arrival of new ideas and standards from Europe.²³ Tanzimat was supposed to be a medicine to Nationalism which begun to plague the Balkans.²⁴ Yet, the chronic problems endured, and the abusive interpretations of Tanzimat provided more reasons for the insurrections.

From many instances, revolts of Niš (1841) and Vidin (1850) are two typical examples of rising in the Balkans that stemmed from the implementations of Tanzimat reforms.²⁵ Despite the points of Tanzimat dictating the abolition of tax-farming and multiple taxes, the local Christian peasantry was forced to pay the old taxes to the local, and the new poll-tax to central authority. Moreover, the Muslims who were exempted from several taxes in time of previous sultans, refused to pay the new ones. In both cases, Muslim landlords wanted to extract more from the Christian peasantry who were under them, in response faced with resistance from the peasants who stated that “people are not revolting against the

²¹ Halil İnalçık, “Tanzimat’ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri,” in *Tanzimat, Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, Halil İnalçık – Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (ed.) (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, September 2006), p.133.

²² Russian penetration was not a new phenomenon during the War of 1828-29. Since the reign of Peter the Great and during the 18th century, Russian advance was felt by the Porte and the inhabitants of the Balkans.

²³ Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, Vol.1-2 (1997-1998), pp.30-75.

²⁴ Mustafa Reşid Pasha believed that, rights and equality before the law would eventually halt the constant demands of the Christian subjects and prevent them to seek external aid from other Christian powers. Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, pp.3-4. Mark Pinson, “Ottoman Bulgaria in the First Tanzimat Period: The Revolts in Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850),” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May, 1975), pp. 103-146, p.105.

²⁵ See Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler: Niş İsyanı Üzerine Ayrıntılı Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Eren, 2002)

legitimate government of the Sultan rather they want that the benevolent terms of the Hatti Sherif of Gulhane be faithfully and exactly carried out.”²⁶ Ottoman authorities fearing a spillover of the insurrections in the whole of the Balkans were inclined to stern measures. Irregular auxiliaries; *Başbozüks*²⁷, whom were mostly composed of Albanians and Circassians, being used to suppress the rebellions, but like double bladed sword, they pillaged and looted towns while eradicating the sources of the unrests.²⁸ The atrocities committed were turning the Western public opinion against the Ottomans while paving the way for self-declared protector of Ottoman Christians; Russia, a right to intervene. These two scenarios were neither the first nor the last in the 19th century Balkan history; repetition of this pattern (rebellion – reaction – violence – foreign intervention) became similar to the torture of Sisyphus, in which the Porte was perpetually locked. As a result, the Peninsula became to be known as a cradle of ethnic violence.

²⁶ Mark Pinson, “Ottoman Bulgaria in the First Tanzimat Period: The Revolts in Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850),” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May, 1975), pp. 103-146, p.109.

²⁷ Although there was no single definition of *başbozuk*, James J. Reid compiled these definitions from the Ottoman Officers themselves; “Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha contrasted the bashi-bozuk with the regular army soldier. To him, the bashi bozuk was the exact opposite of the nizâm soldier. That is, he was untrained, undisciplined, and uncontrollable civilian. [...] Ahmed Mukhtâr Pasha, commander of the Ottoman army of Anatolia in 1877, gave a detailed description of the troops who served under his command. [...] [He has] distinguished between troop levies made directly by the Ottoman government and those made by a military broker not in government service. [...] Mahmûd Celaleddin Pasha wrote about Ottoman Military operations during the revolt in Herzegovina during 1875-1876. [...] The operation followed the usual pattern in which permanently established bands of irregulars maneuvered in a campaign as scouts, skirmishers, advance guards, and the cavalry screen of the regular army troops.” James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), pp.119-121.

²⁸ Halil İnalçık, “Tanzimat’ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri,” in *Tanzimat, Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, Halil İnalçık – Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (ed.) (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, September 2006)p.144.

2.3 Organized Violence; Russian Penetration and War in the Balkans

The Russian interests in the Ottoman lands were not excluded to the Balkans; Russian expansionism also targeted the Caucasus, Iran and even India for its frontier. The stereotyped Russian foreign policy of its desire to capture warm water ports of the Ottoman Empire was more or less factual.²⁹ From the establishment of their diplomatic relations with intervals “tsars and sultans fought against each other in a seemingly endless series of wars between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, until both disappeared.”³⁰ The War of 1828-1829³¹ manifested the power of Russia when its army managed to seize the old capital of the Ottomans, Edirne. With this war, Russia also discovered (or re-discovered) its kinsmen living in the Balkans.³² Even though, these Slavonic peoples were tools

²⁹ Count B.C. Münnich, a friend of Peter the Great claimed in 1762, “from the moment of the first attack on Azov until the hour of his death, [Peter’s] grand design... had always been to conquer Constantinople, to chase the infidel Turks and Tatars out of Europe, and thus to reestablish the Greek Monarchy.” Under Catherine the Great the ambition gained a name “The Greek Project,” in favoring its fulfillment Catherine named her grandson Constantine and tutored him in Greek language, dreaming one day he will be the first Tsar of Constantinople. Hugh Ragsdale “Evaluation the Traditions of Russian Aggression: Catherine II and the Greek Project, *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.66:1 (January, 1988), pp.91-117, p.93.

³⁰ Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.5.

³¹ It was 7th May 1828 when the Russian Army crossed Pruth River and marched further into the Ottoman lands. In the eyes of Europe, the fall of the Ottoman Empire was imminent. On the other hand, Nicholas I was confident about a swift victory, by pressing on the Capital and forcing Sultan down to his knees. Politically, the conflict sparked following the Naval Battle of Navarino (20 October 1827), the Sublime Porte found the decision of European powers on the Greek Revolt unacceptable and furthermore accused St. Petersburg siding with the Greek Rebels in consequence interfering to the internal affairs of the Porte. The Tsar wanted to force Sultan Mahmud II for a favorable agreement with Russia; allowance of passages from the straits for Russian Navy. Nevertheless, Greek Card was no more than a political one, as the Tsar had no sympathy for the Greeks and even considered them a despicable nation. Nonetheless, he shared the idea of the European states that an independent Greek state was required in the vicinity. The war was disastrous for the Ottoman Empire, but upon realizing the danger to the Straits posed by Russia, Britain had to reconsider its foreign policy. See, Baron von Moltke, *The Russian in Bulgaria and Rumelia in 1828 and 1829* (London: John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1854). Naci Çakın, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi Osmanlı – Rus Harbi (1828 – 1829)* (Ankara: Genel Kurmay Basımevi, 1978)

³² Pan Slavism was not a Russian monopolized ideology, as a matter of fact it was first put forward by Czechs and Slovaks at the beginning of the 19th century. Sándor Kostya, *Pan-Slavism*, Anne Fay Atzel (ed.), (Danubian Press Inc., 1981). For a general information on Pan Slavism and its

for the Russian politics in the conquest of the Balkan Peninsula, it would also be false to dismiss entirely the Russian sincerity.³³ Without any doubt, the Russian public opinion was in favor of freeing their “Slav brothers”; especially after 1856, it turned into a public movement with the embracement of Panslavism ideology.³⁴ But the inconsistency in the Russian rhetoric was evident. While Tsar Nicholas I (reigned 1825-55) was playing the role of “Gendarme of Europe” by suppressing nationalistic uprisings (i.e. of Hungary at 1849) thus gaining the sobriquet “Nick the Stick”, in the meantime he advocated and promoted the separatist movements in the Balkans.³⁵

Around 1840's, Russian Empire considered itself closer than ever to its ages long ambition; relations with Britain was warm with their rapprochement, the decay of the Ottoman power was evident, and the Tsar's pride and joy; his army, was at top form. Thus, Tsar Nicholas did not hesitate to grasp the opportunity to wage war against the Porte when the crisis of the Holy Places occurred.³⁶ In the Crimean War, Tsar's miscalculated action cost his empire dearly; Britain entered the war on the side of the Porte not to relinquish the control of the Straits to Russia; France to obtain glory and prestige sided with the British who were joined by Piedmont. Russia was defeated in a war mostly confined to Crimean Peninsula,

effects on the Ottoman Empire see; Akdes Nimet Kurat, “Panslavizm,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol.XI, No.2-4, (Ankara, 1953), p.242.

³³ For a general account of Russia's Balkan policies see; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

³⁴ Hans Kohn, “The Impact of Pan-Slavism on Central Europe,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Jul., 1961), pp. 323-333. p.323.

³⁵ Oscar J. Hammen, “Free Europe versus Russia 1830-1854,” *American Slavic and Eastern European Review*, Vol. 11 No.1 (Feb., 1952), p.27-41.

³⁶ The origins of the Crimean War shaded as they are, still being debated. What is evident is the crisis on the Holy Places, sacred sites of Christendom in Ottoman-ruled Palestine, between Russia, who backed Orthodox Greek Church, and France who supported Catholic priests. “Although none of the powers sought war, the tsar's clumsy diplomacy, the intransigence of the sultan and the machinations of Stratford Canning, Britain's Russophobic minister to Constantinople, all helped transform a ‘quarrel of monks’ into the first major clash among the powers since Waterloo.” David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *the Cambridge History of Russia, v. II Imperial Russia, 1689–1917*, Dominic Lieven (ed.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.560.

and afterwards with the Treaty of Paris had to demilitarize the Black Sea. The Crimean System established as result of this peace, which gave the Porte a breather and at the same time compelled Russia to steer for more subtle means; diplomacy and agitation, in order to achieve their goals in the Balkans.

The Crimean War had an enormous significance for the history of the Ottoman Balkans. *Islahat Fermanı* (The Reform Edict of 1856) was promulgated just before the Paris Treaty, to receive the good graces of the European powers in the conference. If *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* of 1839 was for the Muslims, this new one was clearly for the Christians.³⁷ It came into being from Christian hands for the Christians; since there was no doubt that the British Ambassador “Little Sultan” Stratford Canning was behind it.³⁸ It reaffirmed the vague points of *Gülhane* and clearly emphasized the equality of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the Empire. It was also an attempt to bar the way to European powers to interfere into the internal affairs of the Porte by using the inequality of the Christians as an excuse. With the aid of the *Hatt-ı Humayun* of 1856, during the peace conference, the Porte even secured a formal promise from the parties not to mingle in Ottoman’s own affairs.³⁹ Perhaps most importantly the Porte -as a consequence of Âli Pasha’s clever maneuvers- with securing the endorsements of the European powers, was welcomed to the European concert, thus making it an integral and indivisible part of Europe.⁴⁰

³⁷ Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), p.217.

³⁸ Şükrü Hanioglu quotes the following about Canning; “Fu’ad Pasha is said to have remarked on the appointment of Tanzimat architect Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s son, Ali Galib Pasha, as foreign minister on Canning’s recommendation in 1856: “We too have the Holy Trinity. Reşid Pasha is the Father, Ali Galib Pasha is the Son, and Lord Stratford [Canning] is the Holy Ghost.” Şükrü Hanioglu, *Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), p.84.

³⁹ Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Mesâil-i Mühimme-i Siyâsiyye*, v.1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1960) p.392.

⁴⁰ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), p.85.

2.4 The Post Crimean War System, 1856-1871

An interval of twenty year after the Crimean War (1856-1876) was free from armed conflict with other states for the Porte's account. The awaited respite did not come to the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, with the *Hatt-ı Humayun* of 1856 and its subsequent regulations, Christians of the Porte became more equal with the Muslims, and with the European states championing their rights, they became sort of a privileged population in the Empire. Many crypto-Christians were declaring their true faith, while others through acquiring their passports, were seeking protection of Great Powers that they never set foot in their lives.⁴¹ For instance, after the 1860s in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, there were over a hundred Ottoman Greek families carrying United States' passports.⁴² Conservative Muslims resented the reforms and the elevation of Christians' status in the Empire. Ahmed Cevdet Pasha⁴³ quoted the Muslim's expression of their discontent after 1856 with these words; "We have lost our holy national (*milliyet*) rights of which we have earned through the bloods of our forefathers. Henceforth, people of Islam are stripped of their holy right. Today, is a day of mourn and tears for the Muslims' account."⁴⁴ Namık Kemal, acted as a messenger of the Muslim bitterness, "by pointing out that the Christian population of the empire, having been favored by special protection of the Great Powers, had wrested more

⁴¹ Roderic H. Davison, "The Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century," *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History 1774-1923* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p122.

⁴² Microcopy no.46 Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, 1818-1909, Roll 30 v.29.

⁴³ Perspectives of Ahmed Cevdet indeed are mirrors for the Porte's and the masses own ideology. Christoph Neumann claims that he was a devotee of Mustafa Reşid's legacy to the death. Neumann adds that Ahmed Cevdet called by many names; for some he was reformer, for some an Islamist or a follower of Ib Haldun's philosophy. Christoph Neumann, "Tanzimat Bağlamında Ahmet Cevdet Paşa'nın Siyasi Düşünceleri," in *Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası, Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001). pp.83-5.

⁴⁴ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 1-12* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), p.68.

privilege [...] in a country which already had granted them equal status.”⁴⁵ Mostly, the protests of the Muslims, which were manifested as acts of violence, echoed in the Western press. Murder of French and British consuls by the Muslims mobs in Jeddah in 1858 was one of them. It was solved via British gunboat diplomacy; an act of violation of the Porte’s authority on its soil, by the same Britain who was a signatory side in the Paris Treaty and welcomed the Porte as its equal. In 1860, at Mount Lebanon, Muslim Druzes and Christian Maronites fell into conflict, resulted in a terrible loss of life for the latter’s account.⁴⁶ France acting as the protector of Catholic Maronites intervened by sending troops. In both events, the violence was attributed to the entire Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire, labeling them with the stereotypes of fanaticism and barbarism. These events happened right at the time when French public opinion was questioning the justification of the Crimean War in which France casualties surmounted its other allies, and while British ended a bloody struggle against rebelling Muslims and Hindus of India. While Britain was shocked by every exceptional case of violence in which Christians were hurt on the Ottoman soil, in the mean time, it readily justified the level of violence during the Indian Revolts of 1857, even Charles Dickens called for a genocide for rebelling Orientals in India.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.37.

⁴⁶ Ussama Makdisi, “Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Nov., 2002), pp. 601-617, pp.601-602.

⁴⁷ It was the comment of Peter Ackroyd, Dickens biographer, who made the following comment; “It is not often that a great novelist recommends genocide” due to “[t]he events of 1857–59 on the Indian subcontinent surprised and shook Britons. In the face of the seemingly maniacal uprising, Britons, almost to a person, reacted explosively. In an October 1857 letter, Dickens wrote: “I wish I were Commander in Chief in India. . . . I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested . . . to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth.” Priti Joshi, “Mutiny Echoes: India, Britons, and Charles Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities"” *Nineteenth Century Literature*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Jun., 2007), pp. 48-87.

The Balkan Peninsula was also still boiling. The Tanzimat reforms were unable to penetrate into some parts of the Balkans.⁴⁸ Banditry and mayhem caused by armed bands of the Christian population, was countered by the notorious *başıbozüks*' terror. Understanding the history of banditry and violence in the Balkans is essential to discern the image of the Porte in the West. The romantic figures of *haiduk*, *klephte*, and *armatoles*, were brigands for the Porte but they were also heroes for the Balkan nationalistic/national pantheon.⁴⁹ They were closely related to bards and heroes for national romanticism, although there existed a thin line between a cutthroat and a freedom fighter through their exploits; they had begun to symbolize resistance against the available authority; the Ottoman rule.⁵⁰ They were mostly connected with the peasant masses who had their own type of antagonism shaped along ethnic-religious lines, while the upper strata of them (i.e. community leaders, elites educated abroad in Austria and Russia) were considering the Ottoman rule as alien and exploiting, hence gradually they supported the movements financially and ideologically.⁵¹ Thus, violence became a torch in the hands of these brigands and the Porte, which set the whole Balkans in flames. During the period, in the Ottoman Christian press there was an abundance of articles related to the violence directed against Christians by Muslims.⁵² The movements of the Balkan Christians were powerless on their own to carve their freedom from the hands of the Ottoman Empire. "They lacked the organization, leadership, ability or will" as Mazower puts it, to stand up

⁴⁸ Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1992)

⁴⁹ Mark Mazower, *The Balkans*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000), p.106.

⁵⁰ John MacDonald, *Turkey and the Eastern Question*, (London: T.C. & E. C. Jack, 1912), pp.39-42.

⁵¹ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3. (Jul., 1972), pp. 243-281, p.249.

⁵² Marina Sakali, "The Image of the Turks / Muslims in the Ottoman Greek Press 1830-1860," *Balkan Studies*, V.38 (1997), p.128.

alone against the weakening Ottoman power.⁵³ Balkan peoples thus tried to ally themselves with a European great power of their liking; Austria-Hungary and Russia were ready and able. Except Serbia, they relinquished their hard-earned sovereignty to European princes for their support.⁵⁴

In the meantime, the Sublime Porte, with all its sincerity tried to eradicate the roots of the disturbances in the Balkans also through peaceful means. While the Cretan Crisis was at peak Âlî Pasha, in his memorandum expressed the necessity to hasten the reforms of equality in non-Muslims' favor, with the help of what he hoped that would no longer be revolutionaries. While Fu'ad Pasha firmly believed that, the liberties bestowed on non-Muslims would dull their separatist insinuations.⁵⁵ Their attempts materialized in the assertion of a new supra-national identity of *Osmanlılık* (Ottomanism). Those who were born on the Ottoman soil, under the umbrella of *Osmanlılık*, were equal regardless of the identity or religion. This supra-national identity failed to replace the romantic desires of one's assuming its own separate national title.⁵⁶ What the Ottoman reformers failed to grasp was that in general the Ottoman Christians were not interested in being an Ottoman *-Osmanlı*. Since the penetration of the trends emphasizing critical thinking about the problems of the daily life, masses were inclined to hold the reins of their life. Napoleon III, boldly declared that, "a government should release a nationality that does not want it[s rule]."⁵⁷ It was a wishful thinking of the Ottoman reformists, to attempt to bind these peoples to the core, considering

⁵³ Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000), p.81.

⁵⁴ İlber Ortaylı, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Milliyetçilik (En Kalcı Miras)," in *XII. Türk Tarih Kongresi Ankara 4-8 Ekim 1999*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), p.5.

⁵⁵ Roderic H. Davison, "The Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century," *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History 1774-1923* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p.118.

⁵⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State," 1789-1908, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3. (Jul., 1972), pp. 243-281, p.261.

⁵⁷ Napoleon III said this before waging war against Austria for Italian freedom. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma'rûzât* (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), p.42.

that they could not resort to full scale force -like other Great Powers did- to suppress them. While the revolutionaries had Western patronage, the Porte, Niyazi Berkes counts “was without an expert cadre of accountant, officer, soldier, engineer, doctor, economist, teacher or judge” to accomplish its daring reform plans.

2.5 The Ottoman Finances Crumbles as Its Image Hits Bottom

In 1870, the relative atmosphere of peace in the international arena was beginning to shatter. The former allies at the Crimean War were losing their interests in preserving the unity of the Ottoman Empire. Russophobia which was one of the main catalysis behind the war against Russia, was gradually diminishing in Britain. *Daily News* wrote in November 1870;

[Britain’s] policy of the Crimean War, and [...] the statesmanship of that period would probably have been condemned. Wars for the preservation of the balance of power, for restricting the growth of a strong state and invigorating the infirmity of a weak one, are felt to be out of date. The anti-Russian feeling in England, dying away under the influence of new ideas of policy, was fast becoming an obsolete prejudice.⁵⁸

Hanioglu picks an exemplary account of George Villiers, one of the architects of the Crimean system, “as people [came to] know more about the united ignorance and stupidity of the Mahomedans who squat in some of the fairest regions of the world in order to prevent their being productive.”⁵⁹ Anti-Turkish feelings of the public opinion were manipulated among rival parties to

⁵⁸ W.E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System 1855-71*, (London: Macmillan & co ltd New York St Martin’s Press, 1963), p.3.

⁵⁹ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 2008), p.82.

find support for their vision of the British foreign policy.⁶⁰ At 1870, Gladstone remarked; “the whole policy of Crimean War is not almost universally and very unduly depreciated, and the idea of another armed intervention on behalf of Turkey is ridiculed.”⁶¹

In Europe, with the appearance of a united Germany through its decisive victory against France, the balance of power was tipped for the Porte’s disadvantage. Suddenly the world seemed smaller to the Great Powers. Technological advancement made it easier to conquer lands over long distances, and new means of communication facilitated its rule. Moreover, faith in the advancing technology convinced the contemporary powers that ostensible barren lands might one day become exploitable.⁶² With the opening of the Suez Canal, British interests were fixed directly to controlling the road to India to secure it. Russia seized this opportunity to achieve its desire to remove the last obstacle put on its way after the Paris Treaty; the naturalization of the Black Sea.⁶³ Besides its strategic importance, it was also perceived by Russia an insult to their national honor. During the Franco-Prussian war, Russia secured the backing of Prince Bismarck who had his own agenda, and initiated diplomatic pressure on the abolition of the Neutrality of the Black Sea. While whole Europe was plunged into the infamous War Scare, Russia claiming that it was violated by the Porte in

⁶⁰ Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, Vol.1-2 (1997-1998), p.70.

⁶¹ W.E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System 1855-71*, (London: Macmillian & co ltd New York St Martin’s Press, 1963), p.3.

⁶² Dominic Lieven, “Dilemmas of Empire 1850-1918; Power, Territory, Identity,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 34, No. 2. (Apr., 1999), p.166.

⁶³ The Black Sea rendered neutral and open to trade ships, all the shipyards at the coast was to be demolished and construction of new ones was forbidden. This point of the treaty gave the Porte an evident advantage, since it may enter the Black Sea with its fleets from the Straits but Russia cannot. Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Mühimme-i Siyâsiyye*, v.1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1960), p.120.

many instances, managed to make the point abolished with a *fait accompli*.⁶⁴ The Porte turned Britain for help, but the British announced that they had no material capacity or public support to help. The fall of the Crimean System was no shock for British account since when asked in 1856, Lord Palmerson estimated that stipulations would last only ten years.⁶⁵

1871 also marked great changes for the inner mechanics of the Porte. Âli Pasha, the last protégé of Mustafa Reşid, died in the same year. Upon hearing the news, Sultan Abdülaziz (reigned 1861-1876) declared that “at last I am a free man.”⁶⁶ Abdülaziz became a believer of the supremacy autocracy over liberalism after victory of Prussia over France.⁶⁷ While tightening his grip on the control of the Empire, he appointed Mahmud Nedim as grand vizier. The new grand vizier was a failure of the Ottoman bureaucracy personified; Ahmed Cevdet Pasha dubbed him as the demolisher of the state’s traditions and foundations.⁶⁸ Mahmud Nedim Pasha’s first grand vizierate period was marked with constant shuffling of the bureaucrats in order to consolidate his rule. He rendered the state almost unworkable. He was also the main factor behind the opposition of the public opinion to Sultan Abdülaziz. “In the past” Ahmed Cevdet noted;

⁶⁴ One of the main actors in the abolition of the Neutrality of the Black Sea was Ignatiev, Sumner writes; “As regards the Straits, Ignatyev held that Russia must command them as much for the security of her Black Sea coast-line as for her political and economic expansion. She must be master of Constantinople by one of two means, either by complete diplomatic predominance there as was achieved between 1871 and 1875, or by direct conquest if the opposition of the Turks and the Powers rendered the former policy impossible. Ignatyev seems to have conceived of the peaceful policy of dominance over the Sultan, with harmless Turkey and a de facto Russian control of the Straits, as an interim course to be pursued until such time as a radical solution of the eastern question would have to be found involving the disruption of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.” B.H. Sumner, “Ignatyev at Constantinople, 1864-1874. I” *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 11, No. 32 (Jan., 1933), pp. 341-353, p.343.

⁶⁵ W.E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System 1855-71*, (London: Macmillan & co ltd New York St Martin’s Press, 1963), p.3.

⁶⁶ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.279.

⁶⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, cilt.VII Islahat Fermanı Devri (1861 – 1876)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003) p.68.

⁶⁸ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma’rûzât*, (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), p.210.

The high bureaucrats use to act as a curtain between the Sultan and people, they use to adopt unavoidable decisions that would lead to public opposition as their own, and they bestowed the nice ones to the Sultan, thus, the target of the oppositions use to be the bureaucrats and nobody would talk against the Sultan himself. As soon as the disturbances peaked the bureaucrat would be removed from the office and replaced to a new post, and when the issue was forgotten he would be reinserted. But Mahmud Nedim imposed all of his actions even the bad ones to Abdülaziz.⁶⁹

This conduct of Mahmud Nedim would eventually lead to his and the Sultan's downfall. Although Mahmud Nedim remained as his favorite, the Sultan rotated six grand viziers in three years.⁷⁰

The financial crisis of 1873-1875 was the last straw on the dwindling Ottoman economy. Since the Crimean War, the Ottoman Treasury was borrowing money from the European powers. First of the foreign loans were taken during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid at 1854.⁷¹ Although Abdülmecid resisted the idea of a foreign loan, he eventually cave in to cover the war expenses. As time passed, it became habitual, as new loans were taken just for daily issues.⁷² But after 1871, with the decline of the Ottoman terms of trade vis-à-vis other Western states, the

⁶⁹ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma'rûzât* (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), p.226.

⁷⁰ Alan Palmer, *the Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, (London: John Murray, 1993), p.139.

⁷¹ "In 1854, during the Crimean War, the Ottoman government began to sell long-term bonds in the European financial markets and this soon became the most important means of dealing with the recurring budgetary difficulties. In the early stages of this process, the Ottoman government was supported by its British counterpart and wartime ally which guaranteed the first bond issue against the Ottoman annual receipts from the Egyptian tribute. In the following two decades, the Ottoman government borrowed large sums in London, Paris, Vienna, and elsewhere under increasingly unfavorable terms. The net proceeds of these issues were directed almost from bimetallism to the "limping gold standard" entirely towards current expenditures, however. Only a small fraction was spent on infrastructure investment and on increasing the capacity to payback. By the second half of the 1860s, Ottoman finances had deteriorated to the point where new bond issues had become necessary to maintain the debt payments." Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.213-214. For a detailed account on the relations of the Porte and Britain on the borrowings see; National Archives F(oreign) O(ffice) 881-3248, Lord Tenterden to the Secretary of Treasury, July 13, 1877.

⁷² Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma'rûzât*, (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), p.7.

financial situation became unmistakably dire.⁷³ Despite the time of troubles, the Sultans' extravagant spending continued. From the Empire's sum of incomes, a portion of 10% was transferred to Abdülaziz's own treasury which was reserved to his harem and personal spending.⁷⁴ On top of all these, a famine struck Anatolian provinces, and even Istanbul did not manage to escape it.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the real catastrophe was manmade. Mahmud Nedim Pasha, listening to the ill advises of Russian Ambassador Ignatiev, made a surprising decision and announced the Porte unilaterally reduced debt payments by half in October 1875. It shocked the foreign Ottoman bond holders, as a consequence the anti-Turkish feelings peaked, especially in Britain, an insightful remark was made "that European creditors had no problem with imperfect government in Istanbul when it paid them seven percent, but discovered all its iniquities when the rate [was] reduced to three."⁷⁶ Hanioglu adds, "articles in the British and French press accused the Ottoman government of foolishly squandering European investments; and some even questioned the desirability of 'continued Ottoman existence in Europe'."⁷⁷ There was still some freefall for the Ottoman image in Europe until it hit the rock bottom.

⁷³ "Mostly as a result of the entry of American wheat in the international markets, world wheat prices declined by more than 60 percent between 1873 and 1894, a rate of decline twice as rapid as the decline in the prices of Ottoman nonwheat exports. Ottoman government finances were also hurt because the government derived more than a quarter of its revenues from agricultural production in a country where close to 90 percent of all land under cultivation was in cereals." Şevket Pamuk, "The Ottoman Empire in the "Great Depression" of 1873-1896," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, (Mar., 1984), pp. 107-118, p.111.

⁷⁴ Çoşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Maliyesi*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, October 2001), p.212.

⁷⁵ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.301.

⁷⁶ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 2008), p.92.

⁷⁷ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 2008), p.92.

2.6 1876, the Year of Three Sultans⁷⁸

By the end of 1875, the Ottoman image was in shambles, its economy in ruins, and soldiers, sailors, civil officials had not been paid for eight months. At late, news of revolt from Herzegovina reached to Istanbul. The reason of revolts seemed to be the failed crops of the recent year and the unchanged ratio of tax despite the fact that granaries were empty. But, it suddenly gained a national character, and reinforced from Austrian Croatia, and Serbia.⁷⁹ Austria and Russia overtly condemned the rebels but covertly supplied them with material and morale support.⁸⁰ At the capital, Ignatiev was advising Mahmud Nedim to exercise soft measures against the rebels, and managed stall him for five months. *Redif* (reserve troops) were called to arms, but other than that Mahmud Nedim's rule showed total mismanagement of the whole crisis. The telegrams coming from the Pasha of the revolting Nevesin were ignored, and dismissed as personal feud between officers.⁸¹ In contrast to the military authorities of Austria, who wanted to seize the opportunity to annex Bosnia, foreign minister Andrassy was cool to the rebels; for him, disturbance on the frontier was forlorn occasion, because he hoped to discourage Russian intrigue in the Balkans and the growing Pan Slavism.⁸² Thus, he took the initiative where Mahmud Nedim hesitated, and proposed a joint note, to the Porte and the rebels. The grand vizier, eventually accepted a foreign interference to the revolt, whereas after seeing the full attention of Europe, the

⁷⁸ The title refers to the fall of Abdülaziz, enthronement of Murad V and after him Abdülhamid II. Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.311.

⁷⁹ no. 152, Acting Consul Freeman to Earl of Derby, Bosna Serai April 14 1876.

⁸⁰ Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism*, (Palgrave Macmillian, February 2004), p.257.

⁸¹ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 40 Tetimme*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), p.147.

⁸² David Harris, *A Diplomatic History of the Balkan Crisis of 1875-1878; The First Year*, (Archon Books, 1936), p.69.

rebels demanded more, hence they rejected Andrassy Note. Mahmud Nedim's reputation along with his sultan, in the eyes of Muslim subjects, weighed down by a hideous act of accepting foreign meddling, and even after accepting it, gaining no beneficial results.

The rebellion thus spread in the Balkans. Seeing the Porte unable to suppress the disorders, discontent Christians of the Balkans were convinced to take up arms. Finally, feeling cornered, Mahmud Nedim ordered Ahmed Muhtar Pasha to sweep the rebels. Results came in April 1876, as Ahmed Muhtar made his victorious entrance to Nikšik.⁸³ In the revolting *sancaks* (provinces) *başıbozüks* were recruited and released on the insurgents, while the local Muslim begun to arm themselves.⁸⁴ Atrocities of these *başıbozüks* were written in European press; while correspondents were roaming in the Balkans for more stories to incite their audiences, thus sell their papers.⁸⁵

2.7 From Apostasy to the High Politics

While all eyes were fixed on the Balkans and the entire Europe was talking about the Muslim barbarism, a sudden violent incident happened at a place not far from

⁸³ Great Britain, Parliament, Commons. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1876: *Turkey No.3 (1876). Correspondence Respecting Affairs of Turkey and the Insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.no.182, Ali Pasha to Musurus Pasha to Earl of Derby, Mostar 30 April 1876.

⁸⁴ Mihailo D. Stojanovic, *the Great Powers and the Balkans, 1875-1878*, (Cambridge at the University Press, 1939), p.78. also see; Great Britain, Parliament, Commons. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1876: *Turkey No.3 (1876). Correspondence Respecting Affairs of Turkey and the Insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina* no.185, Acting Consul Freeman to Earl of Derby, Bosna Serai April 21 1876.

⁸⁵ For *Başıbozuk* atrocities see; M. Eugene Schuyler to the Department of State, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey (1818-1909), Roll 12 v.12 (September 13 1876 – August 22, 1877), no.39. Lazzaro to Schuyler, , Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey (1818-1909), Roll 12 v.12 (September 13 1876 – August 22, 1877), no.84.

the revolts; the Murder of French and German consuls at Salonika. It was argued that the event was a materialization of Muslim bitterness during these years of constant crises, but I assert it was not simply a reaction to the grim picture in the Empire. To unearth the roots of the problem the question on apostasy must be defined.⁸⁶

Apostasy was a constant phenomenon in the Ottoman Balkans, conversion to Islam started with the arrival of Ottomans to the Peninsula and continued until late 19th century. What was added to it after Tanzimat was the foreign interference. While many non-Muslims claiming foreign protection the consulates started to act as states within states in almost every corner of the Ottoman Empire. These consulates were clearly mingled in the inter-communal affairs such as apostasy. British Consul of Sarajevo William Richard Holmes, in his report dated 1871, defined the missions of their consulates as “monitor the relations of the mixed and hostile races of Turkey.”⁸⁷

In the cases of apostasy from Christianity to Islam, as Selim Deringil claimed, “the Ottomans constantly felt consulates and embassies were looking over their shoulder in matters relating to conversion.”⁸⁸ The process *ihtida* (embracing Islam) was very lawful; it followed conduct of a strict bureaucracy.⁸⁹ For a Christian girl to become a Muslim, she had to appear before the *meclis* (local administrative council) who would inquire her whether she was free, sane and adult, plus whether she was tricked, forced or coerced. If she was *meclis*

⁸⁶ For a detailed account in the conversion to Islam see, Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coersion in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.121-194.

⁸⁷ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, “XIX. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İngiliz Konsoloslarının Siyasal Etkinlikleri” in *Çağdaş Türk Diplomasisi; 200 Yıllık Süreç*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999), p183.

⁸⁸ For a detailed information and more accounts see; Selim Deringil, ““There Is No Compulsion in Religion”: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 547-575.

⁸⁹ BOA, YE..EE., Dosya No: 31, Gömlek No: 18.

satisfied with the inquiry, then she proceed to the *kadı* (judge) in attendance of her kin, and only after a successful inspection she might become a Muslim.⁹⁰ It was not unheard of that the community would rush to intervene for the annulations of the conversion, this usually ended up with a tension between “the new community” of the convert and the former one.⁹¹

The conversion of Stephana could have been also another cause for a small tension between the Muslim and the Christian community of Salonika. Nevertheless, perhaps due to cosmopolitan nature of the city, the tension escalated into a murder of those who were not responsible for the abduction of Stephana. Stephana’s prospective “new community” reacted to her kidnaping and lynched the two consuls in a rage of mob behavior. It was the bitterness and anticipation of Europe, not the Muslims, turned this crime into a materialization of Muslim violence against the Christians of Porte. An out of control inter-communal tension was a war of civilizations for them due to their mass hysteria.

⁹⁰ Selim Deringil, ““There Is No Compulsion in Religion”: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 547-575. p.560.

⁹¹ BOA, *DH.MKT.*, Dosya No: 1346, Gömlek No: 22. BOA, *DH.MKT.*, Dosya No: 1404, Gömlek No: 48. BOA, *DH.MKT.*, Dosya No: 1408, Gömlek No: 65.

CHAPTER III

THE MURDER OF FRENCH AND GERMAN CONSULS AT SALONIKA, 5TH OF MAY 1876

3.1. Stephana Kidnapped from Her Village, 3rd of May 1876

Stephana, as it was her Christian name, was a Bulgarian girl from a small village called Avrethisar, a town also known as Bogdantza.¹ She had lost her father while she was twelve or thirteen years old, and lived with her mother and two brothers in this Ottoman Macedonian town in poverty.² After the death of his father, Dellio, she became more and more acquainted with the Muslim women of the town; some claimed that she carried her acquaintance to intimacy with the Muslim men as well.³ According to her statement, soon after the death of his

¹ Bogdantza, is today Bogdantsi situated in the Southeastern region of the Republic of Macedonia, not far from the Greece border.

² F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 3 in no.106.

³ Pericles H. Lazzaro, United States Consular Agent at Salonika claimed that "Her [Stephana's] light reputation and the suspicions of the villagers that she had had intimate relations with a young Turk of the village lead me to think that she was in connivance with her ravishes in order to be

father, she embraced Islam, inwardly and by inspiration, she was almost certainly influenced by her Muslim neighbors. Stephana's mother, Maria -or sometimes mentioned as Matto- was powerless to coerce her to stop this relation with the Muslims, yet persistently opposed her decision. Soon after, in May 1876, just before the feast of St. George for Christians and Hıdırellez for Muslims, on Wednesday the 3rd, Stephana was kidnapped by the Muslim women of Bogdantza while she was taking water from the town's fountain.⁴ While Stephana's mother was out in the wilderness gathering mulberry leaves, these women, brought her to one of the other Muslim houses. The wife of the house's owner who was also the mother of Stephana's probable Muslim lover, refused to have her presence in the sanctity of her house until she was made a proper Muslim.⁵ Thus she was compelled to spend two nights in one of her kidnappers' houses. In order to become an official Muslim she required a *mazbata* -an official paper- that only Ottoman Officials in Salonika could provide. She was also given traditional Muslim woman clothing; *ferâce* and *yaşmak*; a full coat and a veil. On Friday morning with the company of Imam (*Hodja*) of Bogdantza, she departed for the

carried of." also British Consul in Salonika, Blunt labeled her as a "wretched creature." F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 3-4, and Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, in Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1– August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71, Microcopy no.46.

⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876 Inclosure 3-4, and Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71. Microcopy no.46.

⁵ A detailed version of the identity of Stephana and her kidnap at 3rd May ; "On connaissait il y a six mois dans le village de Bogdanitza que Stefanini, fille du défunt Dellio Kiota, et de Marie, [...] avait des relations avec le fils du garde champêtre Omer Zintsoglou, Mustapha. Plusieurs voisins de cette malhonnête femme lui avaient fait observer la conduite de sa fille: quelques Musulmans aussi en firent autant. La jeune fille ayant pris depuis quelques jours ses vêtements et quelques-unes de sa mère les envoya chez son amant. Le mercredi vers 10 heures de l'après-midi sous prétexte qu'elle irait à la fontaine elle se fit enlever par quelques Ottomans, qui la transportèrent a la maison d'Omer Zintsoglou, père de Mustafa. Mais a cette heure ni l'un ni l'autre ne se trouvaient la, c'est pourquoi l'épouse du premier n'accepta pas la fille et lui dit: "Qu'elle se fasse musulmane d'abord et de venir après chez moi." On conduisit alors la fille a la maison d'Ahmet Soubashi, Muktar, frère d'Omer Agha, et le Vendredi, afin qu'elle ne fût pas reconnu, on la fit pendre de Karasouli le chemin de fer, ou elle fut rencontré par sa mère. Elle était accompagnée par le Hodja du village, d'une negresse et de de Mehmet Agha de Ghevreli." F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 4 in no.106. "Exposé de Hussein, Fils d'Ismail, Habitant du dit Village."

southern town of Gevheli (Gevhelija of today) to take a train to Salonika. She was also given enough money for a train ticket by the *Hodja*. After two hours of walk she made it to the Gevheli train station.⁶

Meanwhile, Maria was made aware of her daughter's fate upon her return to the town. Consequently, she went to *Muhtar*⁷ (village headman) who was also a Christian, to inquire on what to do and hoping to learn her daughter's whereabouts. Probably unaware of the fact that her daughter was on her way to Salonika to become officially a Muslim, Maria asked for the assistance to save her daughter from the hands of the Muslim women. The *Muhtar*, stating that he cannot dare to go near the Muslim women, advised her to bring a complaint to the *konak*; the seat of government for the *Vilayet* (district) of Salonika,⁸ ironically the same place where Stephana was headed as well.

It is not clear whether Stephana and her *incognita* company, managed to find a train at Gevheli for Salonika. She either took a train there or walked for six hours to Karasuli (today's Greek town of Polykastro) though she claimed the latter. However, walking seventeen kilometers on mountainous terrain on foot was indeed implausible. Whatever be the case, she was in the company of an Arab woman, by the name of Ruşen on the way from Karasuli to Salonika. Stephana during the journey expressed Ruşen of her intentions to become a Muslim, and

⁶ Gevheli, or Gevhelija is also in the Republic of Macedonia, being a border town with Greece. In her examination, Stephana stated that she was alone all the way from Bogdantza to Salonika; that is to say, without the company of the town's Imam. However, testimonies of the townspersons unanimously pointed out that she was in the company of the Imam. It was confirmed that Imam was not present to conduct the Friday's Prayer and was probably with Stephana during the time of the prayer.

⁷ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 4 in no.106. "Evidence taken at the Village of Bogdantza - Apres avoir preté serment l'exposé de Delhio, fils de Stenhil, Mouchtar du village."

⁸ The City of Salonika and the Province of Salonika are not to be confused. One is the actual port city, and the latter is a governing unit in the Ottoman Macedonia, covering also Avrethisar and the other mentioned towns. City of Salonika is the capital of the *Vilayet* of Salonika, much like the state system in the United States.

also told her that she was in the company of a *Hodja*, whose presence was confirmed by Ruşen when she saw him on Karasulu (or Karasuli) station.⁹ Yet, whether he got on board from there or from somewhere else is unclear. Naturally, the imam of Bogdanitza even if he was present in the same train was not in the same compartment where Stephana and Ruşen were travelling, for the reason that it was required by the law of country; which forbade the presence of men in the car with women, obliged the Imam to go into another compartment. In Karasuli, another person also spotted Stephana and *hodja*, it was Maria, who by her own means, made it to the same train, and while the train stopped at Karasuli, she noticed her daughter. Fortunate Maria, upon uniting with her daughter, tried to convince Stephana anew, to make abandon her quest to become a Muslim; she was aware that it was a voluntary decision since she also admitted that throughout the history of Bogdanitza she never met with a single case of forced conversion to Islam.¹⁰ Despite the account in which Stephana claimed that she met Ruşen in the train, Maria dismissed her as a companion given to Stephana by the Muslims and spoke to her daughter in Bulgarian. The fact that they all remained on board, despite the constant stops of the train on its way to Salonika, can point the failure of Maria to persuade her daughter.¹¹ The train arrived in Salonika around early Friday (the 5th) evening.

⁹ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 3 in no.106. "Examination of Rushen, Arab, daughter of Abdullah, before the Imperial Commission of Inquiry, Salonica, May 17, 1292."

¹⁰ Ottoman Official Conducting the Investigation by the name of Vahan Efendi asks Maria; "Before this affair, did any children (Christians) become Mohomedan [*sic*] by force?" and Maria answers simply as "No, never." She also added that Christians and Muslims in her town get along very well. F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 3 in no.106. "Examination of Matto (Maria), the Girl's Mother."

¹¹ Consular Blunt wrote to Early of Derby on May 30 the following; "She also repeatedly declared that no one forced her to embrace Mahomedanism; that during the time she was concealed by the Greeks, efforts were made to dissuade her from renouncing the Christian religion; and that she was determined to follow the Mahomedan faith." F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 30, Inclosure in no.72.

3.2. Stephana Arrives in Salonika, at 5th of May, and Kidnapped Again

The Salonika terminal was crowded with Muslims, Christian Ottoman subjects and foreigners coming for St. George's festal and Hidirellez. Stephana as a stranger to the city approached the policemen¹² (*zaptiyes*) in the station, to be accompanied to the Governor's Mansion - the *konak*. Thus, a corporal with two men took charge of her to escort her to the *konak*.¹³ According to the newspapers, Maria cried after her daughter as "is there any Christian here who will save my daughter from becoming a Turk?"¹⁴ and begged nearby Christian kinsmen to help her save Stephana from the hands of the Muslims. She thus addressed herself to the employees of the Railway Company -all of them were Christians- explaining to them with deep sorrow the carrying off her daughter and begging them to help in her recover. Although at that moment few in number, Maria found assistance among the Greeks¹⁵ at the station. Flamed by religious zeal and headed by George Abbott, brother of Alfred Abbott and Henry Abbott, Consul of Germany, this mob made an attempt to seize Stephana by force from the hands of the policemen. They tore her *ferâce* and *yaşmak*; an action perceived by the Muslims as an assault to a Muslim woman thus signified a grave insult. After a short struggle policemen managed to drag the girl from the hands of the zealous Christians. Nevertheless, the three policemen were quickly overpowered by the mob which

¹² Ottoman police was a military unit not a civil force, it was considered as a municipal force to keep the order and they were under the command of the Governor-General of the *vilayet*. Glen W. Swanson, "The Ottoman Police" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 7, No. 1/2 (Jan. - Apr., 1972), pp. 243-260, p.251.

¹³ F.O. 881-2984, Inclosure 2 in no.106. Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonika Police".

¹⁴ *The Times*, Jun 03, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28646; col D, "Salonica After the Assassinations." *A correspondant write*.

¹⁵ In all accounts the mob that seized Stephana at the station were mentioned as "Greeks". It is not clear whether they are composed of solely Greeks or Christians in general.

was ever growing in size, which were around one hundred and fifty people.¹⁶ Consequently, in a short scuffle this crowd of Christians, who in their turn, emerged with Stephana in their possession, and hastily carried her to a nearby carriage.¹⁷ The idle carriage was waiting for Pericles Hadji Lazzaro, the Consular Agent for the United States, who was expected to come from an excursion at a nearby town by the name of Vodina with the same train in which Stephana arrived in Salonika. The Christian mob forced Stephana and Maria into this carriage, and quickly told the coachman a short version of their story. He did as he was told and galloped the horses to the United States' Consular residence, the policemen tried to catch up with the carriage by running behind it but to no avail. A Muslim crowd, while keeping their distance, observed this entire event.¹⁸

The carriage with its passengers on board; composed of Stephana, Maria and servants of Lazzaro, dashed to the United States' Consular residence. The residence was a mansion in the Frank Quarter of the city, side by side with the church of St. Charalambous. Lazzaro's Mother and his Brother Nicholas Lazzaro were enjoying a walk in the decorated city for the festal. Maria begged the servants of Lazzaro family to have them for a night, who were not so keen to throw them out, after hearing what just happened to them. Mother of Lazzaro was first to return, upon seeing her, the coachman approached and said; "Madame I have done something but I do not know if well or not. I have brought to the Consulate a young Bulgarian girl that some Christians at the station rescued from

¹⁶ The Governor General of Salonika, *Vali* Mehmed Refet Pasha's account also published in the official newspaper of the district, "*Selânik*" of May 8 tells the exact same story of this kidnap in the train station.

¹⁷ BOA, *İDUİT*, Dosya No:138, Gömlek No:33.

¹⁸ F.O. 78-2495 Blunt to Elliot no.22 and BOA, *İDUİT*, Dosya no:138 Gömlek no:33. The beginning of the event that is the seizure of the girl by the Christians is narrated as the same in all accounts.

the hands of the Turks and forcing me to stop put into my master's carriage".¹⁹ Miss Lazzaro, decided to wait for her son Nicholas, before giving the final verdict about what to be done about Maria and Stephana. While waiting, Maria and possibly Stephana too, begged Miss Lazzaro for a permission to remain in their house,²⁰ Maria told that her daughter was forcibly kidnapped from her village and sent to Salonika and by the efforts of the fellow Christians, was saved from the hands of her kidnappers.²¹ Nicholas arrived later; however, he was distracted and hesitant, yielded to the prayers of the refugees in the house. So, it was decided that Maria and Stephana can remain in the house for the night, on the condition to take their leave at first thing in the morning.²²

3.3. A Crisis Looming in Salonika

The next day, Saturday the 6th of May, an Orthodox priest was brought to the Consulate residence to confront Stephana. He was unable to make her repent for her decision hence, towards the midday after having a lunch; the two women left the mansion not through the door of the Consulate but through a little back door,

¹⁹ Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25 Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71. Microcopy no.46.

²⁰ According to *the Times*, Stephana begged Mrs. Lazzaro for suit of clothes, declaring that she could no longer wear the Turkish robes. It is contradictory of Stephana's own account that she embraced Islam willingly. *The Times*, May 31, 1876; pg. 5; Issue 28643; col F, "The Salonica Assassinations."

²¹ In the account of Lazzaro to Maynard, there is also a certain uncle mentioned, nevertheless, since his presence is only mentioned by Lazzaro and only in one place, this uncle's presence or whoever he was, his relation with Maria and Stephana is blurry and questionable. Moreover, the statement of Maria, is also the manifestation of the Christian press' attitude towards the event and as well as Lazzaro's.

²² Maria and Stephana's fate after the events at the station on 5th of May is only known through the account of P. H. Lazzaro's letter to Maynard. Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71. Microcopy no.46.

leading to the courtyard of the church of St. Charalambous. They were accompanied by a European man and his servant, who came to the Consulate to pick them up.²³ Their destination was another Greek's house near to the Consulate, that of Mr. Avyerinos²⁴, who was a Greek merchant under Austrian protection. People in the house spoke neither Turkish nor Bulgarian. They were offered coffee, relaxing and unaware of what was going on in the city.

In the morning of the same day, as the news of violation and abduction of a Muslim girl by the Christians on yesterday evening spread, Muslims in the city were getting restless. Accordingly, a group of representatives from the Muslim community of Salonika went to the Governor General's Mansion, and demanded the return of the girl to the faithful, from the Governor Mehmed Refet Pasha. All witnesses, Muslim and non-Muslim alike previously reported that the girl was carried in United States' Consular Agent Lazzaro's coach to his residence. Immediately, the Pasha sent two members of the *meclis* to the Consulate to bring the girl to the mansion. These two men, being one Christian and a Muslim, asked for Consular Lazzaro, upon learning that he was not at home, inquired for the missing Bulgarian girl. Miss Lazzaro, mother of Consular, sent word for his son before saying anything to the Pasha's envoy. Soon after, Nicholas Lazzaro returned home and informed them of his decision for the girl to be sent away and now had no information of the girl's whereabouts. The *meclis*' members returned to Mehmed Refet Pasha without Stephana or any adequate information.

²³ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 3 in no.106. "Examination of the Bulgarian Girl 'Stephana' who adopted Turkish name 'Aiyshah'". In her account, Stephana claims that after a lunch at Lazzaro's, a woman servant and a tall Frank with a hat and a beard took them to another house.

²⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22), Blunt to Elliot, June 6., no.97 Inclosure in no.97.

The delay in the girl's delivery surmounted the stress on the gathering mob in front of the *konak*. Some natives of the city acted as *Tellals* (town criers) and they called the faithful in streets of Salonika to close their shops, and to gather at the Saatli Camii, near the *konak*. They were joined by business owners in the city who agitated the Muslims for the sake of the religion and gather for the purpose of recovery of a stolen Muslim girl.²⁵ Rumors ran rampant, vivid descriptions of how the Greeks torn her clothing and the wailings of the little girl moved the religious spirit of the Muslim community. Known zealots of Islam, Albanians in particular, were arming themselves for a reckless endeavor of rescue of the Bulgarian girl. In obedience to the call, some shops were closed as their owners set out for the *konak*, while others left because of the fear of the gathering storm.²⁶

The assemblage in front of the Governor General Mehmed Pasha's Mansion was gaining a more intimidating character with every passing moment.²⁷ The Pasha opened his window and summoned the crowd to disperse immediately, while the Chief of Police, Colonel Salim Bey tried to soothe them by the promises that the Bulgarian girl would be delivered in a few hours.²⁸ Their aggressive

²⁵ "Hussein Effendi, du district Tchekbekli, acheteur de dîmes et fabricant de peau, est accusé d'avoir invité le peuple a se regrouper, sans armes, et d'avoir instigué la foule dans la Mosquée de Hamza Bey d'aller réclamer la fille ou de périr pour l'amour de la religion; d'avoir été un des premiers a s'introduire auprès du Gouverneur-Général et d'avoir été remarqué a la Mosquée de Saatli. Il a été a trois ans d'emprisonnement a partir de la date du 5 Djemajulevvel, 1293." and "Courd Ali, anier, accusé d'avoir crié dans les rues invitant en engagement le peuple a fermer les boutiques et a se réunir a la Mosquée de Saatli et d'avoir été un des premiers a s'introduire auprès de Gouverneur-Général et d'avoir été remarqué a la dite mosquée. Condamné a cinq ans aux travaux forcés a partir de la date du 5 Djemajulevvel, 1293." F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot June 18, Inclosure 2 in no.76.

²⁶ Thrace and Neogolos of May 11, published that the Muslims upon hearing the calls of *tellal* armed themselves and rushed to the Governor General's Mansion. The presence of a green flag to rally the faithful is confirmed by Consular Blunt's account. 1876. Mayard to Secretary of the State, May 20, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

²⁷ Albay Salim Bey, claims that the crowd was not armed and were around only one hundred men. Possibly, that is why at that moment the officials did not considered them as a serious threat. F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police".

²⁸ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police".

slogans were easily heard by Mehmed Refet Pasha. Moreover, the appearance of the Pasha's empty handed envoy further galvanized the crowd. They demanded satisfaction because news about the spirited away Bulgarian girl were by no means convincing for them. They strongly believed that the girl was not lost at all, but was in the possession of the American Consul Lazzaro. The crowd then moved to Saatli Camii, a mosque just in the opposite street of the Governor's Mansion.²⁹ They planted the green flag in the courtyard. The appearance of the green flag of Islam in the courtyard of the Mosque, a flag which was covered by the Holy Scriptures and symbolized the war against the infidel, gave the mob an overzealous spirit. Encouraged by the timidity and the indecisiveness of the Pasha, they threatened to march to the Frank Quarter of the city, then assault on the United States' Consulate, hence rescue the Bulgarian girl.³⁰ It was said; they were arming and making preparations for this assault.³¹ Mehmed Refet Pasha gave an order to two sergeants to take some policemen and to proceed to the Frank Quarter with the intention to prevent a possible march of the crowd there.³² The Pasha desired to make a personal appearance before the crowd in the mosque, but heeded the warnings of the members of the *meclis* not to do so. He then decided to send Salim Bey and some members of the *meclis* with all of the reserves in the Mansion, who were only about twenty men. The envoy found the green flag flying in the middle of the courtyard. Members of the *meclis* tried to exhort the Muslims to disperse, but the crowd turned deaf ear to all of their threats and promises. Salim Bey hurried back to the *konak* in order to inform Mehmed Refet Pasha that this was not a mere restless mob and assured him of their extremely

²⁹ For the scene of the murders and the assemblage please refer to Appendix B, at the back.

³⁰ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby June 21 (received July 2) Inclosure 1 in no.106.

³¹ F.O. 78-2495 Blunt to Elliot, 9 May, 1876, no 22.

³² F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21, 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police".

offensive intentions. The Pasha, in his testimony claimed that, he immediately sent for armed assistance; he wrote orders to Albay (Colonel) Atta Bey of the Salonika fortress for *topçus* (artillerymen) and to Izzet Bey Commander of the Ottoman ironclad *Iclaliye*³³, harbored in Salonika quay for his marines.³⁴

3.4. French and German Consuls Murdered by a Muslim Mob

About this time, French Consul Jules Moulin and German Consul Henry Abbott -brother of George Abbott who took the girl from the hands of the policemen on Friday the 5th- came to the vicinity of the *konak*. Consul Moulin was thirty three years old, and was a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. He had been an Assistant Consul at Alexandria. Henry Abbott was an Orthodox Christian of English nationality. Both of them were married to the sisters of Pericles H. Lazzaro, thus the kidnap of the girl and the involvement of Lazzaro's name was a family matter besides their duty as Consuls.³⁵ Even though, for what purpose they approached to the heart of the trouble is unknown, it was speculated that they were tempted by some Greeks to address a representation to the Governor General about the girl's conversion, while the other possibility to explain their presence was that they only went to see whether the Muslims were really irritated and to

³³ "Iclaliye" was a frigate in the Ottoman Navy, originally ordered by Egypt from SA Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino, San Rocco in 1868, and was launched the next year. She had a crew of 16 officers and 132 sailors. She served until 1928. Bernd Langensiepen Ahmet Güleriyüz, *1828-1923 Osmanlı Donanması*, (İstanbul: Denizler Kitabevi) p.92.

³⁴ The name of the Ottoman ironclad was incorrectly given in the accounts of Consul Blunt as "Edirne" to the correct name should be "Iclaliye". BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 516, Gömlek No:52. F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonika Police" and F.O. 78-2495, Blunt to Elliot, no.22.

³⁵ *The Times*, May 10, 1876; pg. 7; Issue 29625; col B, "The Salonica Assassinations".

observe if they posed a real threat to the Frank Quarter.³⁶ Be that as it may, the two consuls were drawn by the crowd into the mosque's courtyard and surrounded by a throng of angry Muslims.³⁷

Salim Bey, according to his own account, seeing the state of recent affairs, hastily went to the *konak* and told the Pasha about the seizure of the two consuls by the crowd. Mehmed Refet Pasha upon hearing this, jumped up saying “*Aman!* Who brought them?” He acted without delay and crossed the street to go to the mosque with the company of Salim Bey and *kadi* (Muslim judge). They passed through the crowd with difficulty to where the consuls were held; a small two staged structure adjacent to the mosque which was used as the apartments for *müdürris* and class rooms for the students of religion. They got in the room at the second floor where some members of the *meclis* and the consuls were held. Meanwhile, Salim Bey was trying to find reinforcements to disperse the crowd. His twenty men strong retinue was far from being adequate to protect the small building where the consuls were held. Then, Commander Izzet Bey, to the contrary of the orders from Mehmed Refet Pasha, appeared with none of his marines at his side. He approached Salim Bey and told that his men had already landed in the morning, and they were now at Beşçınar; in the public gardens near Salonika, for the Hıdırellez feast. Salim Bey ordered him to go to Beşçınar and gather his men. Izzet Bey departed straight away. Salim Bey, in the meantime, stood by the door leading to the room of the consuls and sent two more of his men

³⁶ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 7, Inclosure in no.42.

³⁷ From Daily Levant Herald, May 9 1876; “According to one version, Messr. Abbott and Moulin, on their way to the Governor-general's *konak*, were dragged into the mosque. With the two consuls was Mr. Panourias, cancellier of the Greek consulate, and acting in the absence of the consul, Mr.Vathikioti. When the crowd attacked the consuls –which they did with iron bars torn from the mosque windows- Mr. Panourias made his escape by a window, and ran straight to the telegraph office, whence the telegraphed the state of affairs to Mr.Coundourioti, the Greek minister in Constantinople.” Maynard to Secretary of the State, May 12, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Inclosure in no.66, Microcopy no.46.

to the city's agora to find more troops. German Consul Henry Abbott, realizing the severity of his position, wrote a letter addressed to his brother Alfred Abbott about the delivery of the Bulgarian girl from United States' Consular Residence to the mosque without delay. Salim Bey entrusted the letter to one of his men. However, the messenger while making his way out of the building was intercepted by the crowd; the letter was taken from him and torn into pieces.³⁸

With each passing moment, the threat in the courtyard of Saatli Camii was increasing. Their advance could still be prevented by the efforts of a few policemen. When the French Consul Moulin turned to Salim Bey and asked "Are we prisoners here?" the Ottomen officer replied to encourage them "We only trying to get the crowd dispersed".³⁹ At that moment, Colonel Atta Bey of the Salonika fortress came to the scene, alas with no troops. The Pasha, devastated, inquired him about the *topçus*; Atta Bey answered that no order had reached him and he too departed to gather his men, but he was surrounded on his way out by the crowd who would not let him go.⁴⁰ The members of the *meclis* made a final attempt to convince the mass of the people pushing themselves upstairs to the room of the Consuls, to disband. This they did, but their final act was futile therefore they returned to the room to barricade themselves in. Consul Abbott, meanwhile, wrote another dispatch for his brother. Salim Bey put the letter to the coat sleeve of a policeman, and ordered him to go to the house of Alfred Abbot.

³⁸ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police".

³⁹ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. "Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police".

⁴⁰ According to *the Times*, while these were happening "[...] the Italian Consul and the *chancelier*, or clerck, of the French Consulate, with urgent entreaties to that officer to proceed, instantly to the Mosque. The colonel, very civilly, offered coffee and cigarettes to the Consul and *chancelier*, and instead of starting at once, and showing any readiness to accede to their request, he very elaborately endeavored to convince the two foreign officials of the propriety and expediency of having the girl restored to the Moslems." *the Times*, Jul 19, 1876; pg. 5; Issue 28685; col F, "The Salonica Assassinations".

This time, the messenger managed to sally forth. In the note the following was written in Greek;

Dear Nicholas

We are in the midst of trouble and matters are not agreeable. I therefore think it would be well to send the girl under guaranty because otherwise disagreeable consequences may ensue.

Yours Truly, (Signed) Harellos⁴¹

During this entire time, not a soul in the Frank Quarter was aware of the crisis looming in the mosque. No more than Alfred Abbott, who played his part in the kidnap of Stephana, was informed of his brother's and the French Consul Moulin's condition. He paid a visit to Lazzaro's residence to learn where the girl was taken to, nevertheless, Mother of Lazzaro, told him that she did not know where she was. With the arrival of Consular Abbott's note, so did the news of the crisis at Saatli Camii to the Frank Quarter. Alfred Abbott upon receiving the note, embarked again for Consular Lazzaro's mansion. On his way there, he encountered British Consul J.E. Blunt near the British Consulate. He showed Blunt the letter and gave him a short version of what was going on. Consul Blunt and his *cavass* (bodyguard) Hüseyin Agha, before departing for Saatli Camii to assist his colleagues, advised Alfred Abbott not to lose any more time and convey the girl to the mosque.⁴²

Consul Blunt was a known Turcophile and respected European among the Muslims of the city.⁴³ Thus while Blunt and Hüseyin Agha on the way to the

⁴¹ Mayard to Secretary of the State, May 20, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Lazzaro to Maynard, May 9, Enclosure no.10 in 66, Microcopy no.46. The fact that German Consul Henry Abbott addressed the letter to Nicholas Lazzaro proves that he was aware of Pericles H. Lazzaro's absence and his brother's involvement in the kidnap of Stephana.

⁴² F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 7, Inclosure in no.42.

⁴³ A story is published about the relations of Consul Blunt with the Muslims in the city; "Last Christmas many believed that the Mussulmans of Salonica, were contemplating a massacre of the

mosque came across some Muslims who tried to dissuade them to proceed any further, since they claimed there was danger for any European and Christian. Consul Blunt in return begged them for their help to save his colleagues from the mob. He tried to rally some men among the Muslims with references to their religion, six of them stepped forward agreeing to assist him. They found the crowd getting denser with every step taken, and when they crossed the street leading to the *konak*, they met many armed men, principally Albanians. When Consul Blunt got the mosque in his sight, he claimed that a native Turk probably who knew him, approached him, put his hand on Blunt's shoulders and said "The only way to save the Consuls, is to have the girl delivered up. Do this and all may be saved." Consul Blunt, as a consequence decided to deviate his course to the *konak*. Surrounded by a body of Muslims protecting him he made it to the relative security of the *konak*. In the guard room, on a piece of paper he wrote the following note to the American Consulate,

*Mon cher Pericles,
Allant a l'assistance de Moulin et Abbott, renfermés par populace dans
une mosquée avec le Vali, j'ai vu que l'affaire est très dangereuse et
Mahomédans très excités. Quelques-uns m'ont forcé rebrousser chemin
pour appaiser [sic] populace, faut absolument envoyer la fille au Conak,
ou je suis, et resterai pour assister mes collègues.⁴⁴
(Signed) Blunt, Consul.⁴⁵*

Christians, and the Consuls with the exception of Mr. Blunt, who refused to attend, held a meeting to investigate the matter. Little or no evidence was produced at this meeting, but the alarm continued, and reached a panic on the night on which it was said the massacre would be effected. Mr. Blunt, however, maintained his confidence. The gates of the British Consulate were thrown open; the Consul himself, after visiting the British residents and assuring them that there was nothing to be feared, spent the night wandering in the streets of the Turkish quarter, or calling on the principal Turks and making them swear with most solemn oath that they had no hostile intentions against the Christians. The night passed, nothing occurred, and Mr. Blunt enjoyed for the time his triumph." *The Times*, Wednesday, Jun 21, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28661; col E, "The Salonica Inquiry, Our Correspondent".

⁴⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22) no.97, Blunt to Elliot, June 6, Inclosure in no.97.

⁴⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22) no.97, Blunt to Elliot, June 6, Inclosure in no.97.

He confided the note to Hüseyin Agha, and assigned him to find the girl, and if necessary bring her by force to the mosque. In the meantime, Alfred Abbott, back at the Frank Quarter, desperately explained the crisis to Mother Lazzaro and the dire consequences which may arise if the girl would not be delivered. Miss Lazzaro told him that according to the rumors circulating in the Frank Quarter, the girl was at merchant Avyerinos' house. Indeed, Alfred found Stephana there, and with her he went on his way for an attempt to save his brother.⁴⁶ Himself, Avyerinos and Stephana stumbled upon to the *cavass* Hüseyin Agha on the road to the *konak*. Possibly fearing from the retribution of the Muslim masses, they entrusted Stephana to the *cavass*. Thus, Hüseyin Agha -who was a Muslim Turk- and Stephana with the armed escort of only two policemen set off for the mosque.⁴⁷

The consuls were plainly under siege in the small building at the mosque. The crowd was trying to penetrate through the last defense of the consuls, consisted of a few policemen. According to Salim Bey, Mehmed Refet Pasha got pale when he realized the rigorousness of the mob, and their conviction to get to the two consuls. Three quarters of an hour had passed since the letter from Henry Abbott departed for his brother, yet there was still no news about the Bulgarian girl. Then, a window was broken, with its sound the crowd cried and vociferated. They began pulling of the iron bars of the broken windows.⁴⁸ Few remaining

⁴⁶ Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71, Microcopy no.46.

⁴⁷ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22) no.97, Blunt to Elliot, June 6, and Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71, Microcopy no.46.

⁴⁸ Unanimously all the testimonies relating to the murder of the consuls, asserted that, the Muslim mob tore the iron bars from the windows and used them as weapons. It also confirms that the mob was not heavily armed or not armed at all before the gathering begun, contrary to what is said by Consul Lazzaro (Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 1 in no.71, in Microcopy no.46) and most of the Western origin newspapers. F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby,

members of *meclis* left the scene upon this sight. Soon after the bars of the windows removed, the mob poured in the *divanhane* (gallery) of the building. Someone from the crowd was crying “we want the girl” and the rest were pushing themselves ever upwards.⁴⁹ In a short scuffle, they managed to overwhelm the remaining policemen, and swarmed in the room where the consuls, the Pasha, Salim Bey and two policemen were waiting. The consuls were behind the Ottoman officers, yet the crowd began to hit Consul Moulin and Abbott over the head and shoulders of them. Apparently, the Pasha embraced one consul in order to protect him and the other officers did the same for the other consul. The pasha cried not to strike in vain. Probably as they claimed such; the officers received their share of lynch and fell down in pain.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the real targets of the mob were the two consuls. With the iron bars, sticks and knives they bludgeoned the two consuls. The officers, still struggling, cried for water to give to the two consuls, alas they were already dead. The mob continued to hit their lifeless bodies of them for a while.⁵¹

Back at the Frank Quarter, Hüseyin Agha with Stephana was making their way to the mosque with all haste. At the exit of the quarter they ran into some armed mob going to the Frank Quarter - to the American Consulate as it was

June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. “Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police” and “Deposition of Ahmed Effendi, Mulazim (Lieutenant) of Police” and “Deposition of Ali Agha, Yuz-Bashi of Salonica Police”.

⁴⁹ Berber Memik, “[Il] est accusé d'avoir été vu pendant l'émeute, poussant la foule sur les escaliers et s'efforçant de monter et d'avoir enfin crié "nous voulons la fille". Il a été condamné à 3 ans aux travaux forcés a partir de la date du 3 Djemajulevvel, 1293.” F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, June 18, Inclosure 2 in no.76.

⁵⁰ It was brought to the attention by *the Times* that “It has been indisputably proved that while the Consuls received 30 knife wounds each, neither the *Vali* nor any other person present in the room was hurt by a single scratch”. This observation, if it was true, naturally made the account of Mehmed Refet Pasha and Salim Bey erroneous. *the Times*, Jul 19, 1876; pg. 5; Issue 28685; col F, “The Salonica Assassinations.”

⁵¹ This last scene is narrated by three Ottoman officers, in their testimony that can be found in F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 2 in no.106. “Preliminary Deposition of Colonel Salim Bey, Alai Bey, or ex-Chief of Salonica Police” and “Deposition of Ahmed Effendi, Mulazim (Lieutenant) of Police” and “Deposition of Ali Agha, Yuz-Bashi of Salonica Police”. and the official version of the murder by Mehmed Refet Pasha.

presumed. The mob, howling and shouting made their advance to the Quarter. Hüseyin Agha cried out that the girl was surrendered; nevertheless, the unconvinced mob pointed their guns at them, a shot was fired but it missed. It was the policemen in the company of Hüseyin Agha and Stephana who confirmed the identity of the girl thus halting the mob. After a short *feu de joie* the mob turned back, now cheering and satisfied, they no longer posed a threat the Frank Quarter.⁵² Minutes later they made it to the mosque, upon the sight of the delivered girl, the mob dispersed calmly and quickly.

The fires were also heard by Mehmed Refet Pasha who returned to the *konak* just before the deliverance of Stephana. He and Consul Blunt interpreted the gun shots as either “the police were firing on the mob or a general massacre has commenced”.⁵³ The Pasha, therefore, concerned about the safety of Consul Blunt tried to hide him in his harem. Mehmed Refet Pasha informed the consul on the fate of his colleagues. Consul Blunt, terrified, proceeded into the personal quarters of the Pasha. The chaos was also reigning inside the house as members of Mehmed Refet Pasha’s family ran about screaming and shrieking. After a while, Consul Blunt, summoning the courage, managed to write a telegram addressed to the nearest British consulate in Athens.⁵⁴ Fearing of a possibility that telegraph wires were cut, Consul Blunt entrusted a short penned letter to one of the officers in *konak* and held him responsible for the safe transmission of this dispatch to British Consulate at Constantinople. The incident at Salonika was thus heard from this following message of the British Consul;

⁵² After the affair, Consul Blunt recommended his *cavass* Hüseyin Agha, for favorable consideration to the Earl of Derby, and to explain his exemplary actions he gave a detailed version of what happened while Stephana was in Hüseyin Aghas custody. F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22), no.97, Blunt to Elliot, June 6, Inclosure in no.97.

⁵³ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14 (received June 22), no.97, Blunt to Elliot, June 6, Inclosure in no.97.

⁵⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, Received May 7, no.1.

*6th of May, 6:15 P.M : -“ Very Serious disturbances here by Mahometans [sic], owing to abduction by some Greeks a Bulgarian girl who wanted to become Mahometan. French and German Consuls were surrounded in a mosque and killed, I believe, by Mahometans, who are very irritated and all armed. Authorities have not sufficient means to act with exemplary severity. I have telegraphed to Her Majesty’s Minister at Athens for British vessel-of-war for protection of British subjects.”*⁵⁵

Hüseyin Agha managed to bring Stephana to the mosque when Consul Blunt was still in Mehmed Refet Pasha’s harem. He delivered up Stephana to Mehmed Refet Pasha. Upon seeing this, delegates from the mob approached the *konak* to confirm the identity. They demanded that the Pasha would take charge of her; this was agreed, accordingly the mob quietly dispersed.

Nevertheless, even after the murder of the two Consuls, the Ottoman Officers were not able to restore the order immediately. The corpses of the Consuls, were mutilated, and robbed.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, Received May 7, no.1

⁵⁶ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No:516 Gömlek No:52.

CHAPTER IV

THE AFTERMATH OF THE SALONIKA INCIDENT

4.1. Ambassadorial Meeting at Istanbul and the Action of the Porte

It was Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha who was the first to hear what had happened in Salonika. Mehmed Refet Pasha's own version of the incident made to Istanbul on Saturday night. According to the newspapers, Nedim Pasha was in his country mansion at Bebek. Upon receiving the telegraph, he sent word for Reşid Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Sublime Porte. Reşid Pasha came to Bebek from his house at Istanbul. With two Pashas there was also Munir Bey, who was acting as the introducer of ambassadors at Istanbul. Three of them argued on the mode and the tone of the news that would be conveyed to the foreign ambassadors. As a result, Munir Bey left Bebek for Pera¹, carrying the Grand Vizier's message. Nevertheless, it was already two o'clock in the morning;

¹ Pera; is today's Beyoğlu district of Istanbul. During the 19th century, it was the place where almost all European Embassies were situated. During the period, it had a large population of inhabitants of foreign origin (principally Europeans) and Ottoman Christians.

before he arrived in town, he could obtain admittance neither at the German nor the English Embassy where everyone was in bed, but at the latter embassy he left a note with the porter, which was handed in the morning.²

The *corps diplomatique* indeed received the note of Mahmud Nedim Pasha on Sunday morning. Furthermore, intelligence about the Salonika incident was also pouring to their desks from their own sources. It was decided that the ambassadors should convey at the Russian Embassy, the doyen of diplomacy; at General Ignatiev's residence. The Sublime Porte was represented in this meeting by Reşid Pasha.³ Also, the Sultan's own representative was present in the meeting and expressed the profound regret of Sultan Abdülaziz about this deplorable event. The demands made in this conference by the foreign ambassadors were published in the newspapers at 8th of May;⁴

1. *That the murderers of the Consuls of France and Germany at Salonica [sic], and the instigators of the outbreak which took place in that town, shall be punished in an exemplary manner;*
2. *That all the provincial valis (governors-generals) shall be instructed to exercise redoubled vigilance in order to maintain public tranquility and that they shall be held directly responsible for any disturbances arising in the provinces under their administration;*
3. *That the funeral of the two Consul shall take place publicly at Salonica, with every attendant pomp and ceremony;*
4. *That all the provincial valis (governors-generals) shall receive notification of the punishment inflicted upon the guilty in this manner;*
5. *That the Turkish newspapers generally shall be requested not to publish articles tending to excite the public mind and arouse the fanaticism of the Mussulman population.*

² Maynard to Sec. of State, May 20 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46. "From Daily Levant Herald First Intelligence received in Istanbul."

³ Maynard to Secretary of the State, May 20, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

⁴ Maynard to Secretary of State, May 12, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure no.4 in no.66, Microcopy no.46.

Neither the meeting of the ambassadors nor the promises of the Sublime Porte appeased the Great Powers. Notes from all around the major capitals of the West were flowing to Istanbul. Their tone and their arguments were demanding and harsh.⁵ Ottoman Ambassadors were charged by the European Governments to inform the Porte about the possible dire consequences if they were to remain unsatisfied with the progress.⁶ Moreover, while the negotiations were still continuing, the Porte was receiving reports about the ships of war belonging to France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Greece to Salonika in order to impose a gunboat diplomacy.⁷ The situation was beginning to look like the aftermath of Jeddah Massacres eighteen years ago.

The Sublime Porte was justified in having been troubled about a recurrence of the circumstances of Jeddah Crisis of 1858.⁸ As at that year; two consuls and various individuals under the protection of the European powers were killed by a Muslim mob in an act of lynch. Soon after the murder of the two consuls, British ships had blockaded and bombarded the town, after that they executed ten Muslims who were guilty according to their inquiries. It was a direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and a major blow to its sovereignty and its prestige. It was a *déjà vu* for the Porte; the armada of the European powers was sailing to the location where the crime was committed and the capitals of European powers were blaming the Porte for incompetence with

⁵ See; BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 122 Gömlek No: 58. BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No:124 Gömlek No:93. BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No:124 Gömlek No:100.

⁶ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 124 Gömlek No: 84.

⁷ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 124 Gömlek No: 84. and BOA, *HR.SYS.*, Dosya no: 13, Gömlek No:55.

⁸ Jeddah Massacre; on 15 June 1858, twenty-two people were murdered in Jeddah. "They include the British vice-consul and the French consul and his wife. Of the twenty-two, seven were French subjects or under French protection, six British, seven Ottomans, one Russian, and one Greek were killed." W.L. Ochsenwald, "The Jidda Massacre of 1858," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Oct., 1977), pp. 314-326.

protection of the lives of its Christians and for the execution of the required justice.⁹

The murder at Salonika was not perceived as an isolated event as it was perceived about Jeddah. According to the European and Ottoman Christian public opinion, the Salonika Incident was the first of many prospective massacres that could happen in any part of the Empire. The Porte could not afford protests of procrastination indictments as usually blamed by the Europeans. Faced with similar crises, the Porte was blamed for deliberately stalling the European counterparts because of its slow decision making process or the delay in decisive action. Thus, the Porte this time in order to prevent possible dissatisfaction, acted swiftly and decisively. In the following day after the meeting at the Russian Embassy, Eşref Pasha¹⁰ -the former governor of İşkodra- with some troops, and Vahan Efendi, the commissioner from the Ministry of Justice were sent to Salonika on a dispatch ship “Izzeddin” along with the French and German delegates on board. The Porte obviously was not gambling with the European Powers about the incident at Salonika, since it agreed to have delegates as observers from the European powers during the trials. Additionally, the *vali* of Salonika was removed, with Eşref Pasha resuming the title; and the investigation was to be carried out by an Armenian Christian officer; Vahan Efendi, the Under-Secretary of the State from the Ministry of Justice (*memûr-i mülkiye*).¹¹ Vahan Efendi was, in all probability, chosen for his identity to appease possible

⁹ W.L. Ochsenwald claims that the failure of the Sublime Porte to culprits to justice was due to the slow communication because of the distance between Hijaz and Istanbul. However, Salonika was not Jeddah; it was a port city near Istanbul connected to capital with telegraph wires.

¹⁰ Eşref Pasha; graduated from the Military academy with recommendation, he was also a poet and musician. Lütfi Efendi Tarihi, C.XV, p.79. Horace Mayard, claimed that Eşref Pasha was also the former minister to Teheran. According to the Daily Levant Herald, 9 May 1876, the ship was “Fevaîd”. Mayard to Secretary of State. Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.66, Microcopy no.46.

¹¹ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 516 Gömlek No: 52.

dissatisfactions about the prejudice of a Muslim investigator, in a case in which the religion played a crucial role, and this choice of the Porte did not escape from the notice of the Powers.¹²

4.2. Panic among the Christians of the Ottoman Empire

Despite the efforts of the Sublime Porte, the news of the slain consuls by a Muslim mob was not perceived with steadfastness by the foreigners and the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Fear of a possible massacre directed to the Christians of the Empire by Muslims was a shared apprehension by the Christian public opinion. Sir Henry G. Elliot, the British ambassador to the Porte, was one of those who were afraid of repetition of what happened at Salonika. He wrote to London in the same day of the meeting at the Russian Embassy;

The irritation of the Turkish population has become so great that little is required to put all Christians to jeopardy. The Porte shows readiness to do all that is required to avoid anything that may add to the excitement. If decisive result to come to at Berlin with regard to Herzegovina, great care should be taken to ask for nothing that the Turkish Government cannot accept and engage to carry out. Europe might enforce its decisions, but could not do so without the frightful massacres of Christians.¹³

In the West, already appalling public opinion on the Ottoman Empire was further wounded by the press. In general, the press for the non-Muslim readers of the Ottoman Empire, and the Foreign Press were fanning the flame of panic with their news about the nature of the Salonika incident. The Muslims in the Ottoman

¹² Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Microcopy no.46.

¹³ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby May 7, no.6.

Empire were anathematized by these publications. In the Greek newspapers of the Ottoman Empire, the incident was idealized and romanticized. The mentioned press was clearly biased with the Christians' claims about the incident, and with their descriptions they were trying to justify the actions of the Greeks who kidnapped Stephana at the station. According to their correspondents, the Greeks were the downtrodden ones by the Muslims. The Muslims at Salonika -and all around in that matter- were portrayed as bloodthirsty religious fanatics. The apostasy of Stephana found no place in their narrative. Horace Mayard, the United States Ambassador reported that in a Greek daily newspaper in Constantinople, *Neogolos* of May 19, on the nature of the incident, the following was published;

A very pretty Christian girl was carried off on 21st of April for dishonorable purposes by the mussulmans[sic], while she was taking water at Bogdanitza. [...] When out of the car mother and daughter began crying and screaming and imploring from the crowd which happened to be there for assistance to have the girl delivered from her captors. [...] A certain Emin Effendi whose harem the girl was destined, seeing that she was delivered by Christians excited the mussulmans to resistance. [...]¹⁴

Thrace a newspaper published in Istanbul, while mentioning the kidnap of Stephana at Salonika train station wrote;

The Christians moved by their lamentable cries especially the mother's and getting naturally excited by religious sentiment rushed to the platform and snatched both mother and daughter out of the hands of the authorities using as a matter of course some force. Emin Effendi seeing himself foiled/failed by the loss of the object of his passions, from that evening excited those classes which could arouse. [The Muslim mob] whose appearance was very horrible and whose cries resembled the roaring of animals [...]¹⁵

¹⁴ Mayard to Sec. of State, the Neogolos? of May 19, a daily Greek paper of Constantinople., May 20 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67. Microcopy no.46.

¹⁵ Mayard to Sec. of State, The Thrace another Greek journal in Constantinople, May 20 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

Another newspaper wrote about the two murdered consuls;

[...] The state of the bodies of the victims, barely identifiable, hacked and mangled with wounds that must have inflicted long after life was extinct; indicate a savage bloodthirstiness which only religious fanaticism can kindle. [...]¹⁶

The newspapers published in the West were also not immune to label the Muslims as barbarous fanatics. *The New York Times* of May 11 claimed that the outrage was premeditated;

The assassination is not an isolated occurrence. The mussulmans were previously much agitated [...] and had assembled several times for the purpose of preparing for a massacre of Christians. [...] A violent outbreak, of which Christians will become the victims, may occur at any moment throughout Turkey, and even in Constantinople.¹⁷

The Times of June 3, illustrated a horror scene according to the testimony of one of its correspondent, without giving a second thought about the impossibility of her presence near the murdered consuls when the mob was there;

[...] so miscreants ruthlessly murdered these two unarmed, defenseless beings, who were simply there for the sake of carrying out their duty, and each Mohamedan passed round in turn, slashing at the body with his weapon as he passed, [...] the crowd came up afterwards and dipped their hands in blood of the Christians, by which, according to the Koran they are supposed to gain some advantage hereafter.¹⁸

The warmongering continental press represented by *République Française* was calling all the Powers for a joint intervention to the Ottoman Empire and according to *Le Monde* (the Russian organ in Belgium) the blood of the murdered consuls were crying for vengeance –evidently their notion of vengeance was not about courtroom and justice, but about smoking guns of ironclads. *Journal des Débats* prophesied that today they had an assassination; tomorrow it was bound to

¹⁶ Mayard to Sec. of State, May 20, 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67. Microcopy no.46.

¹⁷ *The New York Times*, May 12, 1876, Wednesday Page 5.

¹⁸ *The Times*, Jun 03, 1876; p.6; Issue 28646; col D.

become a general massacre.¹⁹ By *Chicago Tribune*, the last event at Salonika precipitated the doom of Turkey.²⁰

The notion of insecurity perceived by the Christians in the Ottoman Empire was fueled by the press. Even though they had doubts about an impending violence directed against them, after the consensus of the press on the danger caused by religious fanaticism of the Muslims, their doubts were replaced by panic. The dread was not also in the monopoly of the common Christians but it was shared by the people who were in the higher echelons of society in the Empire. The same rhetoric of “fanaticism” and “imminent massacre of Christians” was repeated by all Western representatives in the Ottoman Empire. Even a known Turcophile, Ambassador Elliot was urging London to send men-of-war to Beşik Bay in case of a need to protect the lives of the Christians in Istanbul.²¹ He also added that all of his colleagues requested from their Governments to send men-of-war in addition to the stationary ships already present in the vicinity of Istanbul.²²

Not only Istanbul and Salonika but other parts of the Empire as well were plagued by the fear of a potential massacre. However, more than any foreigners, those who were known as the United States’ citizens, were feeling a greater insecurity due their Consular agent’s presumed part in the Salonika incident. George Washburn, Director of Robert College at Istanbul, in his dispatch dated 8th of May to Horace Maynard claimed that “[...] the state of feeling among the Turks here is such as may reproduce on a grand scale the massacre of Salonika. [...] This most unfortunate occurrence has been so represented in the Turkish

¹⁹ *The New York Times*, May 22. Page 5

²⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1876 p.4.

²¹ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 9, no.13 a.

²² F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 10, no.14.

papers as not only to rouse the fanaticism of the Moslem population – which was already dangerously excited but also to direct it especially against Americans”.²³ Moreover, at 9th of May, the United States’ ambassador at Smyrna wrote to Horace Maynard. He told Maynard that, since the news of the assassination reached Smyrna, the Christian community became very excited and concerned. He added that, the fear of the *redifs* forced his colleagues to unanimously call their patron state to have them place some men-of-war to Smyrna Bay in case of an emergency.²⁴ As a result, Ambassador Maynard, called for Rear Admiral Worden, the captain of *Franklin* stationed at Nice to Aegean Sea in order to protect the lives of the United States’ subjects if need arose.

4.3. Antagonist or Protagonist; Consular Agent Lazzaro

The Muslim community in the Empire indeed targeted the United States’ Consular Agent Lazzaro. Evidently, the reason behind that was the account of Mehmed Refet Pasha. In his report, *vali* of Salonika, claimed that the Bulgarian girl was kidnapped as a result of the premeditated actions of the United States’ Consular Agent Pericles Hadji Lazzaro. He added that, those Christians numbered around one hundred and fifty, who tore the *yaşmak* and *ferâce* of the young Bulgarian that wanted to be a Muslim, were gathered to the scene by Lazzaro. This and other details from the account of Mehmed Refet Pasha was published in

²³ George Washburn to Mr. Maynard, Robert College 8 May, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure no.6 in no.66, Microcopy no.46.

²⁴ “Extract from a Letter from Mr. Simmitters? US Consul at Smyrna to Mr. Horace Maynard, May 9,” Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure no.6 in no.66, Microcopy no.46.

every official newspaper including of Salonika; *Selanik*.²⁵ Based on the information provided by the Pasha, the Porte sent the details of the incident to its representatives abroad.²⁶ This conception about Consul Lazzaro, was also shared by European capitals that built their perspectives on the reports received from the Porte.²⁷ The report of Mehmed Refet Pasha was as follows;

A Bulgarian girl of Avret-Hisar [...] accompanied by three police zaptiehs at her request to the Konak. On the way, two individuals on the part of the American Consul, attended by 150 other persons, took her away from the zaptiehs [...] having made her get into a carriage, conducted her to the house of a certain Hadji Lazzaro. [...] In consequence, about 5.000 Mussulmans came today (Saturday) to the Governor's Konak. The local authority [...] succeeded in dispersing the assembled mass of people [by assuring them] that it had already taken steps to procure the restitution of the girl. [...] However, crowded into the Saatly-Djami Mosque, near the Konak to insist upon their demand. As soon as I learnt of this assemblage, I took measures for speedy restitution of the girl. I sent several local notabilities and superior functionaries to the mosque to persuade the gathering to disperse; I immediately sent for armed assistance to the fortress [and] to the Imperial corvette Edirne [...] and I ordered the redifs to be called out. Meanwhile, the Consuls [...] proceeded to the mosque in question, and advanced amidst the crowd, who sought to impede their further progress. [...] I hurried to the mosque in company with the cadı [kadı] [...] I endeavored also, but in vain, to get the Consuls away. The girl at that moment in the house of the Consul of Germany (Mr. Abbott), the latter wrote a note directing that she should be immediately brought to the mosque. But there was delay in her arrival [...] the mob entirely tearing away the window irons, fell upon the Consuls and assassinated them both.²⁸

Consul Lazzaro was a logical choice as a prime suspect in the incident in the eyes of the Ottoman officers. It was almost natural to dub him as the puppet master in the kidnapping of Stephana at Salonika. At this point to discern why

²⁵ *The Times*, May 17, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28631; col D, The Salonica Assassinations. (FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.). and F.O. 881-2984, no.25 inclosure 1 Elliot to Derby May 8 "Telegrams from the Vali [Mehemet Refet Pasha]"

²⁶ F.O. 881-2984, Rashid Pasha to Musurus Pasha May 8 – to Earl of Derby, May 13, no.21.

²⁷ One of them was British Ambassador Elliot, in his telegraph to Earl of Derby he wrote; "The report of the American Consul appears to confirm the fact of his having taken a principal part in the seizing of the girl, which led to the catastrophe." F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 7, no.5.

²⁸ *The Times*, May 17, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28631; col D, The Salonica Assassinations.

Mehmed Pasha acted as he did, one must know more about Consul Lazzaro's identity. Ambassador Maynard, probably due to his own suspicions, made an inquiry on Consul Lazzaro and found that he was a Russian subject of Greek origin. He was the son of Hadji Lazzaro, deceased at the date, a man in his day of wealth and character in Salonika, to whose house in fact Stephana was taken for refuge. He was 28 years old and was born and generally lived in Salonika. His wife, recently deceased, was an American, a daughter of Mr. Upton of Virginia, the Consul of the United States of Geneva, described on all hands as a very capable and accomplished woman.²⁹ He was known by his "reputation of being an active Slav intriguer".³⁰

The identity of Lazzaro made him the enemy manifested itself in the flesh of an individual. He was a Greek national; an ethnic title acted as the prime center of suspicion since the Greek Independence. He was also a Russian subject, the nemesis of the Ottoman Empire whose political ambitions on the Balkans was a known fact. He was also an agent of the United States, a country known as the conductor of various missionary activities on the Ottoman soil, and a supporter of Greek national movement. The public opinion of the United States was against the Ottoman policies on the Balkans, and the press was antagonistic. The attitude of the American public opinion was known by most of the Ottoman spheres.³¹

Months after the incident at Salonika, Lazzaro decided to travel to the United States. On the cover, it was a vacation to visit an exposition; after being exposed to false accusations and upsetting events, his tired psyche called for a

²⁹ Maynard to Sec. of State, May 12, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.66, Microcopy no.46.

³⁰ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot to Derby, May 10 (received May 19), no.41.

³¹ For the reports on the negative approach of the United States on the Ottoman Empire, and antagonistic attitude of the American press towards the Porte see; BOA, *HR.SYS.*, Dosya No: 73, Gömlek No: 57 and BOA, *HR.SYS.*, Dosya No: 80, Gömlek No: 57.

break. In reality Lazzaro was trying to get United States' citizenship and protection.³² During his trip in the United States, he paid a visit to his countryman, another influential Greek at Washington; Aristachi Bey, the Ambassador of the Porte. Probably considering Aristachi Bey another champion of Greek National cause like himself, he spoke to him overtly about his intentions of becoming an American citizen. He told the ambassador about his desire to keep this decision hidden in order not to upset the Russian authorities in the Ottoman Empire prematurely. Although Lazzaro again denied his direct involvement in the kidnap of Stephana, Aristarchi Bey reported to the Sublime Porte (along with the other points in the conversation with him) that all of his reservations about the innocence of Lazzaro in the incident were justified, and he added in one of his other reports;

*Mr. Hadgi Lazaro [sic] seems to sympathize with the enemies of our country. I certainly had no evidence to produce, besides the support of my assertion, [but his] affinity with active agents of Pan Slavisme and the Greek [cause], I say, oblige us to monitor him.*³³

4.4. Revolt in Istanbul

The Muslims were furious about the supposed involvement of Lazzaro in the Salonika incident, and their perception of the event was based on the account of Mehmed Refet Pasha. Alas, the antagonist of Salonika, disappointing to some, was not present at the time of the kidnap at Salonika. This reality was either deliberately ignored or the Muslim public was misled by the wrong account of the

³² BOA. HR.SYS., Dosya No: 46, Gömlek No: 2, Aristarchi to Rashid Pacha.

³³ BOA. HR.SYS., Dosya No: 68, Gömlek No: 18, Aristarchi to Server Pacha.

vali. In all probability, Mehmed Refet Pasha jumped the gun; he sent his account too early without making an investigation and without knowing the details about the chain of events that led to the murder of the consuls. In the meantime, there was expectancy among the Christians and foreigners in the Ottoman Empire that the fury of the Muslims was bound to be transformed into a series of massacres directed against them. This expectancy was a making of the press, and the bleak atmosphere created by the problems in the Ottoman Balkans. The rumors ran rampant and the news of celebration of the murder of two consuls by the Muslims of Üsküdar was rubbing the salt in the wound.³⁴ In short, both sides had a common point; suspicion towards the other due to the external constructions.

While everyone was holding their breaths in the Empire, and waiting for something terrible to happen, turmoil seized Istanbul. It seemed *softas* (religious students of Sharia) were arming *en masse*.³⁵ They were selling their precious handwritten books to buy arms and ammunitions.³⁶ What purpose other than massacring the Christians of the Empire could have been the reason behind the armament of the most conservative sect of Istanbul, thought the foreigners and the Christians. As a consequence, they too commenced to buy arms for themselves in response to *softas*. In this cold war, if one can dub it, both sides bought revolvers and other sort of weapons until the shops of İstanbul were emptied.³⁷

Ostensibly, the fears of the Christians were justified; the agitated Muslims' wrath was about to be unleashed due to the incident at Salonika. In the light of the recent events, the reporter of *the Times* claimed that travelers were leaving the

³⁴ *The Times*, May 15, 1876; pg. 7; Issue 28629; col C, Turkey.

³⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 9, no.13 a.

³⁶ Mayard to Sec. of State, May 20, 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

³⁷ Mayard to Sec. of State, May 20, 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

Ottoman soil, resident Europeans were sending away their families and incessant applications were being made to Embassies by persons apprehensive of approaching danger.³⁸ However, there were some who tried to benefit from the apprehension; in the streets of Pera, the Russian Ambassador Ignatiev, paraded his three hundred strong men composed of Croats and Montenegrins. He claimed that it was necessary to have such a force present at the Russian Embassy to protect the lives of the Christians at Pera. He summoned other embassies in the vicinity to do the same or offered them refuge if they came under attack.³⁹ General Ignatiev acted as an *agent provocateur* in order to prove the inability of the Porte to provide security in its capital and to escalate the tension. Indeed the measures taken by him drew attention from Europe; the situation seemed so calamitous if mercenaries had to be gathered to protect the lives of the Christians. Even those who trusted in the power of the Porte considered that there was a reason to be concerned about the Muslim populace. Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha seemed to be inert in response to Ignatiev's mercenary parade. Nevertheless, there were some who criticized Ignatiev;

It is not at all surprising that Gen. Ignatieff [sic] should feel uneasy. Conscience makes cowards of us all, and the great diplomatist, when he reflects upon all the agony and death [...] which his subtle dealings have wrought, must sometimes feel a dart of compunction penetrate through the joints of his armour of cynicism. [...] his Excellency fills his palace at night with a bodyguard of several hundred Montenegrins and Croats to protect him from the vengeance of the Turkish populace: But the Russian ambassador may rest assured that the Turkish populace will not hurt a hair of his Excellency's head; Turkey has no crown of martyrdom to offer to General Ignatieff! Indeed, so baseless are his Excellency's fears that many believe them to be assumed and are persuaded that all this defensive preparations is mere *mise en scene* to force, [...] upon Europe the false impression that the Turks cannot keep order even in their capital, and that the rage of fanaticism boils so fiercely that even the lives of ambassadors

³⁸ *The Times*, May 13, 1876; pg. 11; Issue 28628; col C, At this momentous crisis in the affairs of Eastern

³⁹ Sir Henry George Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences* (London: J. Murray, 1922), pp.219-21.

are in peril. [...] the inhabitants of the quarter of Pera which is graced by the Russian Embassy, are more afraid of the General's mercenaries than they are of the Mahommedans of Stamboul [*sic*] [...]⁴⁰

The newspaper *the Daily Levant Herald* upon publishing the above words was suspended by the order of Mahmud Nedim Pasha, but the editor was embraced with numerous congratulations by Muslims and Christians, and the issue of the article became a rarity, selling at premium prices.⁴¹ Moreover, British Ambassador, defying and denying Ignatiev's claims on the security, overtly announced that the gates of his consulate would remain open even during the night.⁴²

Despite the assumptions, *softas* were not after the lives of the Christians. Their real target was the government and the Sultan. As it was discussed at the previous chapters, it was clear that Mahmud Nedim Pasha was not equal to the strong Âli and Fuad Pashas of older times. Also, he was accused of being incompetent during the crisis at Bosnia and Herzegovina, misdirecting the Ottoman finances, and -perhaps most importantly- of being under the strong influence of Ignatiev.⁴³ Şerif Mardin asserts that Mahmud Nedim's rule was incredibly disorganized and was mostly interested in keeping possible rivals out of sight.⁴⁴ Also, the policies of Sultan Abdülaziz were not popular among the people and the elite, thus some alliance was formed against him among some members of the Porte, composed mostly of Young Ottomans. According to Lütfi

⁴⁰ The Article of the Daily Levant Herald of 13 May, against the Russian Ambassador, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Enclosure 5 in no.67, Microcopy no.46.

⁴¹ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963) pp.328-329.

⁴² For an account of Ambassador Elliot see; Sir Henry George Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences* (London: J. Murray, 1922).

⁴³ İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Sultan Abdülâziz Vak'asına Dair Risale", *Belleten* vol. VII, no. 28 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), pp. 349-373, p.353.

⁴⁴ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962) p.62.

Efendi, it was those Young Ottomans under the influence of Mithat Pasha that incited *softas* to rise against the government.⁴⁵ *Softas* were not chosen as the torchbearers for reform, in fact, they represented, the largest organizable group in the capital, since most soldiers were on campaign on the Balkans. In addition, the rumors hastened the process and agitated the public opinion; the latest one was that the sultan requested thirty thousand Russian troops for his protection,⁴⁶ another repetition of the deplorable events following the defeats against Mehmed Ali of Egypt. For, at 1833 Sultan Mahmud II turned to the Russians for help to defend his capital against the approaching forces of Mehmed Ali, and allowed them to land troops near Istanbul, thus deeply hurting the Muslim pride in the empire.

The discontented *softas* held a meeting at Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque at 10 May. Contemporary chronicler Lutfi Efendi wrote that; on the May 10th, similar to the Janissaries refusing to drink their daily soups as a sign of revolt, the *softas* refused to attend the classes in Istanbul. Instead, they paraded the streets, shouting that the Empire should divert from the Russian bearing, and Mahmud Nedim Pasha should be replaced – not surprisingly they suggested Mithat Pasha’s name as the replacement.⁴⁷

The plot had a deep root; according to their plans, Abdülaziz was to be replaced by Şehzade Murad, the highly intelligent and cultivated nephew of the Sultan.⁴⁸ By Horace Mayard, *softas* demanded four heads; “The first was the donkey’s at Dolmabahçe, meaning the Sultan, [...] then the Grand Vizier’s, the

⁴⁵ İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Sultan Abdülâziz Vak’asına Dair Risale”, *Belleten* vol. VII, no. 28 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), pp. 349-373, p.354.

⁴⁶ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.324.

⁴⁷ İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Sultan Abdülâziz Vak’asına Dair Risale”, *Belleten* vol. VII, no. 28 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), pp. 349-373, p.354.

⁴⁸ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962) p.14.

Şeyhülislam's and Russian Ambassador's."⁴⁹ The most striking of all, the same *softas* presented as the would-be-murderers of the Christians, like an antithesis of assumptions of all of the Westerners and Christians, demanded one more thing; "severe punishment of murderers of two Consuls at Salonika, and to provide the necessary sentences to those who violated the customs and the laws of the country by instigating this murderous act".⁵⁰

On Friday the 12th the *softas* filled the streets of Istanbul once again. Their tone and demands were getting harsher; Mahmud Nedim Pasha barely escaped a pack of *softas* marching to Babiali, in all probability whose aim was to execute him. Not so later that Sultan Abdülaziz after being convinced on the inability of Mahmud Nedim to suppress the movement, announced the change in the government replacing him with Mehmed Rüşdü Paşa. The Sultan pronounced on the change of government directed to the new Grand Vizier; "because of the demands of the people that I bestow upon you this post"⁵¹, this signified that since the insurrections of janissaries for the first time an unrest affected the will of the Sultan and the names in the power.

⁴⁹ Mayard to Sec. of State, May 20, 1876, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.67, Microcopy no.46.

⁵⁰ "Talebe lisaniyle meydana çıkan teklifler bunlar imiş; [...] 4- Selânikte konsolosları katledenler kemal-i şiddetle tedib ve memleketin âdât ve kavaninine mugayir olarak bu katl maddesine sebep olanların dahi mücâzât-ı lâzimeleri verilmeli." İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Sultan Abdülâziz Vak'asına Dair Risale," *Belleten* vol. VII, no. 28 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), pp. 349-373, p.356.

⁵¹ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, cilt.VII Islahat Fermanı Devri (1861 – 1876)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), p.124.

CHAPTER V

SALONIKA REVISITED

5.1. The Trials and Punishments

While Istanbul was boiling, the Ottoman ship with the imperial commissioner Vahan Efendi, the new governor-general Eşref Pasha and French and German delegates on board, arrived in Salonika at May 9. The Ottoman reinforcement to the area was about six hundred men.¹ The former *vali*, Mehmed Refet Pasha used stern measures just after the incident and night curfews were in effect in the city. Although everything seemed quiet, Christians and foreigners of Salonika were still reluctant to go out, or trust in the Ottoman troops. For, it was all too well known about the iniquitous exploits of the *redifs* all around the Empire. In all probability, the fear about the *redifs* was well grounded, because even after the arrival of the commissioner, no arrests were made for two days due to the mistrust of the new *vali*'s towards the *redifs*. The foreign delegates and the consuls of Salonika were complaining that the number of troops were insufficient to enforce

¹ FO 881-2984, The Secretary to the Admiralty to Lord Tenterden, May 9, no.13.

order and to carry out the arrests. The calm in the city was interpreted as the silence before the storm by the foreign delegates.² Newspapers published that the restlessness was spreading, and Salonika was at the brink of anarchy since not enough troops were available; however, these claims were rejected by Eşref Pasha, who claimed in his dispatch to the Porte that perfect tranquility was prevailing in the city, and there were no signs of future troubles among the inhabitants.³ Indeed, soon after his report, the *vali* was reinforced by *nizamiye* (regular) soldiers. After a quick investigation, he ordered the arrest of thirty five individuals; which was also confirmed by Blunt's report.⁴ No resistance or disturbance occurred in the city during the detaining of the culprits, and they were taken to the Ottoman ironclad *Edirne*. The arrests continued throughout the week, the number of the culprits in custody reached to fifty three until the end of the week. All interrogations were carried out on board of recently arrived Ottoman flagship *Selimiye*.⁵

The *konak* was given to the French delegate Gillet, his German colleague Robert –who were sent there by their ambassadors- and British Consul Blunt for their safety and for the good of the investigation. Vahan Efendi, another new resident in the *konak*, was informing the foreign representatives with the developments, while Eşref Pasha was supervising the whole military operation on the security of the city and the safe conduct of arrests on horseback.⁶ Consul Blunt claimed that the commissioners carried out their duties in an able and firm manner, and the town during these arrests remained tranquil.⁷ The ships of war

² BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 124, Gömlek No:96.

³ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 554, Gömlek No:3.

⁴ FO 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 14, no.23.

⁵ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 554, Gömlek No.4.

⁶ FO 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 14, Inclosure 4 in no.64.

⁷ FO 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 14, Inclosure 1 in no.53.

continued to reach the Salonika bay as the investigation and arrests were carried out. Below is the list ships anchored at Salonika by 14th of May;

Nation	Name	Description	Guns	Crew	Commanders	When Arrived
Turkish	Edirne	Corvette	18	160	Osman Bey	
Turkish	Iclaliye	Corvette-ironclad	5	180	Rıza Bey	
Turkish	Selimiye	Frigate	52	430	Hasan Bey	May 8
Turkish	Sahir	Aviso	2	35	Omer Bey	
French	Gladiateur	Aviso	4	70	De Coudinon	May 9
British	Bittern	Gunboat	3	95	Anstruther	May 9
Greek	Salamine	Aviso	2	60	Chriasses	May 9
Greek	George I	Ironclad	4	125	Sakturis	May 10
Russian	Ascold	Corvette	8	309	Tirtov	May 10
Turkish	Muhbîr-i Surure	Frigate	16	319	Ali Rıza Bey	May 13
Italian	Maria Pia	Frigate-ironclad	19	...	Chinca	May 13
French	Chateau Renaud	Corvette	7	210	Grivel	May 13
British	Swiftsure	Ironclad	14	500	Ct.Baird	May 14
Italian	...	Gun-vessel	May 14

At May 14th, a small crisis of etiquette took place in the Salonika bay between the Ottoman and French vessels, which transcended the tension for a short time. Consul Blunt in his dispatch to Istanbul told that; when French corvette *Chateau Renaud* anchored in the Salonika bay, saluted the Russian Rear-Admiral Boutakoff's ship which was also anchored. According to marine customs he should also have also saluted the town of Salonika and the Ottoman Vice Admiral Hasan Bey's frigate *Selimiye*. Nevertheless, as time passed, it was clear that French corvette would not salute the Ottoman presence. Thus, the Ottoman Vice Admiral sent one of his officers to *Chateau Renaud* in order to demand explanations for their action. The French captain replied that "he could not salute

as his nation was in mourning”.⁸ The reply was dismissed and rejected by the Ottoman side. All this happened right at the time of the disembarkment of Ottoman marines with the objective to secure the roads and streets leading to the Frank and Greek quarters. While the anxiety reached the delegates residing in the *konak*, the German representative stepped out and intervened. With his intervention, the required salutes were exchanged and this inopportune event finished.⁹ Nevertheless, it was the first sign of French enmity towards the Ottoman side during the aftermath of the murders of two consuls.

At 15th of May, the trials of the murders began on board of *Selimiye*. During the trials, along with Vahan Efendi and Eşref Pasha, French and German delegates, and British Consul Blunt was present, nonetheless not a representative was called to attend the trials from the American Consulate. According to the investigations and based on the testimonies of the witnesses, said the Ottoman commissioners; six of the culprits were confirmed as the murderers of the two consuls.¹⁰ They were sentenced to capital punishment to be carried out at 16th of May. Nevertheless, during the trials, French representative Gillet and his German colleague who was influenced by him insisted on the same form of treatment which was bestowed upon the arrested culprits and also demanded a decisive punitive action, against the Ottoman officials -without exception of the former Governor General- who were, according to them, equally responsible for the murder of the two consuls.¹¹ The proposal was refused by the Ottoman commissioners on the claim that the power to judge and punish any Ottoman officer belonged to the Sublime Porte alone but not to a mixed tribunal composed

⁸ FO 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 14, Inclosure 4 in no.64.

⁹ FO 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 14, Inclosure 4 in no.64.

¹⁰ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 554, Gömlek No:3.

¹¹ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 554, Gömlek No:4.

of foreign representatives. The move by the Ottoman commissioners found support from Consul Blunt and thus the trials of Ottoman officers were left to Istanbul.¹²

On May 16th, on the quay of Salonika, the sentences of six primary culprits were carried out in the presence of the Ottoman commissioners, French and German delegates and Consul Blunt.¹³ Early in the morning, native Jews came to the quay with picks in their hands, prepared holes for the scaffolds which were brought by the Ottoman ships. The scene was protected by the three sides with lines of infantry; moreover a regiment of cavalry was ready nearby in case of a riot. Soon after the preparations, the six culprits came with boats from *Selimiye*, on board of which they had been condemned to death, with a company of Ottoman troops and an imam. Water offered to them and they were allowed to perform their ablutions. The imam from *Selimiye* spoke to them and they said some quick prayers. Some gypsies and Albanians were hired as executioners; they adjusted the ropes and made the final preparations. The first to suffer, Consul Blunt told, was an Arab; he having refused to be polluted by the touch of an Albanian, kicked the chair he mounted under him which was borrowed from a nearby café. Blunt also added that the other five were almost eager to die since they helped the executioners to do their jobs. The witnessing mob was indifferent to these scenes and they dispersed soon after the executions. *The Times* correspondent claimed that nine scaffolds were erected for the executions and he added, the fact that six people were hanged instead of nine created some

¹² BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 554, Gömlek No:4.

¹³ The narrative of the executions is provided by the Consul Blunt's letter and "*The Times*". FO 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, May 17. no.60, *The Times*, June 03, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28646; Col D. "Salonica After the Assassinations", *A correspondedent write*.

confusion,¹⁴ nevertheless it was a common practice to prepare more scaffolds than needed just in case.

The standing of the punished was neither satisfactory for the foreign press nor for the French led representation in Salonika. Since the six were from the lowest strata of the society, there was a shared apprehension among the foreigners that the real instigators of the murders still remained unpunished. This notion echoed among the European capitals, and again Ottoman diplomats faced accusations and complaints on this issue.¹⁵ The press supported the notion and championed for the punishment of people of higher position to prevent possible bursts of the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. *The Times* wrote; “In order to produce an impression they must search out the instigators and get hold of a few gentlemen who are called Bey or Effendi [*sic*]. By executing one or two of them in the midst of the towns [...] they may instill a little terror into the souls of these fanatics, who we may now be sure, will only await another opportunity for carrying out whatever designs they harbour.”¹⁶

The call of the foreign press and European capitals was not without reason. During the investigations, although no reflections found in the accounts of the Consul Blunt or in the Ottoman correspondence, a certain Emin Efendi's role was like a slim shadow behind the reasons of the whole event.¹⁷ Emin Efendi was an inhabitant of Salonika, and a member of the city council. His name was mentioned here and there during the incident; he was even present among the delegate which went to Saatli Camii while the two consuls were trapped in there.

¹⁴ *The Times*, June 03, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28646; Col D. Salonica After the Assassinations, *A correspondent write*.

¹⁵ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 122, Gömlek No:58.

¹⁶ *The Times*, June 03, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28646; Col D. Salonica After the Assassinations, *A correspondent write*.

¹⁷ I suspect that indeed Emin Efendi played his share in the kidnapping of Stephana in her village and her arrival at Salonika. But the documents available were or never will be adequate to clarify the extent of his role in the incident.

From the moment when the news of the incident became known to the public, newspapers were pointing fingers to this Emin Efendi, claiming that it was him who had Stephana kidnapped at Bogdantza to be destined to his personal harem, and not only that, when Stephana was taken from him at the Salonika train station, he thus tried to agitate the local Muslims for a joint effort for the rescue of the girl. Most likely based on the account of Lazzaro; a copy of the similar narration about the causality of the incident was also repeated by Meropi Anastassiadou.¹⁸ Lazzaro's detailed report to Maynard in which he claimed that almost certainly Stephana's purpose of arriving at Salonika was to enter the harem of Emin Efendi, who according to him; "does not enjoy a good reputation, and it is he that public opinion points out as being the principal instigator of the mischief".¹⁹

These accusations were not groundless or were not a manifestation of an attempt to divert the attention on the Lazzaro's role in the event, on the contrary; the Ottoman commissioner Vahan Efendi was very suspicious whether indeed Emin Efendi was a prime ringleader in the incident. During the interrogations at Stephana's village Bogdantza, Vahan Efendi to each interrogated individual, without any exception, inquired on their acquaintance of Emin Efendi. Vahan Efendi's conviction was clear since in order to find at least a bit of information, he described Emin Efendi to each and every one, in case they did not know his name. All of the villagers answered as they did not know who he was, as if they made a secret pact not to tell anything. Only once a villager admitted that he had heard of him, since Emin Efendi was a *vekil* (deputy) of a plantation near Bogdantza.²⁰

¹⁸ Meropi Anastassiadou, *Salonique, 1830-1912 Une ville ottomane a l'âge des Réformes* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) pp.392-394.

¹⁹ Lazzaro to Maynard, May 25, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), Inclosure 1 in no.71, Microcopy no.46.

²⁰ The conversation was as follows;

With this information Emin Efendi was linked to Bogdantza. Vahan Efendi thus interrogated Emin Efendi too, in which, he admitted that he was in the same train with Stephana but he neither saw nor heard of her or her kidnapping at the train station. Even so, Vahan Efendi because of little confidence he inspired, had him exiled for the duration of three years to Tripoli Africa,²¹ defined by *The Times*; “no very unpleasant place”.²²

Along with the six who were executed and Emin Efendi; three were condemned to prison for life with hard labor, two to prison for ten years with hard labor, eleven condemned to prison for five years with hard labor, three to prison for three years with hard labor, one to prison for one month and an eleven years old boy, was whipped for stealing the watch of the German consul after he was murdered, in total, thirty five culprits were trialed and punished.²³ Ottoman officers were not tried by this court but instead they held in the city until an envoy from Istanbul arrived to judge them.

Q. [...] Emin Effendi, connais-tu cette personne? –R. Je l’ai entendu dire comme Kiatab de Mahkemé, mais je ne le connais pas personnellement. [...]

Q. Tu dis d’avoir entendu parler d’Emin Effendi, à quel propos en as-tu entendu? –R. Comme Vekil de Chehimé Khasun, femme de Fellah Effendi, 1er Gouverneur des moraiés, c’est à ce propos que j’ai entendu parler de lui.

Q. Cette Chehima possède-t-elle des propriétés ici? – R. Elle possède le Tschiplik de Madjicova.

Q. Très bien, puisqu’Emin Effendi est le Vekil du Tschiplik de Madjicova sans doute il y serait venu, l’as-tu vu? –R. Non; jamais je ne l’ai vu.

F.O. 881-2984, Evidence taken at the Village of Bogdantza, Blunt to Derby, June 21 1876, Inclosure 4 in no.106, “L’Exposé de Feizoullah Aga, un des Membres du Conseil des Vieillards du Village”.

²¹ F.O. 881-2984, Statement relative to Convictions of Individuals implicated in Murder of French and German Consuls, Blunt to Derby, June 18, Inclosure 2 in no. 105.

²² *The Times*, Wednesday, June 21, 1876; pg. 6; Issue 28661; col E. Salonica Inquiry.

²³ F.O. 881-2984, Statement relative to Convictions of Individuals implicated in Murder of French and German Consuls, Blunt to Derby, June 18, Inclosure 2 in no. 105.

5.2. The Funerals of the French and German Consuls

The question on the security provided by the Ottoman officers in Salonika was resulted in a delay of the funerals of the French and German Consuls. The Porte had promised in the ambassadorial meeting at 7th of May “that the funeral of the two Consul shall take place publicly at Salonica, with every attendant pomp and ceremony”. Since May 11th, there was discretion in the conduct of arrests at Salonika. Consul Blunt reported that the Ottoman officers did not have enough forces under their command to guarantee that the funeral ceremonies would be conducted with every mark of honor and they could take place without risk of further disturbances.²⁴ Eşref Pasha was constantly corresponding with the Porte about the safe conduct of the funerals. Meanwhile, the Russian Admiral was strongly in favor of landing an armed party of marines, from each of the European ships if possible, to act as a task force to keep the order during the honors of the funerals. The Russian Admiral added, this ostensibly firing squads, would carry blank cartridges in their ammunition pouches.²⁵ This plan was gradually abandoned, because of a strong possibility to incite the local Muslims to take action, by landing troops under arms. Nevertheless, the funerals were constantly postponed even after the trials and the executions of the six culprits.

While the funerals were postponed, another forgotten aspect of the murders became evident. The tragedies of families of the two consuls were almost forgotten. Although the Porte promised to pay compensations to the families of the consuls, the other promise about the conduct of the funerals were still not carried out. The delegates of France and Germany, and Consul Blunt received

²⁴ F.O. 78-2495, Blunt to Elliot, May 11, no.23.

²⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Captain Anstruther to Elliot, May 11, inclosure 1 in no.64.

letters from Abbott and Moulin families. Mrs. Catherine P. Rallie, cousine of Henry Abbott, wrote the following letter to Blunt;

[...]I beg of you, in the name of all the family, to have a special meeting and take strong measures for the quietness of the place as the funeral must take place tomorrow, otherwise this delay will be paid by poor aunt's life, who is today very bad, and insists upon the funeral taking place today; but at least we have succeeded in pacifying her, promising that early tomorrow it will take place.²⁶

Thus, Consul Blunt insisted upon a quiet funeral with only the delegates and the families attending, without any pomp or military presence. The French representative Gillet complained to Paris about the lack of cooperation on Blunt's account. From there the issue made known Blunt, and he answered for the accusations by stating that he was just concerned about the humane side of the tragedy, as such was the pain of mother Abbott as having the disfigured body of his son in her house for days.²⁷ Nevertheless, the idea was rejected by the delegates who insisted on a flamboyant funeral ceremony.

The awaited funeral took place at 19th of May, three days after the executions. In the morning, fifteen sailors from Austrian, British, French, German, Greek, Italian and Russian ships assembled at Salonika quay. Vahan Efendi, the delegate of France and Germany, Russian, and French admirals, joined a large body of the deceased proceeded to the Roman Catholic Church for the ceremony where the body of Consul Jules Moulin was placed. The church was decorated and crowded for the event. Inside the church, French and German sailors were standing as guards of honor, meanwhile Russian and British sailors lined up outside. After the ceremonies, the coffin of Moulin was carried to the French ship which was waiting at the harbor to sail with it to France. The coffin was escorted

²⁶ F.O. 881-2984, Mrs.Ralli (Catherine P. Ralli cousine of the consul) May 10, Inclosure 3 in no.64.

²⁷ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Elliot, May 12, Inclosure 2 in no.64.

by a company headed by the clergy, the *vali* of Salonika; Eşref Pasha, Vahan Efendi and a forward guard of Ottoman soldiers.²⁸ On the coffin was placed the sword, the uniform and the decorations of the late consul. At the either sides of the coffin were the French and German sailors and they were followed by the officers of representatives of the present powers at Salonika. Upon reaching the shore, the coffin was delivered to the French Naval Chaplains to be put on the French flagship. As the body left the shore, salutes fired from the ships. The ceremony took about two hours, after that the crowd moved to the Greek church of St. Nicola for the funeral of Henry Abbott.²⁹

The coffin of the German consul Abbot was placed at the center of the church. The sailors took their positions in the same manner as in the first funeral. A slight change was on the position of the honor guards; German troops positioned themselves at the right side of the coffin and the French at the left. The burial services were carried out by the participation of the entire clergy of Salonika's Orthodox Greek churches. The body of Henry Abbot was buried in the cathedral's cemetery in the Greek quarter of the city. This ceremony took about half an hour, and both of the funerals took place with no sign of atrocity and in perfect tranquility.³⁰

²⁸ It was not unheard-of to Ottoman soldiers giving their respects to the non-Muslim clergy or be present in a Christian or Jewish funeral as guards of honor, in fact, since Tanzimat, Ottoman soldiers were ordered to turn and present arms whenever a Patriarch or a metropolitan passed before them, they were also present in the funerals of a non-Muslim who had been in the service of the state, despite the presence of the crucifix and such. Salâhi R. Sonyel, "Tanzimat and its Effects on the non-Muslim Subjects of the Ottoman Empire", in *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994), pp.353-389, p.371.

²⁹ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, May 17 (received May 30) no.60.

³⁰ F.O. 881-2984, Blunt to Derby, May 17 (received May 30) no.60.

5.3. Trials and Re-Trials of the Ottoman Officers

The European capitals were satisfied with the conduct of the funerals by the Ottoman officers. Only two issues remained unresolved in the eyes of the European powers; first, the punishment of the Ottoman officers who neglected their duties during the murders of the two consuls and second, the compensations to be paid to the families of the victims. Nevertheless, these two issues, however seemed unlikely after the funerals, were to be the future causes of more crises between the capitals and the Sublime Porte.

During the inquiry at Salonika, the delegates excluding Britain, were trying to act as the judges, but according to the Foreign Minister Reşhid Pasha; “the duty of the delegates was to watch the proceedings, to endeavor to elicit all the facts, and to express their opinions freely as to the culpability of the accused, but not to take part in pronouncing the sentences”, and all the ambassadors concurred with this notion.³¹ The Sublime Porte insisted that the crisis occurred due to the negligence of its officers who were under its jurisdiction; since the positions of the officers were bestowed by the Porte, thus the Porte was the maker of these men and the Porte alone could unmake them. The Porte took the full responsibility of its officers and did not dismiss the issue as an exceptional or individual case.

Apparently, the Porte was cautious enough to dodge possible accusations from the European powers that the promises given at *Gülhane Hattı* of 1839 and *Islahat Fermanı* of 1856, once again breached. The Porte according the second

³¹ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 28, no.87.

point of the Ambassadorial meeting of 7th of May, -concerning “that all the provincial *valis* (governors-generals) shall be instructed to exercise redoubled vigilance in order to maintain public tranquility and that they shall be held directly responsible for any disturbances arising in the provinces under their administration”³²- promulgated a memorandum by the hands of the Grand Vizier to all of the provincial governments a list of orders soaked with warnings. The tone, the chosen words and the established causality of the event is of cardinal importance in order to grasp the Porte’s own view of the Salonika incident, and its desire to appear in the eyes of the foreign powers as the loyal preserver of the promised reform ideas. The memorandum was like this; the causes of the murders were portrayed as simply Stephana’s decision and the mob’s reckless endeavor in order to rescue her. The two consuls were killed because they happened to be in the scene, nevertheless, the action was dubbed as a terrible, inhumane crime committed against the representatives of the great powers. It went on implicating that the crime deeply saddened the Sultan who ordered severe punishment of the culprits. Thus, the memorandum delicately referred to *Gülhane Hattı* of 1839, with a duplication of the points on how the state’s primary duty was the protection of lives and properties of its subjects. It stated that the lives, the properties and the dignity (the same order of words in the text of *Gülhane* of 1839)³³ of merchants and diplomats of foreign origin, residing at the Ottoman Empire were also under the protection of the state, ergo the officers of the Empire, from lowest to highest rank, were entirely responsible for the protection of them. Burdened with these points, the officers were ordered to take lessons from the Salonika incident and

³² Mayard to Secretary of State, Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, (1818-1909), Roll 30 v.29 (January 1 – August 10, 1876), no.66, Microcopy no.46.

³³ Ali Reşad, *Devlet-i Âli Osmani'nin Tarih-i Islahatı* (Istanbul: 1328) p.477.

once again pay utmost attention to the safeguard of lives of the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects and the lives of the foreign representatives as well.³⁴

As the memorandum dictated, the Ottoman Officers were trialed. The trials were not carried out until early June due to the chaos in the capital caused by the coup d'état that toppled Abdülaziz and placed Murad V to his place. With the evidence gathered from Salonika by Commissioner Vahan Efendi, at 2nd of June the military judges for the court-martial left Istanbul for Salonika.³⁵ Vahan Efendi in his letter to the Grand Vizierate explained the decisions of the court-martial in detail. According to the interrogations and the evidences gathered, the court was convinced that; although in his statement, Colonel Salim Bey declared that he was not aware of the mob's aim, he nevertheless strived to take the necessary precautions, but he eventually failed to prevent the murders and was charged for not preventing the mutilation of the bodies of the two consuls.³⁶ The commander of the citadel's garrison Miralay Atta Bey, was charged because he did not send the necessary troops to the Saatli Camii in time, and diverted some of the troops from their ways. The commander of the Ottoman ironclad *Iclaliye*, Izzet Bey was charged for not drawing some troops despite his awareness on the severity of the situation. Coming to the former *vali* Mehmed Refet Pasha; he was charged for not dispersing the crowd gathered in front of the *konak* for whose purpose was the reclamation of Stephana, and for not rescuing the two consuls when they were surrounded in the mosque and for not ordering an armed assault on the mob when the situation became dire. Vahan Efendi noted that, the foreign delegates strongly accused the aforementioned officers of intentionally leaving the two consuls to the

³⁴ BOA, *C.DH.*, Dosya No: 13, Gömlek No: 609.

³⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 2, inclosure 1 no.76.

³⁶ For a financial report on the inquiry of Vahan Efendi refer to; BOA, *İ.ŞD.*, Dosya No: 36, Gömlek No:1853.

mercy of the mob. Nevertheless, Vahan Efendi added that, there was no evidence supporting the allegations of the delegates, and no indication of whatsoever on ulterior motives.³⁷

The decisions came swiftly at 12th of June; Colonel Salim Bey was condemned to degradation and imprisonment for one year; commander of the citadel's garrison Miralay Atta Bey, and the commander of the Ottoman ironclad *Iclaliye* Izzet Bey were both were sentenced to imprisonment for forty-five days. Apparently, former *vali* Mehmed Refet Pasha did not receive any form of formal punishment.³⁸

The French and German sides became infuriated with the degrees of the punishments. Again, the sides forwarded their complaints to the Porte's representatives in their capitals about the insufficiency of the punishments given to the officials, whom, according to them, were the most accountable after the murderers themselves.³⁹ According to the capitals, the delegates' struggle with the Ottoman authorities to apply justice was a complete failure. Also, British consul Blunt was accused of not exerting his influence in support of the representations of the delegates, thus, he was named as a prime reason for the lenient treatment of the trialed Ottoman officers.⁴⁰ Faced with the recent developments, German representation at London asserted that the government of Germany might find themselves at the same situation of Britain after the murders at Jeddah 1858, and might enforce their claims like British ships of war did, in short by the appliance

³⁷ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No:516, Gömlek No:52.

³⁸ F.O. 881-2984, Derby to Odo Russell, June 14, no.68.

³⁹ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 122, Gömlek No: 58.

⁴⁰ It is striking that at the same British subjects of Salonika sent a joint letter expressing their esteem and regard to the consul Blunt, plus their satisfaction of his actions. F.O. 881-2984, Address of British Residents of Salonika to Consul Blunt, May 29, Inclosure 1 in no. 89.

of gunboat diplomacy.⁴¹ The fears of the Porte were resurrected on the nature of the Salonika Incident.

At 14th of June, the decision of the military court was annulled for the reasons no other than the complaints from Germany and France. Prince Bismarck himself, was annoyed with the whole conduct of the trials, and resented deeply from the resolution of the Porte to bar the delegates from being the judges. Bismarck was inclined to consider the Porte as a culprit in the incident; his tone was very strong and imperative in favor of reparation. The directives of Bismarck to his ambassador Baron Werther, put the latter in a difficult position as “the ambassador’s own disposition has been to act with moderation.”⁴² The opposite could be said for the French ambassador Count de Bourgoing, who acted with his personal hatred to humiliate the Porte without considering any form of temperance.⁴³ Count de Bourgoing, in his private talk with Ambassador Elliot, made it clear that for the last six years, (he meant after the defeat of France against the Prussians at 1870) his country “had been exposed wanton affronts and mortification the *misérables* Turks”, and now, since the recovery of France, it was again in their power to punish the Porte, Elliot summarized the words of de Bourgoing as “I will not further repeat Count de Bourgoing’s words, and will only state that they were susceptible of no possible interpretation expecting that [...] far from wishing to avert measures likely to be fatal to Turkey, will only be too glad to contribute to her ruin.”⁴⁴ This time instead of Salonika, Istanbul was designated as the place of the new trial which was ordained to begin immediately, yet without the presence of Consul Blunt; he was not summoned to İstanbul as his

⁴¹ F.O. 881-2984, Derby to Odo Russell, June 14, no.68.

⁴² F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14, no.70.

⁴³ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 14, no.70.

⁴⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 6 (received June 16), no.88.

colleagues considered him biased in favor of the Ottomans.⁴⁵ It was clear that the new trial was not pressed by the two sides for truth and reconciliation but to disgrace the Porte, and injure it as much as possible.

During the second trial, the German and the French ambassadors insisted on capital sentences on the accused officers. The delegates intimidated the Ottoman authorities by threatening to withdraw from the court and break off the relations with the Porte, if their demands were not satisfied.⁴⁶ Foreign Minister Reşid Pasha himself had to intervene to avert the ambassadors of their insistences. He told the ambassadors, how sincerely the Porte considered the cases in the affair, and requested them not to force down their demands about the infliction of any punishment beyond that which was sanctioned by the law of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷ As a consequence, the ambassadors were coerced not to be adamant on the capital punishments.⁴⁸

The three officers were re-trialed, this time joined with the former *vali* of Salonika. According to the Sublime Porte's own correspondence, the trial was no longer a case of justice in the internal affairs, but it was a political case concerning the diplomatic relations between the Porte and the Great Powers. The reasons for the re-trial was clear; the punishments in the first one were not considered adequate by the foreign powers, and it was not prudent to prolong the affair while many other important problems dominating the scene.⁴⁹ Thus, according to the decisions of the special court; Mehmed Refet Pasha due his negligence to prevent the affair was sentenced to imprisonment in the General Staff (*Bâb-ı Ser'askerî*), the other officers sentences were increased because of their delay in executing the

⁴⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 15, no.81.

⁴⁶ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 19 (received June 30), no.104.

⁴⁷ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, May 28 (received June 16), no.87.

⁴⁸ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, June 28, no.102.

⁴⁹ BOA, *Irade Dahiliye*, Dosya No: 1295, Gömlek No: 101782.

orders which would prevent the two murders. Colonel Salim Bey condemned to degradation and fifteen years of hard labor (*küireğe konulmasına...*), Rıza Bey to ten years of imprisonment in a fortress and degradation, and finally Captain Atta Bey to three years of imprisonment in fortress and degradation. Rıza Bey was designated to Rhodes and Atta Bey to Lesbos Isle to suffer their punishments.⁵⁰

At the epilogue of the event, still the French and German sides were seeking out for more means to debase the Porte. Certainly, the revised sentences on the officers satisfied the two sides, nonetheless their perpetual interference during the creation of the decisions encouraged them to demand more. The German and the French ambassadors required these three to be fulfilled;

- 1st. That the condemned officers shall be removed to Salonica [sic], and the sentences on them read in presence of troops and the delegates.*
- 2nd. That a written shall be given that the late Governor shall never again have any civil or military employment*
- 3rd. That the whole of the indemnity to the families of the Consuls, amounting to 40.000 (900.000 Francs) L. Turkish shall be paid [immediately].⁵¹*

The Grand Vizier had to respond that the first two of the demands were contradictory of the Ottoman Law, and for the last point, he said, the treasury was empty. The demands were in form of an ultimatum as British Ambassador Elliot's own words defined them.⁵² The Porte tried to protest the demands, recalling the promises of the ambassadors to Raşid Pasha to not insist on nothing inconsistent with the Ottoman Law, it did not have any effect. Paris gave a deadline as the mid August for the full compliance to the points of its ambassador, or else it made it known to the Ottoman Ambassador that, noncompliance would result in severance

⁵⁰ BOA, *Irade Dahiliye*, Dosya No: 1295, Gömlek No: 101782. A few years later ex-Colonel Salim Bey would apply to the Porte to convert his sentence from forced labor (*küirek*) to imprisonment due to his old age and misery, but this request was denied. BOA, *DH.MKT.*, Dosya No: 1326, Gömlek No: 28.

⁵¹ F.O. 881-2984, no.119 Elliot to Derby, August 1 (received same)

⁵² F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, August 1 (received same) no.119.

of the relations with the Porte.⁵³ The Grand Vizier still had hard time to understand what was behind this vindictive spirit, “the demand for a written engagement not to employ the Governor-General is, he said, an aggravation of the legal sentence passed, and designed simply as a humiliation to the Porte”, as for the demand of that sum of money, he added that he hardly understood “how professedly friendly Powers, acquainted with the absolute destitution of the Turkish Treasury, could have put forward this.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Elliot advised him to accept the demands, although he also expressed that the demands were evidently carrying unfairness to the Ottoman authorities who showed nothing but willingness to do justice, and referring to the payment he noted it was “hardly what was expected from the Representatives of friendly Powers.”⁵⁵

August the 21st marked the day of silence for the echoes of the Salonika Incident. The reviewed sentences of the Ottoman officers were read at their former posts at Salonika, in presence of its habitants. After this the German and the French flags were hoisted at the Salonika citadel. Guns from the citadel saluted each flag with twenty-one guns, the salutes returned by the German and the French ships of war anchored in the Salonika Bay.⁵⁶ While the foreign ships of war leaving Salonika, Ottoman Treasury was making the final transactions of the amount which were conjured to pay the final indemnity to the families of the murdered consuls.

⁵³ BOA, *HR.TO.*, Dosya no: 122, Gömlek: 76.

⁵⁴ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby August 1 (received August 11), no.121.

⁵⁵ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby, August 3 (received August 11), no.122.

⁵⁶ F.O. 881-2984, Elliot to Derby August 22 (received September 8), no.125.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

“I should also report to your Lordship that the manifestations of public joy have not been interrupted or disfigured by any act of disorder or ill feeling. The quay, the principal streets, the bazaars, and the coffee-houses were crowded with Turks, Greeks, Jews, Levantines and Europeans, all mingled together, men, women, and children, as if their national and religious feelings had not been wounded by the recent horrid occurrences; antipathy of race appeared to been forgotten and forgiven.”

Consul Blunt to Ambassador Elliot, on the celebrations in Salonika upon the news of Enthronement of Sultan Murad V right after the Salonika Incident.¹

The Salonika Incident was not a political crisis but its results were indeed profoundly politicized. To understand post factum politicization of this incident by the European powers, one must embrace a larger vision on history of the 19th century Ottoman Empire. In the timeline of the events, introduction of Tanzimat reforms can mark the inauguration of the integration of Ottoman Empire to European inner politics. True, the Ottoman Empire was never a peripheral actor in Europe, but it was to some extent an alien factor, and with Tanzimat, it adopted a more European look – at least for its superstructure. This recognition and

¹ Great Britain, Parliament, Commons. *Parliamentary Papers, 1876: Turkey No. 4 (1876). Correspondence Respecting The Murder of the French and German Consuls at Salonica*, n.56 p.40.

acceptance opened the flood gates for the penetration of new ideologies and innovations. Digesting these renovations was painful for the Ottoman Society, as Cemal Kafadar pointed out, this “Westoxication” may even quickened its dismemberment and its fall, just like the effects of Perestroika for the Soviet Union.² The reforms gave European powers collateral right to intervene more to the inner functions of the Empire. Moreover, the Crimean War positioned the Porte in the core of Europe, arguably not for the sympathy of the European powers towards it but because of the apprehension from Russian advance. The timing of the incident is of cardinal importance in order to understand the politicization and the grave nature attributed to it by Europe. The Balkans was in flames during May 1876, rebellions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have spread to Bulgaria. Serbia was preparing for war under Russian General and Panslavist Cherniyayev while volunteers were filling the ranks of his army from Russia. The news of recent atrocities in the Balkans (i.e. Batak) was barely reached Europe when this incident occurred. It was not surprising that European public opinion perceived the incident as if it was related to the entire package of recent crises in the Ottoman Empire.

The Balkans for various reasons was in the eyesight of Europe. It was the westernmost part of the Ottoman Empire, home of ethnicities who shared principals of Christianity with Europe, thus it was easier to establish bonds empathy with them. Even though, the conditions of the Balkan Christian were not worse than its Muslim neighbor or a Russian *muzhik*, it was more convenient for Europe to project and overstate of their impecunious status. A European’s mind was more pervious to believe in the accounts of Muslim/Oriental oppression on

² Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, Vol.1-2 (1997-1998), p.71-72.

the Balkans. Conversely, the Ottoman Empire was reluctant to establish a decentralized rule on its heterogeneous parts, despite the fact that it lacked educated manpower and material to realize a firm one. As the penetration of Europe in the Balkans intensified so did the self awareness of the Balkan peoples. Dubbing all the ethnic movements as political tools with European bearing would be a mistake. For instance, Bulgarian intelligentsia around 1870s certainly desired their own national state and they welcomed a Russian intervention but as their saviors not as their new sovereigns.³ Moreover, Europe was not in a consensus on the Balkan ethnicities, British Prime Minister Disraeli said autonomy would be less absurd for Ireland than autonomy for Bosnia.⁴

Under such conditions arrived the year of deluge. At 1875, the Ottoman armed forces were spread thin in the Balkans; subduing revolting Christian peasants in one part, halting inter-communal violence in another part while fighting a symmetric warfare against Serbia and Montenegro. Mahmud Nedim Pasha proved himself that he earned the sobriquet *Nedimov* rightly; due to Ignatiev's manipulations he mismanaged the crisis in the Balkans, and to further alienate the Porte's allies declared bankruptcy. *Başıbozüks* were filling for the army, and their bloody exploits enraged the European public opinion toward the Porte. When two consuls were killed, two of their own, not in a backwater town but in a cosmopolitan port city which many Europeans heard of, it was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

The Salonika Incident could have been a simple tension, without a loss of life but it was disaster for both humanity and for the Porte's image in Europe. It

³ Charles Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press Westport, 1958), p.vii.

⁴ R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern question* (New York: The Norton Library, 1972), p.22.

was ironic for Europe to overreact to an incident that happened in a place which they considered as violence as its norm. “There is far less reason for surprise that it should have led to the loss of two lives than that it should not have cost more” Ambassador Elliot pronounced, “for, even in this country say at Glasgow, Dublin, or Belfast if a girl about to take the veil was violently carried off by a Protestant mob, it would be well if the riot that would ensue did not lead to worse consequences.”⁵ Moreover, even contemporaries raised the question on extremism of reactions of the European powers. Benjamin Franklin Butler, former general for the Union in the American Civil War, made a striking remark on the Salonika Incident;

[...] But a more striking recent example is an outrage similar in its facts, that of Salonika. In the State of Mississippi, a Negro was accused of stealing a cow. The Turks from Salonika who accused two Consuls Europeans in this city to have kidnapped a Turkish girl, and [the Muslims] killed them for revenge. [...] In America, it suffices to rend the same punishment for a cow! I quote the words of the New York Herald, May 24 "Murder of the Negroes" New Orleans 23 May 1876 "The Picayune says that twenty-nine Negroes were killed in the Wilkinson County (Mississippi) during the latest unrest here." No Christian nation has sought justice for the massacre. Nobody has been punished [...] No warship has been dispatched to the scene of the outrage to the request by the cannon, the punishment of murderers and indemnity for widows and orphans of victims. But after a conference of the Cabinet, an order was transferred to the Troops Commander of the United States, to intervene in order to prevent further bloodshed. In his report the officer said: "That all is quiet in the place or the case in place" which is undoubtedly true, since the Negroes are dead and this tells us that "The secretary of war is delighted." This did not happen in Turkey but near Vicksburg, [somewhere] under the protection of the flag of the United States.⁶

The Salonika Incident also reveals one other point about the society of the Ottoman Balkans; this could be the assertion on the lack of parallelism between the modernization of the superstructure of the state and the public masses. In this incident, despite the 37 years of emphasis since *Gülhane* on the equality of

⁵ Sir Henry George Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences* (London: J. Murray, 1922), p.219-20.

⁶ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, Dosya No: 45, Gömlek No: 46, Aristarchi to Reşid Paşa.

religions in the Empire, a single agitation ignited a mass reaction even in a cosmopolitan European city such as Salonika.

The roots of misperception of the Balkans lie in the Eastern Question; what to do with the European part of the Ottoman Empire was an ever-recurring question for the intelligentsia of the 19th century.⁷ The Balkans was *terra incognita* until the Greek Revolution. It was and still is, a place more imagined than visited, a synonym of a futile attempt of mixing the unmixable, a maze or a puzzle.⁸ Even after the Greek Revolution, encounters of the western travelers in the Balkans were filled with the reflections of their disappointments.⁹ Still today perceived by some scholars as a pejorative term; “balkanization is associated with ethnic territorial conflict”.¹⁰ Due to its close proximity to the West the Balkans was the most vulnerable part to the foreign interests and influence in Ottoman Empire. The availability of many Christian communities living under the Ottoman rule made the Balkans a rather sentimental issue for most of the Great Powers.

The Eastern Question was for all its intent and purposes; a mental shortcut, a shared construction. Subjects of the Eastern Question like the ethnicities in the Balkans were also affected by the black and white approach which took its toll on the Salonika Incident. The Balkan peoples and the life in the Balkans in the 19th century were an imagined phenomenon for a westerner; it was a social and cultural construction where all communities were distinguished not by their falsity

⁷ Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (New York: Reprints of Economic Classics August M. Kelley, 1969), p.2.

⁸ Ipek K. Yosmaoğlu, “Counting Bodies, Shaping Souls: the 1903 Census and National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia” *Int. J. Middle East Studies*, vol. 38, (2006), p.59.

⁹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.62-88.

¹⁰ Mark Ellis and Richard Wright, “The Balkanization Metaphor in the Analysis of U.S. Immigration” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Dec., 1998), p.687.

of genuineness, but by the style in which they were imagined.¹¹ There was a shared stereotype; suffering of Christians under the cruel and fanatic Muslim rulers. It was easier to see the murders at Salonika as a manifestation of Muslim fanaticism rather than an incident, since it was fitting flawlessly in the stereotype. Prejudices were not in the monopoly of the Westerners; insiders also shared this intersubjective constructions; “social facts” for instance, the inevitable accusation that Lazzaro was exposed to because of his Greek-Russian identity. The mob behavior labeled as “the fanaticism of the Muslims” or “traitorous Greeks”, had no material reality but existed only because people collectively believed they existed and acted accordingly.¹² Lazzaro after his name was cleared was put under surveillance of the Ottoman Police and his acts -how innocent they may seem- were put under close watch.¹³ His name also remained as “the puppetmaster” of the event and echoed up to present day’s Turkish press, as a manifestation of a perpetual *agent provocateur* among the Turks, scheming to hurt the Turkish image.¹⁴

¹¹Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comperative Politics” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol.4 (2001), p.398.

¹² Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comperative Politics” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol.4 (2001), p.393.

¹³ BOA, *HR.SYS*, Dosya No: 68, Gömlek No: 18, 1878.

¹⁴ Mehmet Barlas, in his newspaper article titled “It’s Not Easy Being a Bridge Country” published in one of the best sellers paper of Turkey *Sabah* tells a very romanticized version of the Murders at Salonika with the repetition of blame to Lazzaro, and reaches a moral conclusion of that “Turkey must be careful of agitators.” <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2006/02/07/barlas.html>

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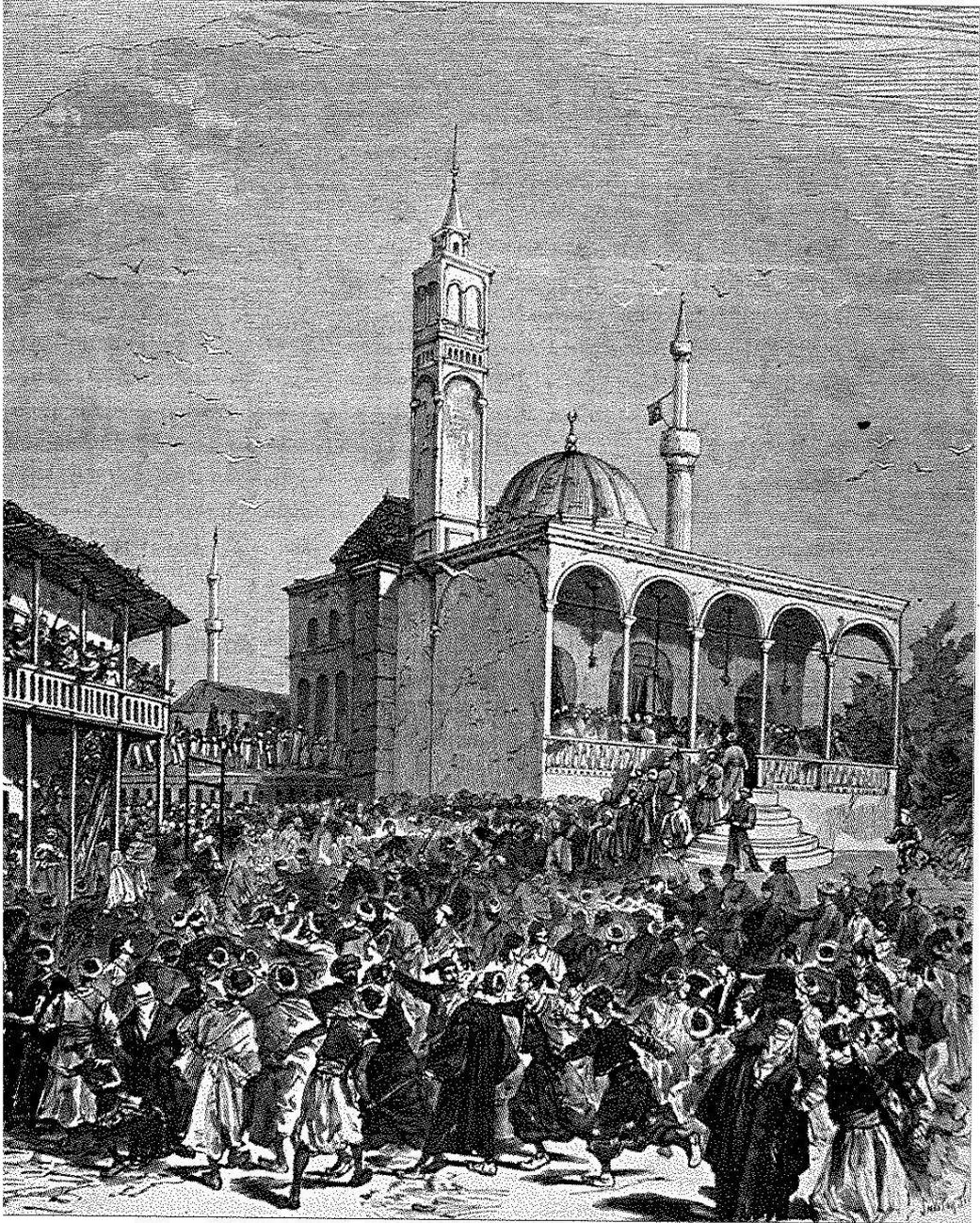
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APPENDICES

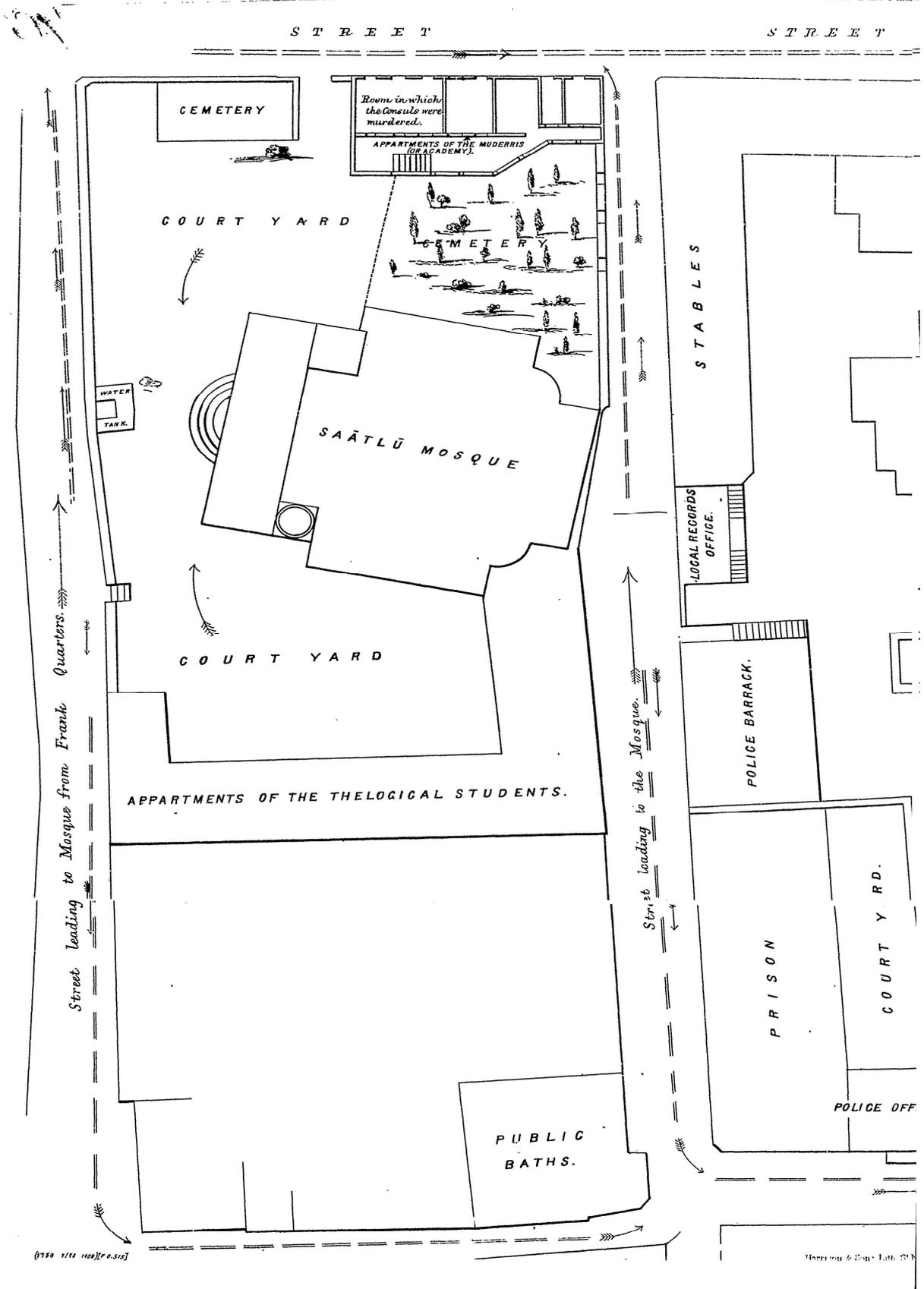
Appendix A: The incidents which resulted in the murder of French and German consuls at Salonika.



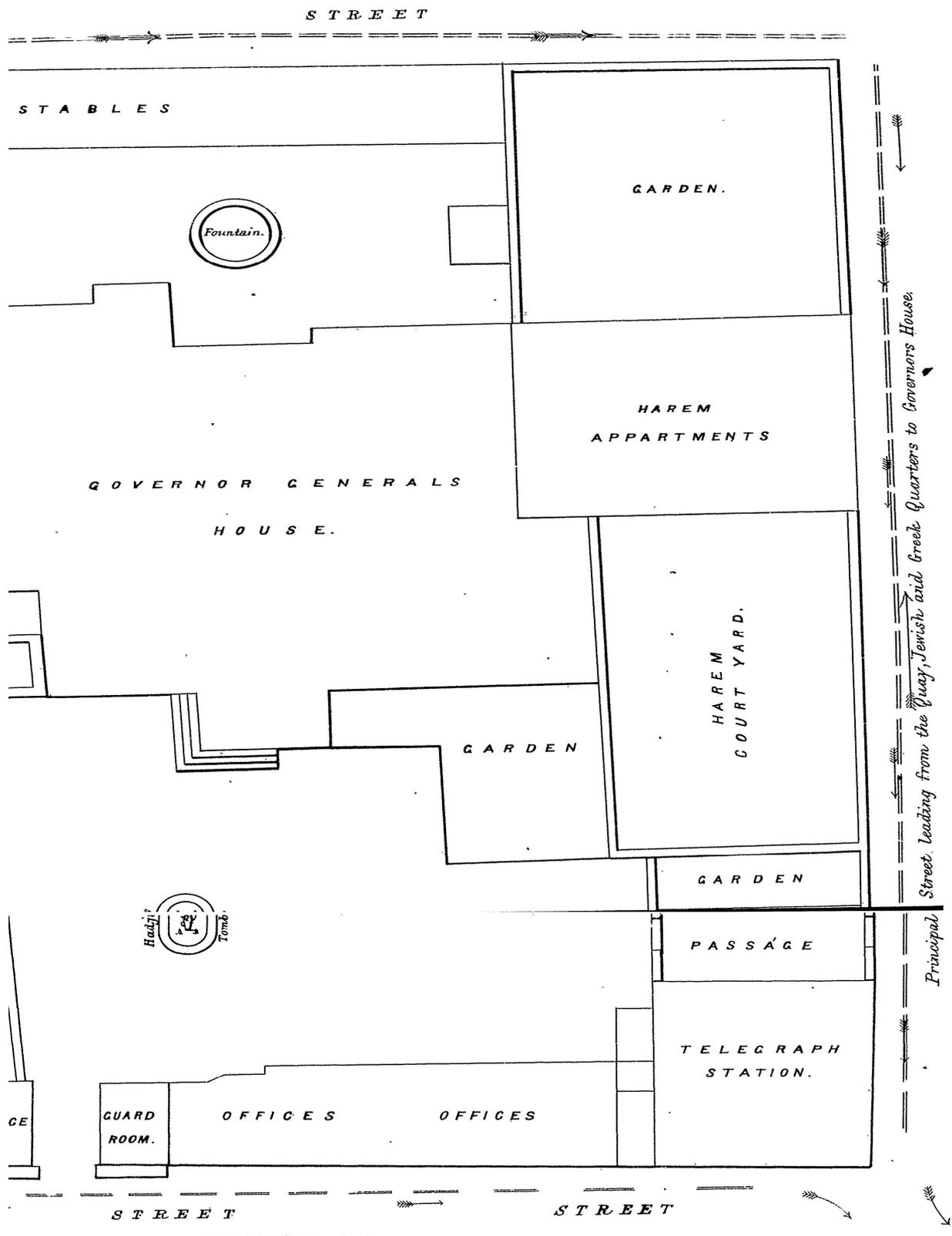
Source: Sacit Kutlu, *Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, June 2007), p.99.

Appendix B: A plan drawn by Consul Blunt on the *konak* and the scene of double murders.

NOTE - The double lines == shew the direction



mob look after perpetrating the murders.



1876: Lane W.C.

Source: Great Britain, Parliament, Commons. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1876: Turkey No. 4 (1876). *Correspondence Respecting The Murder of the French and German Consuls at Salonica.*

