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OF DISGUISE AND PROVOCATION: THE POLITICS
OF CLOTHING IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE,
1890-1910

A Master's Thesis

by
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August 2019

“For Everyone and Nobody”

- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra

OF DISGUISE AND PROVOCATION: THE POLITICS OF CLOTHING IN THE
LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1890-1910

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

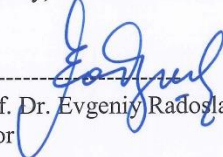
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ANKARA


August 2019

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



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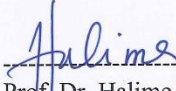
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ABSTRACT

OF DISGUISE AND PROVOCATION: THE POLITICS OF CLOTHING IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1890-1910

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This thesis aims to analyze the *fedayee* practice of disguise in the context of violence between the years of 1890 and 1910 in the North-east parts of the Ottoman Empire. It mainly focuses on the practice's itself and reason behind it. Making use of photographs, this thesis also examines the politics of clothing and self-representation. At this juncture, objects in photographs which were intentionally placed fallacious and delusive are examined to clarify possible *fedayee* clothes which are also analyzed. In order to make sense of the penchant of Armenian *fedayees* for disguise, this thesis also explores the complexity of Kurdish, Circassian, Georgian, Laz clothing through photographic evidence.

Keywords: Disguise, Fedayee, Paramilitary ethnic groups, Photography, the Ottoman Empire

ÖZET

KILIK DEĞİŞTİRME VE PROVOKASYON: GEÇ DÖNEM OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞUNDA KIYAFET POLİTİKALARI, 1890-1910

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Bu tezin amacı 1890-1910 yılları arasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin kuzeydoğu Anadolu topraklarında Ermeni fedayilerce uygulanan kılık değiştirme pratiğini incelemektir. Esas olarak uygulamanın kendisine ve bunun arkasındaki nedene odaklanılmaktadır. Bu tez fotoğraflardan da faydalanarak aynı zamanda kıyafet politikalarını ve benlik algısını da inceler. Bu noktada fotoğraflara kasti olarak yerleştirilmiş olan yanıltıcı veya gerçek dışı objeler de incelenerek muhtemel fedayi kıyafeti açıklanarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu tez, Ermeni fedayilerin kılık değiştirmedeki eğilimlerini anlamak için fotografik kanıtlarla Kürt, Çerkes, Gürcü, Laz giysilerinin karmaşıklığını da incelemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Fedayi, Fotoğrafçılık, Kılık Değiştirme, Osmanlı Devleti, Paramiliter Etnik Gruplar

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For though the common world is the common meeting ground of all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position.

- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*¹

Beginning with the late nineteenth century and onwards, the Armenian separatist movement, which had been experienced in other nations in the Ottoman Empire, gained momentum. The turmoil escalated rapidly, especially in the so-called Western Armenia or the Historical Armenia, where the Ottoman Empire ruled in some provinces located in the region of Northeast Anatolia. Particularly, as the year 1890 approached, the turmoil in the region was replaced by guerilla warfare and violence in these provinces.

Armenian bandits who were calling themselves the *fedayees* began arming with the support they had received from some cognate people of them in the Ottoman Empire and from some foreign states such as Russia. Therefore, they revolted against the orders of the Ottoman authorities in line with their separatist movements. As the

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 57.

reason for these separatist movements, *fedayees* were mostly referring to the attacks of the government and the Kurds who lived with them in the region and stated that Armenians had no security. For these purposes, the *fedayees* aimed to accelerate the movement by resorting to various strategies such as disguise that will be stated below.

The objective of this thesis is to analyze these strategies in the context of violence specific to the practice of disguise as other paramilitary ethnic groups which are Kurds, Circassians, Georgians and Laz lived in the Ottoman Anatolia between the years of 1890 and 1910. The reason for concerning with the abovementioned years for this study is that the reflections of the strategy may be seen in the archival documents intensively during this time period, even if it may have been implemented before by the *fedayees*. That is, this thesis uses archival data as based as the official transition date of the archive records as the start date of the practice, rather than when it was first applied because of its obscurity due to the lack of information. At this point, I consider that it is necessary to discuss the words I used, to refer to certain groups along the thesis in terms of terminology.

Firstly, the term *fedayee* is an Arabic word derived from the noun *fida* which means sacrifice or redemption. It means “one prepared to die for his faith” and “martyr”. As I mentioned above the *fedayees* declared their main aim as protecting the Armenian people from the Kurds and Turks at the cost of their lives. The term *fedayee* and its core *fida* refer to this aim.

Being a *fedayee* actually involved a degree of political thought. In other words, the purpose of these groups was beyond spending their days and escaping from state authority as bandits generally do. Their political ideas, as mentioned above, were to

protect the Armenian people of the empire from the Kurds and to establish an independent Armenian state as quickly as possible.

This name that the *fedayees* gave themselves was begun to be used by the Ottoman State authorities to define the Armenian *eşkiya* (*bandit*) groups. It was also reflected in the Ottoman terminology. As it was encountered in many archival documents, the authorities of the Ottoman State were also using the term *fedayee* in addition to *eşkiya* (*brigands*), *şaki*², *çete* (*guerilla*), *fesede* (*plotter*), *fāsid*³, *komitacı* (*komitadji*), and *müfsid* (*mischief-maker*) when they referred to the Armenian bandits.

The first appearance of the word *fedayee* in the archives of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the date of 24 November 1890.⁴ However, it should be noted that the term *fedayee* is used for bandit groups of other nations in the archives of the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, it is quite interesting that the Bulgarian *çete* members have been also made this nomenclature.⁵

In the light of all these information, it would be appropriate to deduce that in the Ottoman Empire, calling an Armenian bandit as a *fedayee* was only based on being a *çete* member regardless of the organization or an ideological commitment. For this reason, throughout this thesis, this distinction was made by my personal opinion while making inferences from the language of the document, since ideological and organizational connections were not mentioned in the documents. That is, it was my personal initiative to decide which archival documents were using the word *fedayee* to refer the same meaning this thesis concerns -political commitment and fighting for

² *Şaki* is the singular version of *eşkiya* which means brigand in Arabic.

³ The word *fāsid* is singular version of *fesede* which mean plotter in Arabic.

⁴ BOA. Y..PRK.SRN. 2/84 (H- 11.04.1308 / M- 24.11.1890); The document states that Armenians in İskenderiye registered voluntary *fedayees* to disrupt the public order.

⁵ BOA. Y..PRK.SRN. 4/36 (H- 22.10.1311 / M- 09.04.1894); The document is about the investigation of the notice that Bulgarian *fedayees* will attack to Macedonia and what the weapons were distributed for.

this purpose-. The process of evaluating the documents was made according to the criteria of having political thought and commitment. Unless otherwise stated, the Armenian *çete* members mentioned in this thesis are *fedayees* who have ideological commitment which is fighting to protect Armenians in the empire regardless of which word is used to refer them. Moreover, the reason for using the word *fedayee* throughout the thesis is to distinguish the *fedayees* from the bandits who do not have ideological commitments.

Secondly, with the term Circassian, I have intended to use the term as an inclusionary name for all the North Caucasian folks which are Adygeas, Karachays, Abkhazs, Abazas, Kabardays, Ubykhs, Chechens, Kumyks, Nogaises, Ossetians, Ingushetians and Dagestanis. Ottoman Empires' archival documents also use the name of Circassian as *Çerkes*, *Çerakis* or its plural version *Çerakise* to refer to all these North Caucasian folks, when it refers to the people who were emigrated from the Caucasia by the force of the Russian Empire.

Lastly, the term Kurdish clothing is used to refer to the attires of the Kurds living in the certain region which was mentioned in the subject. That is, the term Kurdish clothing does not assert that the clothes of the ethnic group living in the entire Ottoman state were exactly the same. On the contrary, the thesis accepts that dresses were differentiating from region to region even for the same ethnic group. For example, if the term Kurdish costume is used while touching on an incident in Erzurum, the term refers to the clothes of Kurds living in Erzurum. Although it was argued in the third chapter, it was necessary to give some preliminary information in order to avoid confusion about the use of the term.

1.1 Historiography

This thesis aims to analyze the *fedayee* practice of disguise as other paramilitary ethnic groups in the context of violence between the years of 1890 and 1910. However, in order to put this strategy in a context, the clothes worn by the paramilitary ethnic groups and Armenian *fedayees* that were active in the Ottoman Empire have also been analyzed. To understand how we know these clothes in the present day and what “clothes” mean in the Ottoman Empire in general, photography and language of the clothes have been addressed.

For this study, I have used different primary sources on various subjects and research areas to analyze “the strategy” in order to have a wider perspective since the basis of this thesis extends to very different subjects which lead me to have an interdisciplinary analysis of the documents that may shed light on history. Therefore, the existing literature on each relevant subject which has been touched upon in the thesis will be examined in different paragraphs.

On history and meaning of the costume, there exists extensive literature on the historiography of clothing rules and regulations in the Ottoman Empire. Although the works about this subject are agglomerated on specific sultans' reigns or specific eras of the empire, they became base studies for the forthcoming studies. The book named “Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity” which was edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann consists of thirteen different historians' articles which has a wide range of topics starting from reading the clothes in the Ottoman Empire to the viziers' and sultans' clothes.⁶ Especially in the introduction part of the book, the evaluation of the sources that should be used on clothing research in the Ottoman

⁶ Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann, eds., *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity* (İstanbul: Eren, 2004).

Empire, and the parts that Faroqhi mentioned about the tricks that should be considered while using these sources give rise to a new perspective for the literature.⁷ In this section, Faroqhi also dwells on the functions of clothing rules in the Ottoman Empire and consequently states that the reason was to maintain order.⁸ The part which Matthew Elliot investigates “Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Franks,” the author specifically mentions the rules that non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were ordered to obey before starting to give information about the case of Franks.⁹ However, it is confusing that Elliot divides the dress code into two terms as an early and late Ottoman empire in this section, even if it is possible to observe, these rules were revised many times in the late Ottoman Empire.

The most powerful counter argument to Elliot's statement, even if not written to falsify him, can be seen in Quataert's article:

The first example dates from the 1720s, when clothing laws were promulgated in the aftermath of the landmark 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz. For some subjects, this formal relinquishing of once-Muslim lands called into question the very *raison d'être* of the Ottoman state. The post-Karlowitz era was a precarious one for the Ottoman state, one of shaky legitimacy. More particularly, the regulations appeared in the context of a disappointingly unsuccessful war, waged between 1723 and 1727, against a supposedly moribund Iran led by the collapsing Safavid dynasty. And finally, these restrictive laws coincide with the so-called Tulip Period (1718-30)—presided over by the grand vizier, the highest official outside the royal family—an era of social openness and experimentation, when leisure time and pleasure began defining the meaning and purpose of public space. In sum, the laws appeared in a context of shifting social (and moral?) values, combined with the instability of a frustrating war that followed close on the heels of epochal defeat.¹⁰

⁷ Suraiya Faroqhi, “Introduction, or Why and How One Might Want to Study Ottoman Clothes” in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi & Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Eren, 2004), 15-48.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Matthew Elliot, “Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks” in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi & Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Eren, 2004), 103-124.

¹⁰ Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (Aug., 1997): 403-425.

The argument of Quataert directly quoted above that these rules and regulations were enacted on social changes and turmoil in the Ottoman Empire seems more reasonable. However, the shortcomings found in both of these studies are not sufficient for giving information about the background information when talking about the changes. Also, they refrain from explaining the origins when telling the new rules. This shows itself mostly in fez and kalpak cases. It may be believed mistakenly that both headgears emerged suddenly without a base and they had not been worn within the Ottoman Empire or other Muslim countries previously, because of lack of background information on them.

On photography, Engin Özendes' book "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Fotoğrafçılık 1839-1923" -which was published in 1987- is used as a reference source in many studies.¹¹ This book examines the introduction of photography in the Ottoman Empire, its developmental processes, and the locations of studios in the state. Throughout the thesis, Özendes's book together with the Edhem Eldem's and Zeynep Çelik's "Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914" are one of the reference books in the second chapter which deals with photography.

At this point, it is necessary to mention Eldem and Çelik's edited book.¹² In contrast to books written on photography in the Ottoman Empire, Eldem and Çelik's book, which was edited by four different historians had different perspectives, photography was discussed from different angles. In particular, Edhem Eldem's article in the book

¹¹ Engin Özendes, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Fotoğrafçılık 1839-1923* (İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2013).

¹² Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem, eds., *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914* (İstanbul: Koç University Press, 2015).

provides a new approach on self-representation and perception management in Ottoman studio photography.¹³

On defining and silhouetting the *fedayees*, Elke Hartmann's article which has a brand-new perspective on history of Armenian movement through photography and the representation on these photographs became a reference source for this thesis.¹⁴ In the article, Hartmann examines the *fedayees'* clothes through photographs taken by their own wills and discusses the practicality of costume they wore in the photos in addition to the ideas they represent. On the other hand, although this article contributes greatly to the formation of this thesis in many respects, it also leaves some points deficient in the literature. In the third chapter of this thesis, the gap which was left by Hartmann has been tried to be fulfilled while the costume of the Armenian *fedayees* is examining in the regional context in comparison with the other habitants' clothing habits at the same period. Probably the main problem in Elke Hartmann's article is that the clothing she calls as *fedayee* costume is not compared to non-Armenian local people in the certain regions. In addition to the thesis' main purpose which is discussing the *fedayee* strategy of disguise as other paramilitary groups in the context of violence, it also aims to fill this gap in the literature.

The book "Armenian Freedom Fighters: The Memoirs of Rouben Der Minasian", which is compiled from the memoirs of Ruben Der Minasian -a *fedayee*-, which contains very rare information about lifestyles of *fedayees*, is used as a reference book throughout the thesis even though it does not directly contribute to drawing the

¹³ Edhem Eldem, "Powerful Images: The Dissemination and Impact of Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1870–1914" in *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914*, eds. Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 106-153.

¹⁴ Elke Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior: Clothing and Photographic Self-Portraits of Armenian Fedayis in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century," in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives* eds. Claudia Ulbrich, and Richard Wittmann (Würzburg: Ergon 2012), 117-148.

silhouette of them.¹⁵ This book contains very detailed information and has its own problems to be evaluated as a historical source. The most important of these problems is the objectivity. The author evaluates the events with a completely biased perspective as the other sources. This memory, which he wrote in order to keep a memory alive as he stated, carries the concern of extolling *fedayees* who died for what they believed. Therefore, it is very important to be very careful while using this source. It requires to verify the information through different sources.

Although many sources with the same problem have been used in this thesis and the necessary attention has been paid, it is essential to mention the memoir book edited by Antranik Çelebyan due to its contributions to the literature of the field.¹⁶ The book was composed of the memoirs of Antranik Ozanyan who was a *fedayee*. Because of this reason, the book has the feature of being an explanation to many unanswered questions. To give an example, in this book, it is possible to see the links of the *fedayees* who have not been written before in any sources. The book, which sheds light on different aspects of the *fedayees*, is one of the important studies written on the subject despite the objectivity problem.

The same objectivity problem also manifests itself in the travel accounts used throughout the thesis. In fact, it would be more accurate to call it orientalism rather than labelling it as the problem of objectivity. It is necessary to mention the effect of orientalism on photography and narrative which have been discussed on different places throughout the thesis. Although the accounts of the travelers who came to the Ottoman Empire with some expectations in their minds by placing the empire in the category of Eastern societies are unique primary sources, they should be used very

¹⁵ Rouben Der Minasian, *Armenian Freedom Fighters: The Memoirs of Rouben Der Minasian*, ed. James G. Mandalian (Boston: Hairenik Press, 1963).

¹⁶ Antranik Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa* (İstanbul: Peri Yayınları, 2003).

carefully considering their purposes of writing. It is important to highlight that these people mostly wrote what they saw and did not do a deep research on the society. In addition, the reliability of the photographs used in this thesis which was taken by travelers will be discussed in the subheading of methodology.

Another source, in which the problem of objectivity is apparent even if it is not the primary source, is “Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I: Epic Battles: 1890-1914” which is edited by Hagop Manjikian.¹⁷ Although Manjikian’s book examines the cases in depth, it has always been used in comparison with other sources throughout the thesis, since the footnote system is not used and no reference is given along the book. However, since the photographs used in the book are very rare, they are borrowed to use in this thesis.

Although there are many written and visual sources on the subjects that the thesis examines in order to put the objective of the thesis in a context, the current literature suffers from lack of studies on the main subject of this thesis which is *fedayee* practice of disguise as other paramilitary groups in Anatolia as strategy. I hope this study will lead to new discussions and further researchs on the issues which was not touched upon along the thesis.

1.2 Methodology

This thesis bases on different methodologies for each chapter. In the first chapter, close reading was implemented as a method of analysis to give some background

¹⁷ Hagop Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I: Epic Battles: 1890-1914* (Los Angeles: ARF Central Committe, 2006).

information to the readers. In the second chapter, the method of analyzing the photographs while reading them as texts was applied.

At this point, I believe that the use of photographs as sources of history should be discussed. Throughout the thesis, I used many photographs as sources taken by different groups. Although this discussion will be held from time to time between the chapters, I believe that the reliability of these photographs should be discussed as preliminary information to prepare the reader for it.

Some questions were asked to each photograph used throughout the thesis to avoid misleading while applying them as a source. One of these questions is that who took the photo. This question requires to be answered in order to minimize the influence of the photographer or of the person who wants the photograph to be taken before serving it to audiences and readers before serving it.

In order to minimize the influence of the photographers, photographs of *fedayees* have been evaluated and sorted into three different categories while using throughout this thesis: Photographs taken by the request of the poser; photographs taken by the Ottoman photographers; and photographs taken by travelers. These photographs that have been categorized are also questioned in terms of their reliability as sources.

First one is the photos taken by the request of the poser. Here, the poser of the photographer should be examined rather than the photographer. The reason for this is that the person who went to the studio was ready for his photograph to be taken, and he shaped the objects in the photo frame in the way he wanted to reflect himself. This raises the issue of self-representation, which is one of the main concerns of the thesis.

The issue of self-representation in photographs, which may be misleading under normal circumstances, has already eliminated the risk as it has already been examined throughout the thesis. In the third chapter, the clothes of the Armenian *fedayees* and how they reflected themselves in their photographs were examined rather than examining only the clothes they wore.

The second category on manipulation is that, photographs which were shot by Ottoman photographers that carries the risk of misleading the public opinion. When these people – *fedayees*- were caught or arrested, they were photographed by the authorities. The problem here is that there exists a huge difference between the photo taken by the authorities and the photo taken willingly in the mountains where *fedayees* were free. Therefore, it is significant that which side requested for the photograph to be taken since these sources are open for manipulation and the photos may be used in authorities' favor to shape public opinion.

The third category is the photographs taken by travelers. Here, a very different problem arises from the questions of self-representation or manipulation. It is all about who the traveler was and what was the reason behind taking these photos. Throughout the thesis, it will be tried to minimize the misleading of orientalism by considering the risk while using the photos taken by the travelers. It has been considered that travelers used an exaggerated style of photographing that may arouse the interest of the west.

Their aim was mostly to draw attention with the mystery and diversity of the East, rather than reflecting the Ottoman societies with all their reality.

At this point, another question which is “the purpose of the photography” is showed up. In the works where photographs are used as historical sources, it is necessary to

know why the photo was taken. The intention of the photographer or the person who wants the photograph to be taken is vital. The reason for this is that the purpose of the photograph reflects on the frame. The historian needs to find the objects which was irrelevant in the photo frame to prevent manipulation and perception management. The main responsibility of the historian here is to show these intentionally placed objects to the reader. Otherwise, posing styles, clothes, or even small objects in frames -that seem innocent and unintentional- may mislead both the reader and the historian. The photographs used in this thesis, are examined in depth to minimize the risk of manipulation except the ones used for visual support purposes only.

In other words, when the photograph was taken to publish somewhere, the story behind the photograph should be considered completely different. It might have the intention of managing public opinion to gain support. At this point, it is necessary to state that, although the photographs of the *fedayees* shown in the third chapter were published in the journals afterwards -especially during 1915- this issue was not considered since there was no publication between 1890 and 1910. Since the *fedayees* had already taken these photographs to keep memory as it will be mentioned later, the existence of the above-mentioned manipulation is always presented, whether or not they were published.

It should be noted that in terms of the methodology of using photographs as historical sources; the angles, places and lights differ because each photograph was taken by different people for different purposes. Of course, these variables were reflected in the photographs and made them difficult to evaluate. However, the effect

of these variables on evaluation was minimized due to the research utilizes photos as visual support and to dwell on self-representation in general.

In addition, it requires a deeper research to know exactly where the photos were taken due to the mobility of the *fedayees*. In other words, these photographs may have been taken inside or outside the Ottoman borders. However, the reasons why each of the photographs in the thesis was taken are given in the footnotes even if the location is unclear.

For all these reasons mentioned above, all the photographs used throughout this thesis have been examined in detail to evaluate them as sources of history. As a result, all risks are minimized on the issue of using photographs and a detailed study is developed.

Another main method used in this thesis is the analysis of archival documents. This method also has its own problems. However, these are objectivity problems rather than being problems that will undermine reliability of the thesis. Like many sources, archival documents have been written by the one who experienced the events from his/her point of view. It would be misleading to seek objectivity due to the nature of these documents. Because of the awareness of the danger mentioned, in the process of writing this thesis, not only the Ottoman sources but also the sources reflecting many perspectives were used.

The reason why archival documents do not reflect the truth as it happened is that due to the fact that most of these documents have been written to the highest authorities in the capital of the state as reports by the local governors. These documents are often concerned with whether the local governors have fulfilled their duties as

required in the periphery where the central authority was deficient.¹⁸ Aside from looking for objectivity in these documents, it is possible to doubt the existence or even the reasons for the occurrence of these events reflected in the archival documents. For this reason, sources have been used comparatively throughout the thesis.

However, as mentioned earlier in the cases of memoirs and photographs, the purpose of this thesis is to deal with how the events were reflected, rather than with the concern of revealing the facts. For this reason, the phrase of “as far as it is reflected in the archives” will be encountered throughout the thesis.

Finally, due to the fact that the subjects are different from each other and combined under a single heading, some points could not be examined in depth due to the page restriction and it was mentioned that further research is needed on these subjects.

For example, the biggest gap that the study could not fill is the anthropological approach to the clothes drawn silhouettes. However, defining these costumes has a secondary role besides prime purpose of the thesis. For this reason, it has a supportive style in terms of leading to new studies on this issue rather than considering it as a major deficiency. Therefore, these parts drawn silhouette do not claim to have an anthropological concern, but they also lead to new studies in this area.

¹⁸ For more information about the reliability of the Ottoman archival documents see, Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in The Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali 1541-1600* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).

1.3 Thesis Plan

This thesis consists of five chapters that are subjectively complementary rather than a chronological continuity. For this reason, it is aimed to create a context by considering the subject from different perspectives in each chapter. As mentioned above, the objective of this thesis is to analyze these strategies in the context of violence specific to the practice of disguise as other paramilitary ethnic groups which are Kurds, Circassians, Georgians and Laz lived in the Ottoman Anatolia between the years of 1890 and 1910. However, in addition to this main purpose, while talking about these ethnic groups, their cloths were defined as silhouette so that they could be drawn in the minds of the reader.

In the first chapter, the main objective of the thesis is explained. That is, this part has the characteristics of an introduction considering its mission which is to evaluate the sources and methodology applied and to draw the thesis plan.

The second chapter deals with both the reading the costume in the Ottoman Empire considering the rules, and photography. The reason why these two main issues seem to different aggregated in the first chapter is that photography plays a major role in the visualization of costume. Before discussing the clothes of the *fedayees* and other paramilitary ethnic groups in the certain regions, this chapter serves as a base to understand the meaning and attribution of clothes in the Ottoman Empire and to understand the extent of manipulation in photography. The subject of dress rules and regulations mentioned in the first part of this chapter is also necessary to emphasize the importance given to this issue in the Ottoman Empire.

The second part of the chapter concerns with the photography in the Ottoman Empire under the name of visualization of clothing. Like all the visuals imagined through

drawings and works of travelers, the clothes were sharing the same fate before the invention of photography. For this reason, it would be incomplete to examine the photographs used in this thesis and the clothes of the groups mentioned without examining history of the photography in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the secondary concern of this thesis which is the self-representation issue, discussed in the third chapter, and history of photography cannot be separated from each other because it is closely related to each other.

In the third chapter, in order to lay the groundwork for the main subject of the thesis, the clothes of the *fedayees* and other ethnic paramilitary groups living in the region are analyzed and a picture of their silhouettes is drawn. In this section, representative photographs which I preferred as patterns that have all the features I am looking for, each ethnic group was selected and my personal analyzes are compared with those pictures in the memoirs, traveller accounts and other written sources. This section also deals with the issue of self-representation of the *fedayees*. The reason why the self-perception of other paramilitary groups is not mentioned here is that the purpose of defining their costumes is to give preliminary information before examining the main subject in the context rather than dwelling on their perception of self.

The fourth chapter focuses on the *fedayee* practice of disguise as a strategy. In this section, besides the disguise practice while wearing the clothes of certain ethnic groups as a strategy in the violence actions, other actions that the *fedayees* use, the practice of disguise are examined. In order to reveal the difference between them, the actions of the *fedayees* are divided into two main categories as propaganda and provocative actions. After explaining the reasons for the division of actions into two and the variables between them, an example of the first type is given. In the violent

actions examined under the subheading of provocative actions, the events that have been reflected in the archives are analyzed and evaluated in terms of practice of disguise as other paramilitary groups.

In the last chapter, the *fedayee* practice of disguise in the context of violence as a strategy and the regions where they implemented it are concluded. This chapter also discusses how successful the strategy of the *fedayees* were considering the goals they wanted to achieve while implementing the strategy.

Overall, this thesis concerns with the *fedayee* practice of disguise as Kurds, Circassians, Georgians, and Laz which are ethnic paramilitary groups between the years of 1890 and 1910 in the context of violence. For this purpose, the costumes of these groups mentioned before were defined as silhouette and then the events in Armenian *fedayee* implemented the strategy of disguise were examined region by region.

In order to understand the schema and importance of this strategy, first of all it is important to investigate the meaning of the costume and the photography that visualizes the clothing in the Ottoman State case. After that, it is necessary to understand what *fedayees* were wearing when they did not practice the strategy of disguising by examining the photos of the *fedayees*, which is accepted as patterns in this thesis. At this point, the clothes of the other paramilitary groups were also analyzed through the photographs in order to understand whose costumes were used to disguise by the *fedayees*. These subjects which was dwelled on to support the objective of this thesis which is strategy of disguise are addressed as instruments.

CHAPTER II

CROSSING PATHS: CLOTHING AND PHOTOGRAPHY TO VISUALIZE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

*“Ein Bild sagt mehr als 1000 Worte”*¹⁹

-Kurt Tucholsky

2.1 Reading the Costume: History and Meaning of the Costume

Costume is a non-verbal and unwritten code which gives clue about people’s identity as a subject beyond fashion since its invention. It is required to be read in just the same way as other evidences of history in the context of ethnicity and affiliation.

According to traditional historical perception, text should be evaluated as the history of events which excludes cultural phenomena behind, although the alternative perspective sees the texts as the evidences of particular cultural events as the subject of the research.²⁰ As a combination of these two statements, it is also possible that a historical event could trigger a cultural exchange.²¹ That is, it is not possible to

¹⁹ “A picture says more than a thousand words”; Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

²⁰ Zvezdana Dode, “Costume as Text” in *Dress and Identity*, eds. Mary Harlow (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2012), 7.

²¹ To illustrate, after the Byzantium-Iran War in between 502 and 629, Iran preclude Byzantine from importation of raw silk through the orient. To find an alternative route against the restraint, Byzantine found a new route through the Caucasus to be able to bypass Iran while importing raw silk. As a consequence of this, local people of the region which was Alans got access to silk and used it while

evaluate the event and culture which triggers it, separately. This is the same with the history of clothing. While the clothing itself is a historical evidence, the traces of the culture behind it are equally important and worthy of examination. Even in the modern era, clothes worn on special occasions carry traces from past cultures.

It should not be underestimated that costume as a text reflects the unintended symbols which show the belonging and identity of people who wear it, but ascribing a meaning to the parts of clothes is the researcher's inference to group them according to their cultural and religious affiliation.²²

Although nationalism considered as a secondary subject matter which has lesser importance than class, gender, occupation, generation, and aesthetics by those who studied social history of clothing, current studies reveal that all these matters indirectly refer to nationalism in clothing.²³ It should be highlighted that, clothing also reflects the cultural codes of the societies thanks to the story behind it. These stories should be examined under the rules and regulations under the name of sumptuary law which were imposed by the authorities of the society in which people belonged to in the field of costume studies. These regulations give several clues about both social structure of the state and the perception of identity.

This chapter mainly concerns the clothing regulations in the Ottoman Empire to identify the Armenian *fedayees'* costume and to evaluate it in the context of nationalism in the third chapter. While doing this, the chapter discusses the reading

making clothes. Being on a trade route improved Alan tribes' economy and the economy started to grow. The amount of silk in the clothes and its range from people to people displayed the appearance of social stratification among Alan tribes; for more information see, Dode, "Costume as Text", 14.

²² Ibid., 7.

²³ Alexander Maxwell, *Patriots Against Fashion: Clothing and Nationalism in Europe's Age of Revolutions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4; for more information about the latest debates see, John Carl Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: Hogarth Press, 1930); Marilyn Horn, *The Second Skin: An Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968); Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Daniel Purdy, *The Tyranny of Elegance: Consumer Cosmopolitanism in Era of Goethe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

of photography as a means of visualizing the costume for the first time after the descriptions of travelers and its historical development process on the basis of the Ottoman state. That is, this section melts two different topics which connected through the dress and its visualization in the same pot.

2.1.1 Costume in the Ottoman Empire

Although history of costumes worn in the Ottoman Empire is an under-researched topic, rules and regulations which have been studied before by the historians, illustrates that imperial governments were ascribing great importance to the dress code with the intent of identification through the clothing. Reading the rules of the costume is as important as reading the costume itself. The Ottoman Empire applied to the rules and regulations of costume as the other contemporary states which lived in pre-modern era. For instance, in 1301 the *dhimmis*²⁴ of the Mamluk Empire were forbidden to wear a color other than specified - blue turbans for Christians and yellow one for Jews.²⁵ The regulations were not limited to the colors. In 1354, Christians and Jews of the Mamluk Empire were limited in the size of their turbans.²⁶ All these edicts issued in the Mamluk Empire were to distinguish people through the clothes they wore.²⁷

²⁴ It is the word to describe non-Muslims of the empire.

²⁵ Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society, 1979), 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁷ Non-Muslim adherents of the Mamluks were prohibited from building higher homes than Muslims. Dhimmi men were wearing a metal neck ring to be distinguished in the public baths. On the other hand, non-Muslim women were not allowed to use the same bath with the Muslims in case they could affect others; for more information see, Leo Ary Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1952), 67.

In the Ottoman Empire, the aforementioned rules and regulations were not applied only to maintain the order.²⁸ Even though the Ottoman Empire pursued two different sets of regulations on dress code especially after nineteenth century while dividing them as unification and daily clothing, this chapter mostly concerns subjects' clothing which was worn in remote provinces where the banditry emerged as a background information through the rules before and mostly after the reign of Mahmud II as a sign of modernization.

Prior to the reign of Mahmud II, the most remarkable specifications in the clothing regulations were the ones which were related to colors. While discussing clothing, it should be highlighted that the term "clothing" corresponds to all parts of the garment such as trouser, shalwar, jacket, skirt and headgear.

In the Ottoman Empire, clothing was used mostly to identify religion of people and their rank rather than identifying national belonging. One of the missions of these rules was to separate non-Muslims from Muslims and to group them among each other. These were prevailing rules to all non-Muslims throughout the empire to be distinguished, regardless of whether they were residents or travelers. In accordance with this purpose, headgear had a crucial role as a determinant.

During the reign of Sultan Suleyman, sumptuary law was introduced to all-inclusive manner. The new regulations were used to enforce both civil and military hierarchy particularly through the headgears.²⁹ Sultan Suleyman's regulations were mostly kept until the nineteenth century. Thereafter, policy of clothing changed under the Mahmud II and the new policy was legalized with the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856 which was issued on February, 18 by Abdulmecid I.

²⁸ Faroqhi, "Introduction, or Why and How One Might Want to Study Ottoman Clothes," 15.

²⁹ Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829," 406.

Some arrangements were made to eliminate the confusion during this long journey that lasted nearly three centuries until the abolition of dress rules and regulations.

One of the most detailed of the said arrangements was made through an edict which explained the rules during the reign of Sultan Selim II. The regulations were specified the clothing rules for the Jewish, Christian and other non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire. The edict aimed to prevent the similarity between Muslims and non-Muslims in the streets after a non-Muslim subject of the empire wrote a petition which demanded to be identified by religions. For the members of each religion, their visibility in society was of capital importance to be known and to be distinguished.

Starting from the sixteenth century to the Tanzimat period, many edicts were issued regarding the clothes of non-Muslims which restricted the color, type and quality of the clothes. One of these edicts was issued during the reign of Selim II in 1568 to describe non-Muslim clothing in detail. The edict ordered non-Muslim men to wear blackish lined *ferace*³⁰(*outer cloak*) which did not have *lekende* (*a seam with twine or thong*) on it.³¹ The sashes they wore around the waist should be half pink and half *harir* (*silk fabric*) and the price of it would be between thirty and forty *akçe*.³² *Dülbend*³³ (*a fabric used to wrap around turbans*) which non-Muslims wore *denüzlü*³⁴ fabric. *Başmaks*³⁵ (*a traditional shoe*) of them was black, flat and the

³⁰ The *ferace* which was mentioned here refers to men's outer cloak. It was mostly worn by the members of ilmiye institution. Some cloaks had fur on the collar. The young men were wearing short sleeve *feraces*; for more information see, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları, 1969), 107.

³¹ Ahmed Refik Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Orhaniyye, 1333), 68.

³² *Ibid.*, 68.

³³ For more information about *dülbend* see, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 98.

³⁴ It is a type of cotton fabric which was produced in Denizli in the Ottoman Empire; for more information see, Ahmet Aytaç, "Osmanlı Dönemi'nde Bursa İpekçiliği, Dokumacılık ve Bazı Arşiv Belgeleri," *Uluslararası Tarih ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13, (2015): 1-11.

inside of these shoes was ordered to be linerless.³⁶ *İç edüks*³⁷ (a traditional soleless shoe) of the non-Muslims had to be black and made from sheepskin leather.³⁸ It was forbidden to make *iç edüks* from *sahtıyan* (goatskin leather) or wearing any color other than black.³⁹ The *çakşirs*⁴⁰ (shalwar type baggy trousers) of the non-Muslim men had to be *asumani* which means light blue in English.⁴¹ The rules regarding the clothing of the Armenians are also mentioned by opening a subtitle in the edict. They were also ordered to wear the same clothes with the Jewish population in the Ottoman Empire, but Armenians had to wrap their heads with multicolored fabrics.⁴² The edict also concerned with the clothing of non-Muslim women lived in the empire. They were forbidden to wear *ferace*⁴³ (women's outer garment) unlike non-Muslim men, to be distinguished from Muslim women.⁴⁴ They were allowed to wear dress which made from Bursa fabric.⁴⁵ They were not also supposed to wear *başmak*.⁴⁶ It is clearly written in the edict that non-Muslim women had to wear

³⁵ It was an traditional shoe similar with *çarık* and *yemeni*. The toe of the *başmak* was round and flat. The heel part of it was not flexible. Contrary to *yemeni*, *başmak* could not be worn by way of crushing back; for more information see, Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 29.

³⁶ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

³⁷ It was worn in the houses or inside of the overshoes.

³⁸ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁰ *Çakşır* is a shalwar type garment that is worn on the underoos of men's clothing. Before the trousers, men were wearing *çakşır*, *potur* or *shalwar*. It was taken in before reaching the calf of the leg. Janissaries were also wearing *çakşır*. In seventeenth century, after the dramatic death of Osman II, Abaza Mehmed Pasha was baying for blood and ordered the killing of janissaries in the eastern anatolia region. The janissaries in the mentioned regions began to flee to Istanbul while disguising. However, pasha ordered to check the knees of the people who wanted to abandon the region. The reason of checking people's knees was the sunburns which could be seen in Janisseries' knees because of the *çakşirs* they wore; for more information see Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 60-61.

⁴¹ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴³ The term of *ferace* below refers to women's outgarment. It was used to veil before the spread of *çarşaf* among the muslim women of the empire; for more information see, Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 108.

⁴⁴ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

*kundura*⁴⁷ (men's heeled shoe) or *şirvani* (a traditional shoe which was worn in Şirvan in the province of Siirt) instead of *başmak*.⁴⁸

Although non-Muslim men were allowed to wear the same type of clothes as Muslims but with a different color, non-Muslim women were strictly banned to wear the same garments even though the shape and the color were divided. This may be due to the diversity in women's clothing. That is, there were plenty of pieces in women clothing, and clothes may be divided among women based on religion. The fabric type of the dress was also an important point in the edict. Non-Muslim women were not allowed to wear *seraser*⁴⁹ (a silk fabric embroidered with gold and silver) and *arakiyye*⁵⁰ (voile, light and round headgear made of lint) or any other fabric than *atlas kutnu* (cotton fabric) in their clothes.⁵¹ Armenian women were not allowed to wear *ferace*, as in the Jews. In order to distinguish the Armenian women from other non-Muslims in the Empire, it was enacted that they had to wear black *surmayi* dress made of Bursa fabric and blue *çakşirs* as shoes.⁵²

In addition to the above-mentioned three categories -which are the rules given to non-Muslim men, women and Armenians- the edict also mentioned the dress rules of *Kara Kafirs*⁵³ which were poorer non-Muslims. Although it is understood that the term *Kara Kafir* refers to poor non-Muslims considering the fabric qualities, it is not clearly stated in the edict why a separate category subtitle is opened for this group. It is possible to make two different inferences. First one is that the rules enacted for

⁴⁷ The shoe was also worn by women in the villages; for more information see Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 160.

⁴⁸ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

⁴⁹ Since it is a very expensive fabric, it is used only for decoration of thrones in upholstery; for more information see, Koçu, *Türk Giyim, Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, 204.

⁵⁰ It was usually preferred by poor dervishes in the Ottoman Empire.

⁵¹ Altınay, *Onuncu Asr-ı Hicride İstanbul Hayatı*, 69.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵³ *Kara Kâfir* refers to poorer non-Muslims who cannot afford the mentioned expensive fabrics; for more information see, Yavuz Ercan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Gayrimüslimlerin Giyim, Mesken ve Davranış Hukuku," *OTAM* 1, no. 1, (June 1990): 117-125.

Kara Kafirs might have been to help them, but rather to humiliate, identify or distinguish poor non-Muslims from the richer ones according to their incomes which may have affect the social status through the clothes they wore in the streets. This may be to specify the clothes that poor non-Muslims also could afford.

A second inference may also be emphasizing the hierarchy and rank that the Ottoman Empire applied in other cases. That is, hierarchy between non-Muslims by separating poor ones through their clothes in the edict may have been also aimed. However, the first one which asserts that the given rules in the edict under the name of *Kara Kafirs* was to help them to afford seems more reasonable. The reason that leads to this inference is that the Ottoman Empire generally used the clothing regulations to demonstrate hierarchy and rank among the officials through the headgears. That is, although *Kara Kafirs'* case may or may not be an example of it, there were also clothing rules among the people of the same religion to determine rank and hierarchy between them, but they were clergymen or officers. Although it is necessary to say that non-Muslims were already explicitly prohibited from wearing higher quality fabrics than Muslims by aforementioned edict, it was not stated in the edict whether non-Muslims had such a hierarchical clothing rules among themselves. Because of this reason, the question of why a separate title for *Kara Kafirs* was opened requires a deeper research.

The same implementation was applied to determine ranks among the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. In the eighteenth century, the empire forbade modest Muslim men to quit wearing dresses which were studded with furs such as ermine, sable, otter, and fox.⁵⁴ This rule was enacted to distinguish high ranking officials. This case

⁵⁴ Heather Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 66; Madeline C. Zilfi, "Whose Laws? Gendering the Ottoman Sumptuary Regime," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi & Christoph K. Neumann (İstanbul: Eren, 2004), 132.

shows that the religion was not the one and only criteria for the clothing laws in the Ottoman Empire.

Also, the non-Muslims of the empire were not discriminated among themselves according to their religions. It may be deduced from the fact that the dress codes and colors of each religion was determined separately and that these rules were not only to separate Muslims from non-Muslims. The edict shows that the regulations were making in reference to religion which people believed in. Thus, people who believed in the same religion had no difficulty in finding their own communities. That is why non-Muslims also maintained these rules. It may be shown as evidence that the edict of Selim II which was mentioned above was enacted hereupon the complaint petition of a non-Muslim in the empire. The clothes were the tool of determining differences such as religion, rank, financial situation and other affairs which the empire ascribed importance to distinguish.

In accordance with this purpose, colors played a significant role. Wearing green and white turban was distinctive to Muslims in the empire and the non-Muslim population was officially forbidden to do so by law.⁵⁵ This kind of regulations was making people distinguishable from each other. Non-Muslims were forbidden to imitate the Muslim clothing.⁵⁶ Jews of the Empire were wearing yellow; Christians were wearing blue and Zoroastrians were mostly wearing black.⁵⁷

In addition to wearing white and green turban, shoeing the yellow leather was only permitted for Muslims while non-Muslims were wearing black shoes.⁵⁸ Although non-Muslims were not allowed to wear yellow leather shoes, Jews of the empire

⁵⁵ Faroqhi, "Introduction, or Why and How One Might Want to Study Ottoman Clothes", 25.

⁵⁶ BOA. A. {DVNSMHM.d... 31/698 (H-15.07.985 / M- 28.09.1577); the document states that the clothes such as *iskarlat* (Venetian fabric), *çağşir* and silken caftans became expensive because of the fact that Jews started to wear them in the sanjaks of Skopje, Vučitrn and Prizren. Therefore it was enacted that Jews were forbidden to wear the similar clothes with Muslims in the mentioned regions.

⁵⁷ Elliot, "Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks," 105.

⁵⁸ Faroqhi, "Introduction, or Why and How One Might Want to Study Ottoman Clothes", 25.

were permitted to wear mostly yellow in other parts of the costume. This illustrates that the color was varying from piece to piece on costume. Regulations on colors were not strict or forbidden to use completely. Although people of the empire were ascribing meaning to the colors, these auspicious or ominous colors were not imputing the non-Muslims.⁵⁹

In addition to colors of the clothes, another way to emphasize the religion, rank and honor were through headgears. To illustrate, non-Muslims were also forbidden to wear sable *kalpak*.⁶⁰ Wearing a large and black *kalpak* was the sign of Muslims to be distinguished among the subjects. The problem of wearing sable *kalpak* was probably not about headgear's shape. Although this is not explicitly stated in any documents, it should be about the material of the *kalpak*. As it was mentioned before, non-Muslims were not allowed to wear higher-quality fabrics than Muslims. This may be the case on the sable *kalpak*. Although it was not forbidden for non-Muslims to wear *kalpak*'s itself, the sable may be seen too sumptuous to be worn by non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.

However, there were cases in which certain non-Muslims were allowed to wear sable *kalpak*.⁶¹ These non-Muslims were given a warrant which was named as *muafiyet*

⁵⁹ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, the envoy of Austria in the Ottoman Empire in between 1556 and 1562, draws attention to the meanings of the colors in the Ottoman Empire in his work as : "Among them black is considered a mean and unlucky colour, and for anyone in Turkey to appear dressed in black is held to be ominous of disaster and evil. On some occasions the Pashas would express their astonishment at our going to them in black clothes, and make it a ground for serious remonstrance. No one in Turkey goes abroad in black unless he be completely ruined, or in great grief for some terrible disaster. Purple is highly esteemed, but in time of war it is considered ominous of a bloody death. The lucky colours are white, orange, light blue, violet, mouse colour, &c. In this, and other matters, the Turks pay great attention to auguries and omens..."; for more information see, Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, Vol.I (London: C.K. Paul, 1881), 144.

⁶⁰ BOA. A. {DVNSMHM.d... 85/559 (H- 09.10.1040 / M- 2 May 1631); the archival document is about making provision against the non-Muslims who wear sable *kalpak* instead of the headgears and dresses enacted before in Subprovinces of Thessaloniki, Serres, Larissa (Yenişehir ü Fenar) and Mystras (Mizistre).

⁶¹ Doctor Mosi in the Ottoman Empire who was known as Etibbadan Mosi was given the right of wearing sable *kalpak* for his services to Muslims. However, Muslims of the Empire in the streets assaulted him because of the reason that he were not allowed to wear Muslim clothes. Doctor Mosi wrote a petition to demand a licence and it was enacted to renew his document; for more information

berati to charter them the permission of wearing sable kalpak in the streets for the exchange of their services in the Ottoman Empire.⁶²

Before the presentation of fez in the Ottoman Empire in 1829, diversity of the headgears was showing itself in the phases of the social life in significantly different ways. The headgears were attached an extraordinary importance in the social order of the empire even after the death of people both before and after the reign of Mahmud II.⁶³ The headgears which showed the rank of people were also used on gravestones. These figures started to be observed on the top of gravestones after the sixteenth century onwards and the practice was kept until the nineteenth century. To give an example, quilted turban was representing a certain class based on the shape of gravestones and other characteristic features even if the color of the headgear had a significant role to determine the rank and it is not possible to understand it through the stone.⁶⁴

In 1829, however, Mahmud II abolished the traditional regulations which based on identification of people through the clothes they wore in different types and colors according to the rules enacted. Although he followed the traditional rules and

see, Ahmet Refik Altınay, *Hicri On İkinci Asırda İstanbul Hayatı: 1100-1200* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1988), 20-21. As a similar example, the sons of Surgeon Mikel, Doctor Manol and Doctor Nikola were given the right to wear sable kalpak; BOA. C..SH.. 4/157 (H-17.10.1155 / M- 15 December 1742); In the same way, two clock repairmen named Agob and Sarkis received this permission and *muafiyet berati* in exchange for repairing the clocks of Enderun, Babiali and Ağakapısı; BOA. HAT 1356/53156 (H- 29.12.1222 / M-27 February 1808).

⁶² For more information about *berat* in the Ottoman Empire see, Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018); Kemal Beydilli, “III. Selim Devrinde Verilen Bazı Muaf ve Müsellemlik Beratları Hakkında: Foti Kalfanın Berati,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Araştırma Merkezi, Osmanlı-Türk Diplomatîği Semineri* (1995): 75-89

⁶³ Katja Jana, “Loyal and Elegant Subjects of the Sublime State: Headgear and the Multiple Dimensions of Modernizing/-ed Ottoman Identity” (PhD diss., University of Göttingen, 2016), 33.

⁶⁴ Hans-Peter Laqueur, “Dervish Gravestones” in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, eds, Raymond Lifchez (California: University of California Press, 1992), 284; for more information see, Suraiya Faroqhi, *Cultural History of the Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and its Artefacts* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

regulations in his early years, reversal of his attitude requires examining with the reasons and the epitome of change.⁶⁵



Figure 1: The photograph shows the variety of Ottoman headgears before 1924.⁶⁶

Between 1768 and 1829, the Ottoman Empire faced many internal and external problems such as wars with Russia which threatened the straits. Moreover it had difficulty in establishing authority in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia; and faced the resistance of Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, and Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt.⁶⁷ All these problems caused the Ottoman state to reorganize itself both inside and outside in the reign of Sultan Mahmud II.

⁶⁵ In his account which was written in 1810 John Hobhouse who was a British traveler describes Sultan Mahmud II as the representative of a traditional sultan. According to the account, Sultan was wearing a robe of yellow satin with a darkest sable, a shining turban which was white and blue embellished with diamonds while carrying dagger as a part of his clothing. However, while Sir Adolphus Slade, a British military officer, was describing Mahmud II in his account he draws a different picture. According to Slade's account, the sultan was wearing a plain blue military cloak and a trouser instead of robes of golden tissue and turban. As a matter of fact, his fez was not embellish with the expensive jewelries; for more information see, John Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, During the years 1809 and 1810* (London: Sharpe and Hailes, 1813), 999; Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc.: and of a Cruise in the Black Sea with the Capitan Pacha* (London : Saunders and Otley, 1854), 166. These two examples reveal the change and transformation in the sultan himself.

⁶⁶ In top row, first headgear represents the being member of Bektaşi; second one Bayrami; third one Nakşibendi. The seventh headgear in the top row is the regular fez. In the top row, first one from the left belongs to Bektashis; second one Sünbüli; third one Kadiri; the next one is an illustration of a wrapped fez; others were belonged to Kadiri, Sinani and Halveti, for more information see Laqueur, "Dervish Gravestones", 285.

⁶⁷ Darin Stephanov, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 129-148, 133.

His new army wore European style uniforms which were not seen in the Ottoman Empire before and they were ordered to shave their beards.⁶⁸ Furthermore, sultan's himself started to wear these types of new uniforms and he got his picture drawn while wearing it in the early 1830s.⁶⁹

He also ordered officials not to wear traditional Ottoman clothes. According to newly enacted edict, all the officials in the Ottoman Empire had to wear fez, pants and a long frock coat.⁷⁰ All these attempts were to reduce the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims in the empire.⁷¹ Wearing fez was also compulsory among the bureaucrats to prevent the determination of rank and religion through headgear.

The practice of wearing different types of turban was replaced with standardization of headgear. The rule which was used to distinguish people's belonging disappeared after the regulation. The headgear became beyond a symbol of rank after the regulation. The fez turned into the symbol of modernism in the Ottoman Empire. However, the subjects of the empire, both Muslims and non-Muslims, rejected to adopt it as a national headgear. Especially conservative tradesmen and artisans objected to the regulation as a conservative community. In response to this opposition, the sultan gave permission to them to wrap fabric around fez such as *yazma*, *yemeni* or *tülbent*. After the permission, wearing fez spread around the empire.⁷² However, the color of these fabrics wrapped around the fez was also indicating the religion although it was not a given rule by the state.⁷³ This also has

⁶⁸ Ibid., 135; Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc.*, 140.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 137.

⁷⁰ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148-149.

⁷¹ Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829", 413.

⁷² For more information about the regulation of headgear in the Ottoman Empire see, Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*; Faroqhi and Neumann, ed., *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*; Maxwell, *Patriots Against Fashion*; Jana, "Loyal and Elegant Subjects of the Sublime State: Headgear and the Multiple Dimensions of Modernizing/-ed Ottoman Identity".

⁷³ Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East*, 131

evidential value that the non-Muslims were willingly protecting and demanding the rules and regulations.

However, non-Muslims were ordered to wear the *kalpak* to maintain distinctions between Muslims and others.⁷⁴ The traditional dress codes enacted by the Ottoman sultans were officially abolished in 1856 with the Ottoman Reform Edict which aimed to declare subjects equal under the law.⁷⁵

By 1908 -right after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary the fez became a symbol of foreign imposition and no longer sufficiently “Ottoman”. At the time, the fez was produced by factories in the Austria-Hungarian Empire.⁷⁶ When fez was boycotted, *keçe külah* became widespread among people.⁷⁷

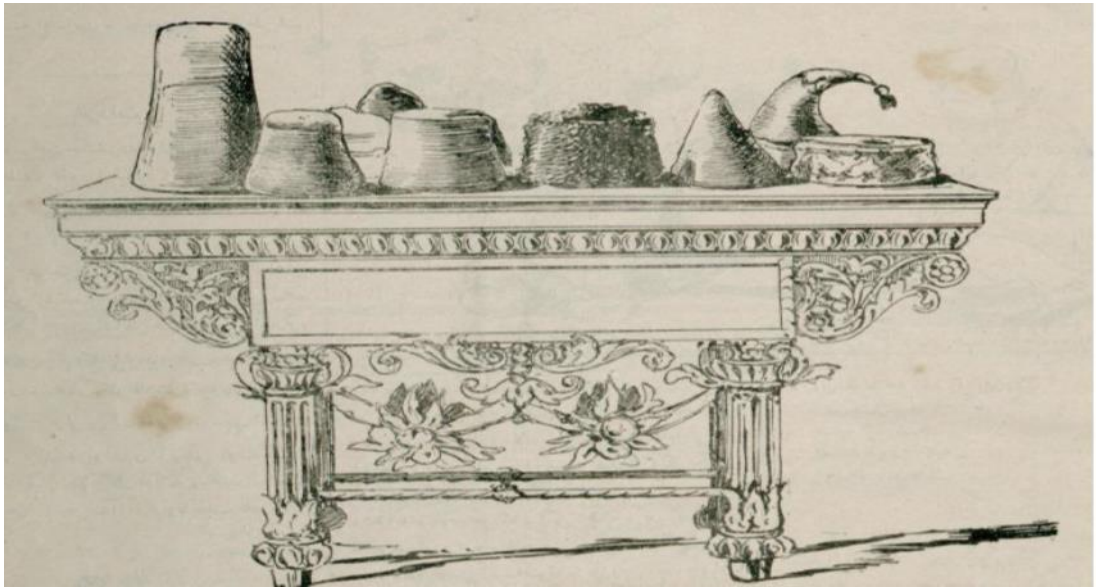


Figure 2: An illustration cynically shows the new headgears which appeared after the boycott, from the Ottoman humour magazine known as *Boşboğaz ile Güllâbi*.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁵ Elliot, “Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks”, 108; for more information see, Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, ed., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East A Documentary Record 1535–1956*, vol. 1, 1535–1914 (Archive Editions Ltd, 1987).

⁷⁶ Mehmet Emin Elmacı, “Fes-Kalpak Mücadelesi”, *Toplumsal Tarih* 42 (June 1997): 28-32.

⁷⁷ Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *1908 Osmanlı Boykotu: Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 146.

⁷⁸ “Serpuşlar,” *Boşboğaz ile Güllâbi*, no. 26, 26 Teşrin-i Evvel 1324 [9 Kasım 1908], 3.

After a while, people decided that the *keçe külah* was not suitable for being the national headgear, so *kalpak* was started to be worn in the streets as a symbol of being Ottoman.⁷⁹ Fundamentally, the struggle of fez and *kalpak* was between old order and constitutionalists, and the headgears were just symbols of these two groups.⁸⁰ The boycott became one of the most discussed issues in the Ottoman social life and the press for a while.⁸¹

Another issue worthy of notice about clothing is disguise practice of non-Muslims. Until the abolishment of clothing rules in accordance with the religions non-Muslims were disguising as Muslims for different purposes, even though it was forbidden by law. The most significant reason behind non-Muslims' practice of imitating Muslims' clothing was security. It was safer for non-Muslims to wear Muslim clothes, especially while traveling. In addition to security, they used the practice of incognito to hide their identity which will be discussed in the fourth chapter through the Armenian bandits.

Although Ema Miljkovic asserts that the intention of non-Muslims was "en vogue" while wearing Muslim clothes, I strongly believe that the main reason was beyond the fashion in the great scheme of things.⁸² Moreover, if these prohibitions was enacted to prevent non-Muslims who followed the fashion, it would not be a two-sided order as it may be seen in the archival documents. Muslims were also forbidden to go out on the street in non-Muslim clothing.⁸³ The purpose of these

⁷⁹ Elmacı, "Fes-Kalpak Mücadelesi," 30.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁸¹ For more information about boycott of 1908 and its reflections in the Ottoman press see, Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2000).

⁸² For more information about Ema Miljkovic's ideas about non-Muslim clothing see, Ema Miljkovic, "Ottoman Heritage in the Balkans: The Ottoman Empire in Serbia, Serbia in the Ottoman Empire," *SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 2009, (2014): 129-137.

⁸³ Ercan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Gayrimüslimlerin Giyim, Mesken ve Davranış Hukuku," 118.

regulations, which prohibited both sides to disguise, may be to maintain social order rather than hierarchizing. It would not be wrong to say that the headgears especially after the reign of Suleyman were indicating the status among the officials. However, there was not any piece in clothing which showed superiority among the civilians neither for Muslims nor for non-Muslims.

Of course, there were some groups which would not be controlled in addition to the given subjects. They also had symbolism concerns on their clothing: bandits. It will be more accurate to explain the symbolism in clothing through the example of bandits in terms of the integrity and comprehensibility of the thesis to put it in a context in the next chapter. Before that, it is necessary to talk about the spread of photography which visualized the aforementioned costumes.

Until the invention of photography and its arrival in the Ottoman Empire, the costumes were tried to be pictured in the minds of people through paintings and travelers' depictions. Photography moved the costumes beyond imaginations and descriptions.

However, both sources had their own methodological problems. Even though this problem is the subject of another research, its invention had a great importance in terms of visualizing clothes and bringing it beyond our imagination to interpret both common people and bandits.

2.2 Visualizing the Costume: Photography

Although *camera obscura* is the predecessor of the photographic camera, the revolutionary invention of photography which reshaped the perceptions of reality

was declared separately in London and Paris in 1839 at the same time.⁸⁴ After the calotype was publicized in 1841 in Britain; the wet collodion technique in 1851 and Kodak camera were discovered in United States in 1888.⁸⁵

With the invention of photography, a new perspective was added to the sources of history which played a revolutionary role in the visualization of history. Thus reading historical photographs became an issue for the historians. The photography also had its own language which requires to be read properly. This issue will be discussed in the following pages as it will be more appropriate to deal with the content of using Ottoman photography as the source of history.

The phenomenon of photography arrived in the Ottoman Empire immediately after its invention in France in 1839 through foreign travelers.⁸⁶ However, it would be deceptive to evaluate Ottoman daily life or clothing based on these photographs which reflects the so-called “east” from the eyes of the “west” while ignoring orientalism factor in it. The nineteenth century is a period in which a great influence had been observed in terms of shortening the travel time of people thanks to the technological developments brought about by the industrial revolution.⁸⁷ Even though Europeans’ curiosity towards the east dates back to the sixteenth century, technological developments have brought orientalism to its peak. Access to

⁸⁴ Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1997), 15.

⁸⁵ Markus Ritter and Staci G. Scheiwiller, *The Indigenous Lens?: Early Photography in the Near and Middle East* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 11.

⁸⁶ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 186 (19 Şaban 1255/28 October 1839). Bahattin Öztunçay touches upon the names of early foreign travellers who photographed the empire: Frederick Goupil Fesquet (1840), Joseph-Philibert Girault de Pragey (1842), Kompa (1842), Maxime du Camp (1843), Ernest de Caranza (1852), Alfred-Nicolas Normand (1852), John Shaw Smith (1852), Jacob August Lorent (1859), Francis Frith (1860), Francis Bedford (1862), and Claude-Marie Ferrier; see Bahattin Öztunçay, “The Origins and Development of Photography in Istanbul” in *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914*, eds. Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (İstanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 67; also compare with Engin Çizgen, *Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1919* (İstanbul: Haşet Kitabevi, 1987), 28-29.

⁸⁷ Engin Özendes, *From Sebah and Joaillier to Foto Sabah: Orientalism in Photography* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 43.

information has become much easier after the industrial revolution through the technology.

As this desire to know increased, studios began to open one after another in order to show the orient to the world, especially to show the west the east they imagined and fulfill their expectations.⁸⁸

The daily life of women in the Ottoman Empire was one of the most important visuals that Western travelers and photographers wanted to paint in glowing colours to Europeans. They created exaggerated compositions. These pictures shows that orientalism in photography is dangerous while using them as a source of history.

Women in the photographs appeared in thin silk clothes, hookahs in their hands, design of inlaid coffee tables in front of them and tasseled cushions that were thought to be unique to the east, or in belly dancer clothes.⁸⁹ As a matter of course, a woman in the Ottoman Empire did not have the luxury of dressing like this in compliance with the Sharia rules. Obviously these fiction photographs were designed to show the East more interesting. Since a Muslim woman in the Ottoman Empire was strictly prohibited from posing in this clothing, the so-called Muslim women presented in the photographs were either the models who worked in taverns of Pera, foreign women who came to visit the Ottoman Empire or cross-dressed men for the photo-shoot.⁹⁰ Although these women were covering their heads and faces in the photo frames; their hands, feet and bodies were revealing their gender. This type of clothing, which was not practiced in daily life, could be misleading for the perception of the “Ottoman women” for those who saw them for the first time through the photographs.

Basiretçi Ali Efendi, the owner and editor of the *Basiret Magazine*, was also made the same mistake while criticizing the “shameless” photographs of Muslim women

⁸⁸ Özendes, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Fotoğrafçılık 1839-1923*, 48.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 48.

hanging in a retail display.⁹¹ Ali Efendi was assuming that these women were Muslim although they were not posing in the garb of *ferace* and veil which were ordered Muslim women to wear to be distinguished from the non-Muslims.⁹² This case shows that living in the same society was not enough to avoid being trapped by orientalism. It was one of the most significant methodological problems of reading photographs as the source of history. When the profession of photography spread among local artisans, the trap of orientalism became less harmful thanks to diversity in photographs.

By the 1850s, the profession of photography reached the local people of the Ottoman Empire and spread on a large scale especially amongst Greek and Armenian subjects. This step helped Ottoman photography for the reflection of the society and reality in a certain sense. From the beginning of the 1850s, professional photography gained steam in Istanbul, especially in Beyoğlu Street.

Vassilaki Kargopulo, an Ottoman Greek, opened a studio in Beyoğlu in 1850. Following his lead, Ernest-Edouard de Caranza between 1852-1854; Rabach right after the Crimean War, Alphonse Durand and Jules Derain were the pioneers of the photography in the Ottoman Empire.⁹³ Several studios were launched in the empire, but the products of these studies were not included in archival sources. These photographs were the property of personal collectors' collections which are market base.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Eldem, "Powerful Images," 108.

⁹² Ibid., 108.

⁹³ For more information about the photography in the Ottoman Empire see, Engin Özendes, *Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1919* (İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2013); and Engin Çizgen, *Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1919* (İstanbul: Haşet Kitabevi, 1987); Öztunçay, "The Origins and Development of Photography in Istanbul".

⁹⁴Edhem Eldem, "Following Ottoman Photographs" August 11, 2015, in *Ottoman History Podcast*, produced by Chris Gratien, MP3 audio, 12:17, <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2015/08/ottoman-empire-photography-edhem-eldem.html>

From the very beginning of the 1880s, portrait photography gained popularity rapidly among people all around the empire. As a result of this, the presence of common people increased. Defining the look of Ottoman people without neglecting even the ordinary subject revealed that they needed to be seen to understand the society's structure through photographs which were collected on all sides of the empire. Ordinary subject's appearance in the photographs as a historical source helped to narrate their stories thanks to this strong evidence.

The use of these photographs may be deceptive for those who study the subtext as it is difficult to read it as a historical source because there is little known about their purpose of taking them.⁹⁵

However, in respect of visual representation, photographs are valuable sources because of their feature of revealing the costume as an important instrument to reflect self-portrait. Even though they are still deceptive for historians to figure out who they really were in the real world, out of the studio; this shortcoming turns to an advantage because this study uses the photographs as a historical source to understand how the *fedayees* used photography to create and portray an image of the "self".

However the photographs of *fedayees* require to be examined together with those of other civilian population with whom they interact before reaching a conclusion. The third chapter of the thesis aims to evaluate the photographs of *fedayees*, as well as to compare them with other communities in the nineteenth century Ottoman Anatolia and tries to avoid the manipulation of photography by comparing their similarities and differences with other paramilitary ethnic minorities.

⁹⁵ Nancy Micklewright, "Public and Private for Ottoman Women of the Nineteenth Century" in *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, ed. Fairchild Ruggles (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 159.

Although the photographers who took the photographs of the *fedayees* were unknown by name, it is known that the photos were taken either by the Armenian photographers at the given town as in the case of Van, where the *fedayees* seemed to have circulated and posed for photos relatively free at some times, of in some cases also by their comrades, as in the famous case of Kevork Tchavoush.⁹⁶ Of course, there is also a possibility that these photographs may be taken outside the Ottoman borders. However, since the photos taken outside the border is a different subject, at this point, it is necessary to give information about Armenian photography in the Ottoman Empire before the “self-image of *fedayees*” issue which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Although there is no explicit verse in the Qur'an that prohibits painting, it is a highly controversial issue for Muslims to do photography as a profession in the Ottoman Empire governed by the Sharia. Until the first photograph studio belonged a Muslim named Rahmizade Bahaeddini which was opened in Istanbul in 1910, this sector was monopolized by Greeks and Armenians who were Christian.⁹⁷ However, even in 1920, *Ceride-i İlmiye* magazine published by the Department of Shaykh al-Islam in August issue confirmed that it is forbidden by religion for a Muslim to take photographs.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ At that point I need to thank Elke Hartmann for her interest in my thesis and for all her help; for more information about Armenian photography in the Ottoman Empire, Armen T. Marsoobian, *Fragments of a Lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); Nissan Perez, *Focus East: early photography in the Near East: 1839-1885* (New York: Abrams, 1988); Stephen Sheehi, *The Arab Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography, 1860–1910* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016); David Low, “Photography and the Empty Landscape: Excavating the Ottoman Armenian Image World,” *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 6 (December 2015): 31-69. For more information about Kevork Tchavoush’s case see, Hartmann, “Shaping the Armenian Warrior,” 122.

⁹⁷ Özendes, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Fotoğrafçılık*, 36.

⁹⁸ “Zeyd-i müslimin insan ve sâir zî-ruh olan hayvan sûretlerini alâ külli hâl tasvîri şer’an haram olur mu? El-cevâb: Olur [Suret tasviri: V/62, s. 1968 Cemaziyelula 1338]; for more information see, İsmail Cebeci, *Ceride-i İlmiyye Fetvaları* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2009), 250.

In such an environment, the Armenians of the empire who were known as pharmacists and chemists in Kayseri, Diyarbakır, Sivas, Trabzon, Elazığ and Istanbul, easily became the pioneers of the photography by adopting the technique called *daguerreotype* which requires knowledge of chemistry.⁹⁹ Thereby, it was easy for *fedayees* to have their photos taken in the studios where they were active, while this makes impossible to identify photographers of the photos.¹⁰⁰

2.2.1 Creating “Self” in Ottoman Photography

Clothing both in Ottoman Empire and in the world around it was a fundamental tool to create a fiction “self”. Although the selection of clothing in the society was restricted by the rules, it was not possible to prevent people’s choices while posing for a photo-shoot in the studio. It should be highlighted that most of the time people were wearing whatever they found fancy and original in the studios rather than their daily clothes. Nevertheless this was not a random choice for every single poser.

⁹⁹ Özendes, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Fotoğrafçılık*, 38.

¹⁰⁰ Names of known photographers and location of their studios in the borders of the Ottoman Empire: Gaspar Tütünciyan in the center of Adana Vilayet; K. Cevahirciyan in center of Ankara Vilayet; N. Çiçekyan, Siragan Mosdicyan Harutyun Sarkis Stepanyan and D. C. Youssofian in the Sanjak of Kayseri; T.F.Asfarian, A. Bayadjian, Carlo Bukmedjian, Castania Frères, B. Chiclian, Kirkor Zeki Kessirbachian, Pateraky Frères in Sanjak of Izmir; Movses Yeghparian in Sanjak of Manisa; Z.G. Donatossian in the center of Baghdad Vilayet; A. Guiragossian, Melconian Frères, Sarrafian Brothers, Pascal Sébah in Beirut; Papazyan Frères in the center of Bursa (Hüdavendigâr) Vilayet; Kirkor Odabachian and Harutyun Raphaelian in the center of Erzurum Vilayet; Himayeh Azadian and Agop Kazancıyan in Sanjak of Erzincan; Ohannes Varzabedian in Sanjak of Maraş; Abdullah Frères, O. Aharonyan, Garabed Amiryan, Garabed Baghdasarian, R. Caracachian, P. Chacarian, Martyros J. Contadzian, Takvor Çirakyan, Gülmez Frères, P. J. Hekimian, V. Hissarlian, K. Hougassian, M. Itarian, Edouardo Kasparian, Raphael Khendamian, Karnik M. Maziyan, G. Paboudjian, Mathieu J. Papazyan, Cosmi Sébah, Pascal Sébah, Arşak T. Sedefjian, Bogos Tarkulyan, Tchamlidjian, H. M. Tchourechian and Tchobanian Frères in Istanbul; Tz. Dildilyan and A. Cevahirciyan in center of Kastomonu Vilayet; Encababian Frères in center of Sivas Vilayet; Ghazaros Kayian, Mıgırdıç Najlian and Tornig Terzibashian in Sanjak of Amasya; Ohanig K. Guekbachian and Arsen Margazian in Sanjak of Tokat; Derounian Frères, Hartune Mardikian and Kirkor Messerlian in Syria; Hatchik Cholakian in the center of Trabzon (Trebizonde) Vilayet; Dildilian Brothers in Sanjak of Samsun; Nadjalian Frères and Papazyan Frères in Sanjak of Varna; L. Makinistian and Mardiros Mavian in Sanjak of İzmit; Yessayi Garabedyan, C. Krikorian, H. Mardikian, Sarrafian Brothers and Garabed Yazedjian in Kudüs (Jerusalem); Abdullah Frères, G. Lekegian, Prisco Frères, J. P. Sébah, Pascal Sébah and A. T. Sedefjian in Khedivate of Egypt. For more information see, Çizgen, *Photography in the Ottoman Empire*, 46-51.

There was also a group which had a great effort to prepare for these photo-shoots as a part of creating “self” through the photography. They were in attempt to manage perception of people. Because of this reason photographs require to be asked two main questions to prevent the manipulation: “Who took the photograph?” and “What was the purpose of it?” These questions give several clues about the intention of photograph and photographer. *Fedayees* which will be evaluated in the third chapter were one of the most obvious examples of this group.

It would not be wrong to say that the smell of nationalism was in the air of nineteenth century and the spread of photography coincided with almost the same period. However it would not be right to call it as “coincidence”. According to constructivist turn, technological developments were directly linked with the spread of nationalism through newspaper, reproduction of texts, illustrations which served the purpose of “national belonging” and global spread of all these tools.¹⁰¹ As it was mentioned, rebels were also using the technology to reach the large masses all over the world.¹⁰² Among the tools of technology, photography had a special place. However, photographs had vulnerability for manipulation.

Although photographs seem to be subjectively reflecting the reality as it is, it was used for perception management over time. To give an example, Abdulhamid II himself was trying to create an image for the state and to control the images that were attempted to be created by the others. In addition to preventing the distribution of his own portrait, he made a considerable effort to control the visual world of the

¹⁰¹ Martina Baleva, “Revolution in the Darkroom: Nineteenth-Century Portrait Photography as a Visual Discourse of Authenticity in Historiography,” *Hungarian Historical Review* 3, no. 2 (2014): 363-390.

¹⁰² For more information about rebels' dissemination of their ideologies through the technology in Ottoman Balkans' case see, Martina Baleva, “Revolution in the Darkroom: Nineteenth-Century Portrait Photography as a Visual Discourse of Authenticity in Historiography”.

empire.¹⁰³ Abdulhamid's desire to control this area may come from his concern about being defeated or being manipulated by technology and photography, because of the reason that the photography had the ability to show the things different than reality or different than what Abdulhamid II wanted people to believe in. An event may be reflected through a photograph as what photographer or the poser wanted it to be, instead of what it really was. Besides, people could be impressed by what they saw. In other words, photography could be a very successful tool for perception management.

To illustrate, there exists two types of bandits in the photographs even though they were the same people. First one is the photograph of a bandit which was taken mostly in the mountains where he was free. These photographs were reflecting the glory and power of the bandit through his clothing, weapons and standing which shows his fearlessness. The second one is the photograph of a bandit which was taken by the Ottoman Empire after his capture. The photographs of the prisoners were ordered to be shot by Abdulhamid II in 1884.¹⁰⁴ As claimed in the sources, this practice -which was limited to certain prisons because of its high cost- was allegedly used by Abdulhamid II to decide whether the prisoners should be amnestied or not.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Eldem, "Powerful Images", 120.

¹⁰⁴ Özendes, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Fotoğrafçılık*, 32.

¹⁰⁵ In April 1888, convicts of the empire who sentenced to death and life time penal servitude were taken photography by order of Abdulhamid II. Crimes of the convicts were also written under the photographs by rule. However, it should be easily deduced in the archival documents that this practice cost the empire a lot. The criminals in the photographs regardless of their crimes were acting as innocent in contemplation of to be amnestied by the Sultan. It is hard to interpret whether authorities forced these criminals to act as regretful or not. The prisoners might have acted as less glorious than the time they were arrested willingly to be forgiven after they heard the stories based on the role of these photographs. Even if it was not proven, it was told that Sultan was deciding go by these photographs about whether they will stay in prison or not. While some of them seem repentant in the photographs, there was also a group who does not seem regretful. Nevertheless the prisoners who seem regretful were shaping public opinion. Their situation was suppressing the others who do not seem regretful in the prisons; for more information see, BOA. DH.MKT. 1499/70 (H-26.07.1305 / M-8 May 1888); the document gives information about demand for payments of photographs which were taken in prisons; BOA İ.DH.. 1081/84840 (H- 14.08.1305 / M. 26 April 1888) which gives

These second type of photographs taken by the empire were reflecting the bandits as regretful and inoffensive as it could be seen in the practice of Abdulhamid II in contrast with the photographs they were taken willingly to create a “self”. However both type of photographs had its own methodological problems. The second type which was taken by state authorities tries to shape the bandits in the photographs as they wish to reflect to the society in order to not to influence other people in the empire. The first type’s problem is that the photographs were shaped by the bandits themselves to gain support in public opinion.

Bandits were overexerting to create theatric poses behind the scene. Neither their clothes nor their stances were reflecting the reality of bandit life. Especially the members of *chetnik*¹⁰⁶ in Bulgaria were reflecting themselves as intellectual heroes through the background of the photographs which contained rugs, consoles, balustrades, rocks made of papier mâché, bookshelves, musical instruments, weapons, “European” suits dressed men and so on.¹⁰⁷ The purpose of the photographs which was taken by the bandits was creating a “self” through the nationalism in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the aim of the photographs taken by the Ottoman authorities after capturing them was to show the weakness of these bandits and the superiority of the state.

However the Ottoman Empire remained incapable to defend itself against the opponents of state, who used photography as a tool of propaganda. To give an

information about the cost of the taking photograph in prisons; see also, Edhem Eldem, “The Search for an Ottoman Vernacular Photography” in *The Indigenous Lens?: Early Photography in the Near and Middle East*, eds. Markus Ritter & Staci G. Scheiwiller (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018).

¹⁰⁶ The armed *çetes*, in the name of *chetnik* led by Hadzhi Dimitar and Stefan Karadzha, consisted of soldiers who were only part of the old Bulgarian legions which was expelled from Serbia.

¹⁰⁷ Baleva, “Revolution in the Darkroom”, 377.

example, on February 28th, 1903 cover of the French weekly news *L'Illustration* was the six Ottoman gendarmes gathered around three severed heads.¹⁰⁸

Despite all the precautions of Abdulhamid II, the spread of this photo -which went down like a bomb in Europe- could not be prevented. While Europe described this photo as atrocity, Ottoman authorities had the opinion that there was no difference between the paramilitary groups who fought to gain political independence and the ordinary bandit who robbed people.¹⁰⁹

This photo became a visual propaganda to defend the right of people who were persecuted in Macedonia in the eyes of Europeans. Famous writers wrote articles with this photograph on the cover and accused Abdulhamid II of committing crimes against the civilian population in Macedonia. This was also an attempt of image management against Abdulhamid II.

The empire failed to manage this process after the photograph reached the masses through the press. Abdulhamid's understanding of precaution was to prevent the spread of photography outside the country.

However, it was impossible to achieve this goal in the age of press and the age of nationalism at the same time. On the other hand, posing like that was an Ottoman tradition.¹¹⁰ For this reason, the photograph may not even cause a problem for Ottoman local authorities before it became notorious out of the empire. The severed human head was symbolizing victory. According to tradition, this was not something to be condemned, but rather these kind of photos were representing that the strong side prevailed and defeated the weak owner of the head.

¹⁰⁸ Eldem, "Powerful Images", 121.

¹⁰⁹ İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 226-227.

¹¹⁰ For more information see, Edhem Eldem, *Death in İstanbul* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2005).

However, it was revealed that this traditional symbol of power and glory were representing something as long as it stays within the borders of the empire. This time, somehow, the photograph crossed the empire's borders. Thus, the image of Abdulhamid II tarnished in Europe.

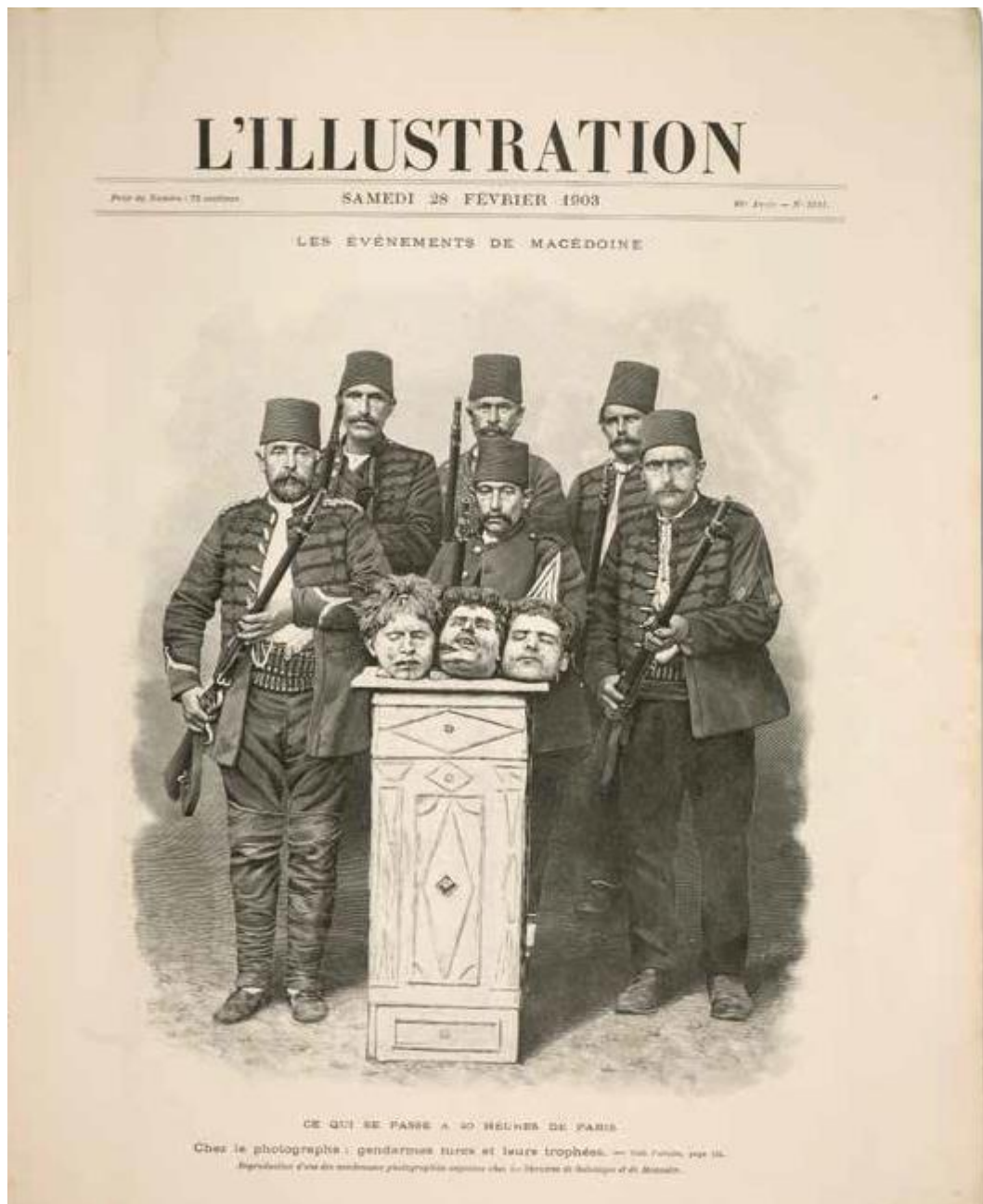


Figure 3: Cover of L'Illustration, February 28, 1903.

It should be highlighted that manipulation of the images and creating “self” were common in the nineteenth century. Clothing played a significant role in the aforementioned process of creating an image to shape public opinion. The third chapter particularly focuses on photography and the creation of “self”. This is analyzed through a case study of *fedayees* and their selection of clothing in the photographs.

CHAPTER III

2 PORTRAYING THE PROVERBIAL SILHOUETTE

The rebel can never find peace. He knows what is good and, despite himself, does evil. The value which supports him is never given to him once and for all.

- Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*¹¹¹

3.1 Biases in the Evidence

Although there were strict rules and regulations on clothing based on edicts in the Ottoman Empire especially before the Tanzimat Era, it was not easy to pursue all the groups and subjects. Even if regulations were put into practice in centers such as Istanbul, it was quite difficult to scrutinize people lived in periphery. People who lived in rural areas of the empire intended to be comfortable in daily life. For this reason, it was not surprising to see similarly dressed people believing in different religions. These people who lived in the same region especially in the rural areas where they interacted with each other more were seeking for practicality rather than following the uncontrollable rules even if they were not rebellious.

However, there were, of course, groups that refused to pursue the dress codes imposed by the empire. At the top of these groups were the *eşkiyas* (*bandits*) who

¹¹¹ Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 285.

cannot be controlled. It was not expected that they would follow these rules, as they are already a group that went against the law. The clothes of these groups had their own language and were saying a lot about the purpose of the organization they dedicated themselves if there was. While examining the activities of these uncontrollable groups, their clothes are also required to be analyzed as a text.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century photographs of Armenian *fedayees* and other paramilitary groups may tell little or nothing about their casual clothes which they wore in the mountains. However, these clothes have a great deal to say about their perception of “being *fedayee*” and how they wanted to identify themselves within the context of clothing.

The reason why this thesis does not concern about counter paramilitary groups’ - Kurds, Circassians, Georgians and Laz- self-image is that the photographs of these groups were used to demonstrate their traditional clothes which were used by Armenian *fedayees* that are argued in the fourth chapter. These groups’ self-representation through photographs is a different subject which needs to be examined in detail in a different research. The counter paramilitary groups’ photographs are used to define their clothes in this thesis. However, the silhouette of these paramilitary groups requires to be drawn on the purpose of visualizing them in the fourth chapter of the thesis which outlines the *fedayees*’ practice of disguise. Although the paramilitary groups’ perception of “self” does not require to be explained because of being out of context, *fedayees*’ “self” definitions in photographs is one of the concerns of this thesis.

The existing photographs of the *fedayees* which belong to late 19th and early 20th century are mostly the group portraits which *fedayees* posed in their carefully selected traditional costumes that they used as a tool to represent their identities and

nationalities.¹¹² The *fedayees*' portraits had been taken before they were commissioned with a critically important mission or after they achieved a goal which was given to them by the organizations of *Hunchak* and *Dashnak*.¹¹³ The main purpose of these photographs was to keep memory and to be remembered magnificently in case of their circulation.¹¹⁴ They were assuming that the photograph they were taken before a mission may have been their last picture. The reason of keeping diaries and memoirs among the *fedayees* were the same: to remember every detail. Although none of them mention it in memoirs, it may be deduced that if the taken photograph had the possibility to be their last picture, the *fedayees* may predict that they would be remembered with this last visual after many years. Because of this reason, it is difficult to believe that the possibility of publishing these photographs was ignored by the *fedayees* and taking these photos randomly. On the date the photos were taken, there were already magazines belonging to the organization that

¹¹² Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior," 117.

¹¹³ Ibid., 117-122; First armenian revolutionary party was established in 1885 named as Armeneg in Van. However, the organizations mentioned in the text are Hunchak and Dashnak, which were the subsequent Armenian revolutionary parties. The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party was formed by seven Russian Armenian students in 1887 in Geneva and the name of the organization was changed in 1905 to Hunchakian Social Democrat Party and then to Social Democrat Hunchakian Party in 1909. They had adopted Marxist ideology affected by Russian and German revolutionary thought. Following that, The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, abbreviated as the ARF, (the Hay Heghapokhakan Dashnaktsutiun) in 1890 in Tiflis which commonly referred to as the Dashnaktsutiun was found in 1890 in Tiflis where was the one of the centers of students who moved by the spirit of revolution. Organization members' aim was to establish the liberation of the Turkish Armenians through revolution. ARF activity centers were Tiflis, Istanbul, Atrpatakan, Kars (Kars was the main center because of its historical and geographical importance), Yerevan, Baku, Alexandropol, Batum, Erzurum (Karin), Vaspurakan, Taron (called as the *Fedayabatun*), Paris, Bulgaria and Geneva. Although these two organizations merged together for quite a while, they were dissenting with each other on Hunchakian Revolutionary Party's socialist ideology; for more information about the Armenian Revolutionary Organizations see, Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties Through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Anaide Ter Minasian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement: 1887-1912* (Cambridge: Zoryan Institute, 1984); Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation: Dashnaktsutiun, 1890-1924* (Milan: Oemme Edizioni, 1989); Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Simon Payaslian, *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Michael M. Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); *Ermeni Komitalarının Amâl ve Harekât-ı İhtilâliyesi: İlân-ı Meşrutîyetten Evvel ve Sonra*, ed. H. Erdoğan Cengiz (Ankara Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1983).

¹¹⁴ This information was reached by e-mail (Elke Hartmann, 2019, personal correspondence., 6 July).

published in Armenian. It is usual that this possibility may be reflected in the photographs of the *fedayees* and they want to shape public opinion through these tool. Therefore, this possibility should be taken into consideration when evaluating the aforementioned photographs.

The Armenian *fedayees*' costumes play a significant role in these portraits not only as a visual source, but also as a text to be written to understand their photographic self-representations.¹¹⁵ Clothing has a symbolic role in the photographs as an expression of national belonging and identity.¹¹⁶ The photographs which were collected from personal collections illustrate that the *fedayees* made a great effort to be dressed in accordance with their national belonging although they probably do not dress in mountain as they pose in the photographs.

A different type of *fedayee* clothing could be deduced through the photographs which were taken by the officers of the empire when they were captured even if their reliability is also controversial. Nevertheless, they were still posing in the garb of so-called Armenian *fedayees* in the studios fastidiously. It should be highlighted again that these photographs may have been taken by the local photographers or travelers who took a close interest in clothing practices of local people of the empire when they arrived or out of the Ottoman borders, especially in Russian side of the border.¹¹⁷ The reason why this is so important is that, of course, the place where the photo was taken would affect the frame.

¹¹⁵ Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior", 123.

¹¹⁶ Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 108.

¹¹⁷ The perception of "east" in the eyes of travelers who came to the Ottoman Empire after the invention of photography reflected their photo shoots. They created their own "east" notion which they already created in their minds before they came. They find interesting the traditional clothes which were not worn in daily Ottoman life. Their perception of "east" was much more conventional than it was.

Although most of the photographers who took the photographs of the *fedayees* in the studios are unknown, they should be Armenian local photographers who launched studios on all sides of the Ottoman Empire. These photographs may be also taken in Bucharest, Tiflis, or even Tabriz. It may be traced through the studios' background colors and objects which were seen in the photographs but it requires to be examined in a separate study.

In addition to the use of clothing as a means of national belonging, *fedayees* were also utilizing the studio's itself as a tool of propaganda through the instrumentality of flags and mottos on the flag. This will be explained in detail below.

3.2 Defining Armenian *Fedayees*' Silhouette

Although there was not a standard *fedayee* uniform, their clothing practice may be classified according to the regions where they operated. It should not be underestimated that the climate, geography and being under the influence of other cultures such as Iran and Caucasus, bear down on the clothing practices of the *fedayees* in their daily life. It should be noted that the use of clothes in daily life and taking advantage of flamboyant costumes for the photo shoots were the practices which were different from each other.

As it was mentioned before, the *fedayees*' portraits had been taken before they were commissioned with a critically important mission or after they achieved it. On this opportunity, history had a chance to record their ceremonial wears which revealed who they wanted to be in the eyes of Armenian people in the empire and the organizations. Although the *fedayees* were not routinely wearing the clothes which

they posed in the photographs, they may be aware of the importance of image building in both public memory and foreign press.

The peasants' attitude was profoundly important for the *fedayees*. The aim of gaining the Armenian local people's support and sympathy played a significant role in the selection of clothes. The *fedayees* required to be different than the peasants to gain their support as protector of the Armenian people in their ideology. They thought that their superiority should be reflected by their costumes. They were posing in the garb of their so called "uniforms" -which does not exist in actual-, probably to show consistency in the event that these photographs may have been published in journals out of the empire or to be seen by villagers in the future.

That is, their self-representation efforts were mostly to gain support. When *fedayees* entered a village in full uniform with their own words, the continuation of the process for gaining support was moving faster than they entered in their casual clothes which they wore in mountains.¹¹⁸ However, the question of "what is uniform" should be explained. What is making these clothes "*fedayees*' uniform"? What are the distinguishing features of this costume both in photographs and in daily life?

Although *fedayees* were wearing eye-pleasing but unpractical clothes in photo shoots, these aforementioned photographs give clues about the *fedayees* that they wanted to be seen rather than what they actually were. Analyzing these photographs also reveals the difference between practical clothing to wear in the mountains and the self-image they desired to portray through the photographs before the discussion of what they were wearing in the daily life.

¹¹⁸ Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior", 136.

3.3 Armenian *Fedayees*' Concern: Self-Representation in the Studios

From the photograph (see figure 4), it can be deduced that it was a theatric posture which was rehearsed before the shoot. Their stances and ammunitions give more information about “being a *fedayee*” rather than their choice of clothing. Company commander comes into prominence by the place he sits. Tigran Teroyan, *nom de guerre* Vazgen, is the only member who sits as the leader of group in the photograph. In bottom row, first person from the right, Pulkaratsi Peto, pretend to pry around by binocular. Members in the second row act as they are ready to shoot.



Figure 4: Tigran Teroyan who preferred the *nom de guerre*, Vazgen, and his group in Van, in 1896.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Vazgen was born in Van and became one of the leaders and propagandists of the organization. He took part in Van Rebellion of 1896 and became the leader of Vaspurakan after the death of Peto. He also wrote his ideas in *Droshak*, which was official journal of ARF; for more information about group leaders of the *fedayees* see, Vahe Habeshian, ed., *Voices From the Past: Excerpts From the Writings of Armenian Revolutionaries* (Watertown: Hairenik, 2014); Ara Aharonian, *Heroic Figures of A.D.L.*, trans. Aris G. Sevag (Los Angeles: NOR-OR Publications, 2006); Der Minasian, *Armenian Freedom Fighters*; Antranik Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*.

In second row, first *fedayee* from the right aims his gun at the lens. While most of them were wearing moccasins; Patghtasar Malian who adopted the *nom de guerre* Gurgen -first person from the left in bottom row- Vazgen who sits, and Peto who holds the binocular were wearing leather boots. It is obvious that these three had key roles in the organization. Vazgen takes precedence, *khumpabed*, of all the group members.¹²⁰ This title was giving him the privilege of wearing leather boots and sitting on a chair in the photo shoot. In addition to the missions of Pulkaratsi Peto which he accomplished as both group leader and regular *fedayee* and his place in the organization, his family may have afforded the leather boots which is reflected in the photograph due to financial sufficiency they had. Gurgen as the last group member who shoed the leather boot in the photography served in the Russian army before he became a *fedayee*.¹²¹ These boots may be given him by the Russian army.

Other *fedayees* whose feet are visible in the photograph wear a low-cut shoe. They may be moccasins or rubber shoes. However it can be easily seen that second person from the left in the bottom row, whose name is unknown, wears moccasins or *çarık* which is a traditional shoe that is leather and wraps the lower leg by thick shoelace around a hand-knitted sock. *Çarık* seems more suitable to be worn by the *fedayees* due to its affordability and practicality. If there existed a *fedayee* uniform, they'd all be wearing the same leather boots or *çarıks*. By looking at the photo, it may be said that the clothes were generally based on *fedayees*' own affordability.

In the photograph *fedayees* wear *shalvar* which are baggy trousers as Kurds and other Ottoman *reaya* live in the Anatolia. *Shalvar* was also practical and traditional for the people who lived in that part of the empire. Therefore the choice of trouser of

¹²⁰ *Khumpabed* was referring to group leader in Armenian language; see, Der Minasian, *Armenian Freedom Fighters*.

¹²¹ Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 66.

the *fedayees* as in the photograph and in the other photographs does not typify their nationality or belonging. Especially while drawing silhouette to identify a nation in the Ottoman Empire, wearing *shalvar* cannot be regarded as a characteristic feature. People of the empire influenced each other inevitably and it may be easily seen in their clothes and traditions which they adopted from each other. Therefore, it was hard for people to distinguish the nationality of a person through his clothing when he was just a silhouette at a distance. In order to be identified through the costume, the shape of the silhouette needs to be different from the other costumes. *Shalvar* was not the right choice for the people who lived in the Ottoman Anatolia to be distinguished by the others.

Fedayees' overgarments in the photograph also give insufficient clues about their national belonging. It may be deduced that there was not standardization on overgarments. While some of the group members wore longer overgarments which hanged down from their waist bands, others wore shorter overgarments which were tucked in their trousers and cover the commissure through their waist bands.

In the Ottoman Empire headgear was providing the crucial marker of identity, status and rank; not only the fashion.¹²² However, the choice of headgear also varies across even group members in the band as it is in choice of trousers, overgarments and shoes. It may be easily seen in the photograph that the Armenian *fedayees* did not adopt a standard regulation for the practice of wearing headgear.

Most of the members in the photograph wear the fez which is wrapped by turban around. In the bottom row, third *fedayee* from the right displays the practice of

¹²² Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829," 403-425; see more information about the regulation of headgear in the Ottoman Empire, Jana, "Loyal and Elegant Subjects of the Sublime State: Headgear and the Multiple Dimensions of Modernizing/-ed Ottoman Identity"; for more information see Chapter II.

wearing wrapped fez in the photograph. It was the typical use of fez in the Ottoman Anatolia. It is really confounding to see a photograph which illustrates *fedayees* while wearing fez especially the third person from the left in top row. This is because the fez was a symbol of being an Ottoman. The Armenian subjects of the empire were wearing wrapped fez with a fabric or black fez to show their affiliation even if wrapped fez was forbidden by Sultan Abdulaziz I because of its being inconsistent with Islamic custom.¹²³ It may be seen that Armenian teachers in Istanbul were supporting students not to wear fez.¹²⁴ At such a time, *fadeyees* who posed while wearing fez is confounding for those who study on Armenian nationalism through photography.

Different types of *papakha*¹²⁵ and *kalpak*, which are woolen hat worn by Caucasian men in general and the Russian version of it also may be seen in the photograph. It is known that Armenians were using *papakha* after Russia adopted it during Russo-Circassian War and Cossacks used it.¹²⁶ Both types may be seen in the photograph: *papakha* and *kubanka*. The *papakha* is known with its long fur which is ended in the photograph by the *fedayee* who is the third person from the left in the bottom row. *Kubanka* is also shows itself in the photography as a shorter woolen hat similar to *papakha*. Vazgen who is the seventh person from the left in the bottom row demonstrates the practice of wearing *kubanka* in addition to three *fedayees* in the photograph. However, Anatolia was familiar with both *papakha* and *kubanka*

¹²³ Jana, "Loyal and Elegant Subjects of the Sublime State: Headgear and the Multiple Dimensions of Modernizing/-ed Ottoman Identity," 93.

¹²⁴ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 5/44 (H- 15.12.1313 / M- 28 May 1896); the document gives information about the teachers' actions who support students to not to wear fez in Mosedician Armenian School in Yenikapı/Istanbul; BOA. MF.MKT. 323/22 (H- 3 July 1896); the document is about making students of forenamed school wearing fez.

¹²⁵ Papakha is also known as Astrakhan hat which has long fur.

¹²⁶ Leonid Vasilyevich Belovinsky, *Entsiklopedcheskiy Slovar' Rossiyskoy Zhizni i Istorii: XVIII-Nachalo XX v* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003), 534.

through the Circassian¹²⁷ immigrants who came to the Ottoman Empire after their migration *en masse* in 1864. Georgians were also wearing more furry *papakhas* in contrast with Circassians. Wearing practice of both *papakha* and *kubanka* were not peculiar to Armenians in Anatolia since it belongs to Caucasus.

The practice of wearing *papakha* gives a crucial clue about Armenian *fedayees*. It reveals Russian influence on Armenian *fedayee* movement. It also shows that lots of the *fedayees* came from the Transcaucasus from Eastern Armenia where Russia ruled, Artsakh (Karabakh) or Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha and they may have been trained in the Russian Army.¹²⁸

In addition to wrapped fez and papakha, the practice of wearing turban as Kurds practiced in the Anatolia shows itself in the photograph. Kurdish turban is described as voluminous turban of a sombre color by James Creagh in his account.¹²⁹ Although it was generally identified with Arabs and Muslims, the practice of wearing turban cannot be restricted with national or religious belonging in the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ There were rules for color to distinguish the Muslims and non-Muslims but the silhouette of the turban was the same since the way they wrapped it was indistinguishable.

¹²⁷ With the term of “Circassian”, I intend to use the term as a inclusionary name for all the North Caucasian folks which are Adygeas, Karachays, Abkhazs, Abazas, Kabardays, Ubykhs, Chechens, Kumyks, Nogais, Ossetians, Ingushetians and Dagestanis. Ottoman Empires’ archival documents also uses the name of Circassian (Çerakis/Çerkes/Çerakise) to mean all these North Caucasian folks, when it describes the people who were emigrated from the Caucasia by the force of the Russian Empire as it was stated in the introduction of the thesis.

¹²⁸ Hartmann, “Shaping the Armenian Warrior”, 133.

¹²⁹ James Creagh, *Armenians, Koords, and Turks* (London: Samuel Tinsley Amp Co., 1880), 166.

¹³⁰ Beverly Chico, *Hats and Headwear around the World: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 456.

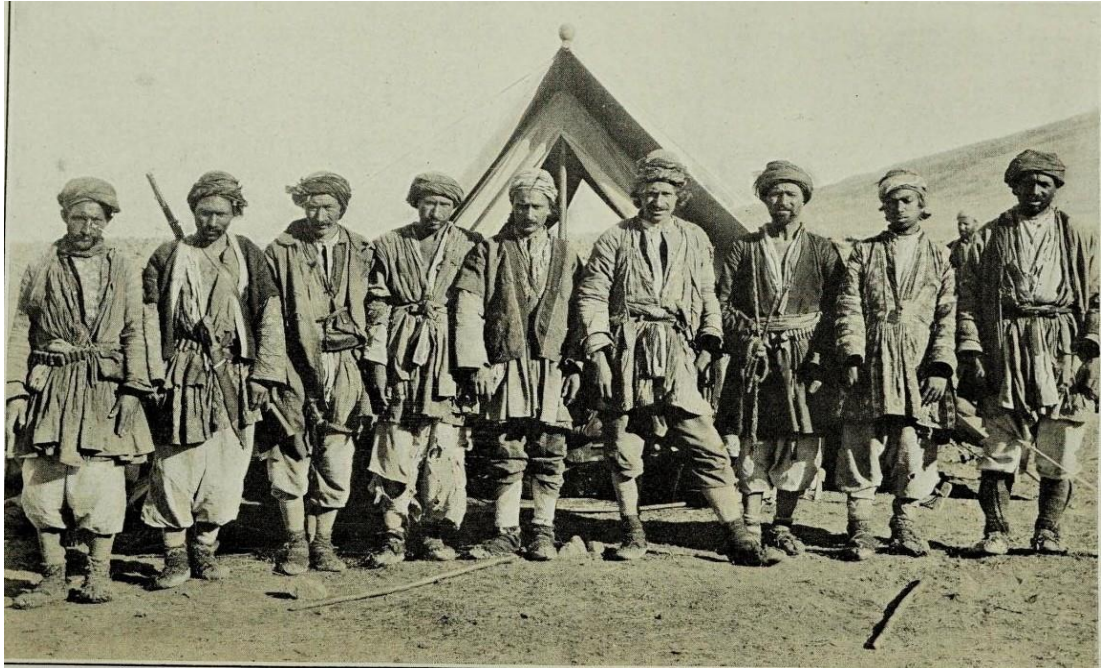


Figure 5: Kurd porters on Ararat.¹³¹

It may be clearly deduced from the photograph given above, the Armenian type of wrapping turban was like a mirror image with Kurdish style as it is with other people in the Ottoman Anatolia. It was the reason of why the Armenian bandits cannot be distinguished from other bandits or local people when he was seen as a silhouette from a distance.

The photograph also reveals that the Armenian *fedayees*' clothing had several characteristics in common with other Anatolian clothing especially with those of Kurds. At this point, it should be noted that it is not possible to talk about a single Kurdish or Armenian outfit. The term Kurdish clothing refers to the clothes worn by the Kurds living in a certain region. Although both Armenian and Kurdish clothes varied from region to region, it would not be wrong to say that these costumes were similar and influenced by each other in certain regions that close to each other.

¹³¹ Henry F. B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), 166-167.

Therefore, it is most likely that the villagers would not be able to distinguish them from each other at night when they were attacked suddenly.

The first difference between the two photographs is poser's poised stances. Armenian *fedayees* posture is as if they are ready to fire. It is obvious that the pose was theatrical which was prepared before the shoot. The *fedayees* were trying to create a self-image in the photographs. The theatrical pose is not specific to this photograph. It may be easily seen in most of the photographs which belong to *fedayees*. Binoculars play an important role in these theatrical poses. Binocular was representing wealth, power and distance between the *fedayees* and peasants because of its rarity. For this reason, binoculars were placed in distinctly visible locations in the photographs as in the first photograph. This point also refers to the second difference between *fedayees* and Kurdish porters. Arms of the *fedayees* have a huge position in the photograph. Their rifles, daggers and bandoliers represent power, wealth and expecting respect as in binoculars. The rifles they posed with also give clues about their deep connection with Russia. In the photograph, *fedayees* carry Russian Mosin rifle. Similar to the headgears mentioned above, carrying Russian Mosin rifle also indicates Russian impact and support of the Armenian banditry movement in the Ottoman Empire.¹³²

The most significant difference between the two photographs is cross wrapped bandoliers on *fedayees*' chests and waists. However, it was an accustomed scene for those who lived in the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century.¹³³

¹³² For more information see, Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

¹³³ For more information about banditry in the Ottoman Empire see, Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Mustafa Akdağ, "Celali İsyanlarında Büyük Kaçgunluk 1603-1606," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 2, no: 2-3 (1964):1-50; Mustafa Akdağ, *Celâli İsyanları: 1550-*

While clothing and armaments were common for most of the bandits especially in Anatolia, objects such as flags and crosses played a significant role in the photographs as distinctive figures. The *fedayees* intentionally showcased other symbols and objects in the frames to show and distinguish themselves as Armenians. Perhaps they may be aware of the similarity of their clothes with those of the Kurds, and they may be putting these objects to distinguish themselves.

The flag in the photograph is the only significant marker to identify the bandits' nationality (see Figure 4). For this very reason, the flag is located at the heart of the photo frame. It was the sign of the Khanasor Expedition in 1897 which Armenian *fedayees* organized against the Kurdish Mazrig tribe to take "revenge". This explains the reason behind the meaning of the slogan and the skull on the flag. The slogan on the flag is "Vrezh, Vrezh" [վրէժ վրէժ] which means: "Revenge, Revenge".¹³⁴

The cross which is worn by Melo who is the fourth *fedayee* from the left in the top row represents the religious belief of the *fedayees*. Their religious belief distinguishes them from the Muslim Kurds in Anatolia and helps them and local Armenians to recognize each other.¹³⁵ However, wearing cross does not seem practical for the bandits while they were sleeping with the same cloth. They also needed to hide their identities from the authorities. On the other hand, while wearing crosses, they were informing about their belonging. Above all things, size of the crosses Melo and the unknown *fedayee* sixth one from the left in the middle row wear in the photograph do not seem practical. They may put the crosses strategically

1603 (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 1963); Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime and the Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹³⁴ Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, 158.

¹³⁵ There were also Christian Kurds in the region, but they were not considered as a part of this movement throughout this thesis.

in the photo in order to be seen by other Christians and so that they could possibly get help or support from them. It may be deduced that wearing cross is also another practice *fedayees* used to create a “self” through the photographs. According to the ideologies of the *fedayees*, they were protecting Christian Armenians from the Muslim Ottoman Empire and Kurds. They believed that Ottoman Empire were unfair in many areas, and perhaps the *fedayees* may wanted to take advantage of the nationalism movement that had already spread in the Balkans and to be independent as the remained Christians of the Empire.

Contrary to existing photographs, Der Minasian states that all the *fedayees* were wearing the same uniform which consists of native headgear that was called *Arakhchi*, a flat red tarboosh draped with a bandana with tinsel; *Arkhaloukhs* which were colorful Armenian short woolen jacket; baggy trousers which were embroidered in red and yellow colors.¹³⁶ The cords of *fedayees*’ trousers were tying with long winding sashes and they were shoeing moccasins.¹³⁷ Standardized sashes, called as the sash of Diyarbakır, were wrapped around their waists and shoulders in addition to four row bandoleer carrying 240 cartridges or the Russian Mosin rifle.¹³⁸ The another requisite to be dressed as a *fedayee* consisted of strapping one more belt which was called as the dagger belt ensheathed *a dagger of Damascus* inside.¹³⁹ They were also wearing a silken head scarf to protect themselves from sun and rain.¹⁴⁰

He also states that the only difference between a common *fedayee* and the company commander was having the luxury to carry only the binocular and the compass

¹³⁶ Der Minasian, *Armenian Freedom Fighters*, 71.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

during the marches although field glasses, binoculars or compasses are the *sine qua non* of the *fedayees*.¹⁴¹ The company commanders' costume was same with the *fedayees*' except not to carry knapsack which contains repair tools, polishing cloth, a change of shirt, one underwear, a pair of socks and a pair of moccasins.¹⁴²



Figure 6: Sebastatsi Murat (Murat Khrimian, Kurikian), the *fedayee* and the group leader.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 72.

¹⁴² Ibid., 71.

¹⁴³ The photograph of Sebastatsi Murat may be taken around 1904 during the events in Taron; see, Manjkian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 138.

However, contrary to the portrait Minasian draws in his memoir, photographs of the *fedayees* show that there was not a standard and distinguishing uniform to identify them and they were attaching great importance to appearance of “self” as a part of self-image they created in the photographs even between the *fedayees* of the same group.

The *fedayee* leader in the photography (see Figure 6) wears thigh boot as opposed to Rouben’s statement which claims that *fedayees* were wearing moccasins. Affording thigh boot for all the *fedayees* or just for the group leaders does not seem possible. By wearing polished expensive leather boots, they were indicating the power and wealth of the organization they were affiliated with. They aimed to influence the poor Armenian peasants and show them the possibility of acquiring power and to put distance between being a *fedayee* and an ordinary Armenian peasant to establish the authority. The rifle which is in the front, dagger, the bandolier which wraps the *fedayees*’ waist and the revolver which was inserted between two lines of bandolier also serve the same purpose. Armaments are in the foreground instead of drawing attention to being Armenian in the photograph. Upon first impression, the photograph represents power rather than nationalism. The practice of wearing a distinguishing *arakhchi* and *arkhaloukh* also does not show itself in the photograph. The white turban which Sebastatsi Murat wrapped also does not share similarity with Minasian narration. Although Armenian people of the empire wear turban, it is impossible to determine one and only headgear for the *fedayees* (see Figure 4).

Rouben Der Minasian gives supporting details in his memoir:

On our way down on the other side, we first came to the Village of Hoghand. When the villagers saw our arms and strange uniforms they took us for enemies and started to run away, without heeding our shouts and explanations that we were their friends. Finally their leading citizen, one

named Nerso who had seen the world recognized us and came to our aid. He had been in the City of Van, had seen Vardkes and his fedayee company, and knew the revolutionaries. Their fears removed, presently all the villagers, men women and children gathered around us, and with tearful eyes watched the soldiers of the “Armenian army” in their uniform, mauser rifles, and field glasses- things which even the Kurdish Aghas lacked.

... Far more powerful than the propaganda or the spoken word is the presence of a fedayee company

The reason why Der Minasian could not understand the stampede of Armenian villagers from *fedayees* may be because of his partiality. That’s why he supposes that Armenian villagers ran away from them because they confused *fedayees* with other bandits despite the uniform *fedayees* wore. Although Minasian assume that all these pieces were particular to Armenian *fedayees* in the eyes of villagers, the case he wrote demonstrates that the clothes of fedayees were not a sign to recognize them from a distance. It may be deduced that Minasian may not be aware of the similarity between their so-called uniform and the Anatolian garment which are composed of all the cultures in the region. It should also be noted that some of the *fedayees*, especially a group of them lived in different regions, may be dressed as Minasian portrayed. However, the so-called costume depicted in the memoirs and seen in the photographs is the clothing worn in certain regions of Anatolia without regarding to religion or ethnicity.

The most significant difference between Armenian guerilla and others in addition to Russian riffles was the linguistic performance. Armenian bandits were not speaking while crossing border even if they disguised as Muslims.¹⁴⁴ Minasian’s case which was given above substantiates that the villagers gathered around the *fedayees* after they were convinced by Nerso.

¹⁴⁴ For more information see Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*; Der Minasian, *Freedom Fighters*.

Minasian's case has evidential value of Armenian *fedayees'* uniforms similarity with Kurds and other people in Anatolia. If *fedayees'* clothing had carried the traces of only Armenian tradition as they stated, villagers would have recognized them from distance. Minasian himself also uses the words of "strange uniforms" in his memoir. However, he cannot notice the reason behind the stampede of villagers. Therefore Minasian abstains from stating an opinion about the stampede of villagers and he looks from different point of view which is equipment even Kurdish Aghas lacked.

From the photograph, it should be assumed that either *fedayees* were wearing highfalutin clothes in the mountains, or they were trying to shape public opinion about the perception of *fedayee* (see Figure 4). I strongly believe the second assumption. As Hartmann states in her article, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior: Clothing and Photographic Self-Portraits of Armenian *Fedayis* in the late 19th and early 20th Century", *fedayees* poses were theatrical and they were reenacting scenes of daily life in the military but the costumes they selected to be seen in the photographs were not indiscriminate.¹⁴⁵ The selection of costume was representing the national belonging and their attempts to create a "self" but it remained incapable of being "Armenian *fedayee*". Their clothes draw a picture of a bandit but it is almost impossible to deduce the nationality of the bandits mentioned.

In addition, as it was stated in Minasian's memoir, the *fedayees* were not given permission to remove their clothes not to lose time.¹⁴⁶ The leather boots might have been unpractical for the *fedayees'* way of life.

¹⁴⁵ Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior", 120.

¹⁴⁶ They were marching 5 to 6 kilometers in one hour and covering the distance of 25 to 40 kilometers every night. They were crossing rivers without changing their clothes to gain time. They were not allowed to take off their bandoleers. After a march of three to four hours, they were allowed to smoke. During the march, they were strictly forbidden to talk to each other. At day breaks, one of them was keeping watch while other *fedayees* were sleeping on their blankets they carried with them. They were

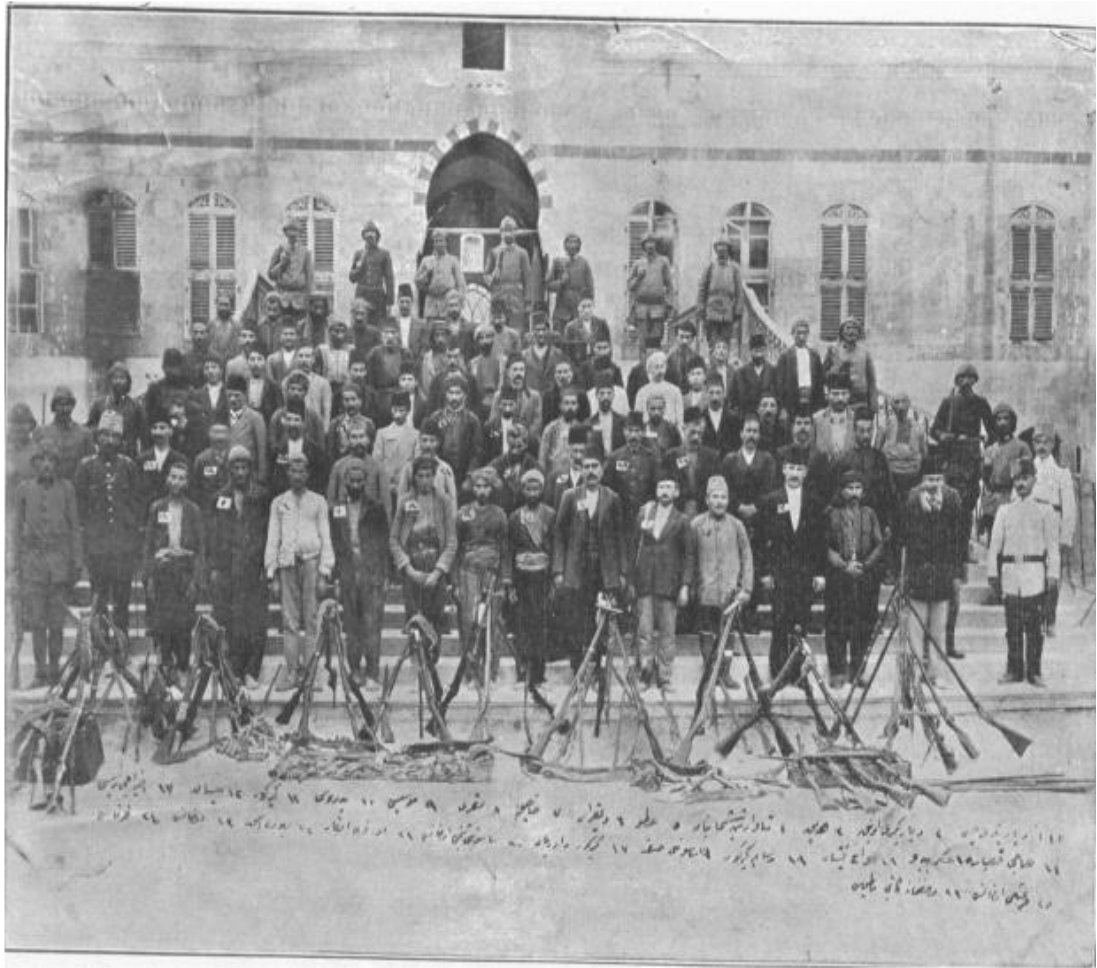


Figure 7: A photograph of *fedayees* who were the members of Armenian Revolutionary Committee of Aleppo. They were arrested in Aleppo and Marash with their rifles. ¹⁴⁷

The photographs taken by the Ottoman authorities right after the capture of *fedayees* in the mountains show two different *fedayee* profiles to the audience as mentioned briefly at the end of second chapter . The audience cannot decide which one of these

tucking their rifles between their legs in the course of sleeping. Even while sleeping, they were forbidden to take of their bandoleers; for more information see, Der Minasian, *Armenian Freedom Fighters*, 73.

¹⁴⁷ The soldiers who surrounded *fedayees* were Ottoman soldiers. Top row from left to right (without counting Ottoman soldiers who wear uniform): Kirkor, Ato, Dikran, Haço, Makri, Mosis, Bedros, Isa of Diyarbakır, Onnik of Diyarbakır, Akerbief, Haik, Kirkor the Painter (13th). Second row from left to right: Misak, Nerses the Pharmacist, Hacı Kasbar, Akbar of Urfa (5th), Nişan of Van, Şavarş Şişmanyar, Ohannes, Yahudi Ishak. Third row from left to right: Kirkor Dadriyan (2nd), Migir of Sassoon (4th), Kokas (6th), Ohannes of Muş (13th); see, *Ermeni Amal ve Harekat-ı İhtilaliyesi: Tasvir ve Vesaik = Ziele und Taten Armenischer Revolutionäre No: 2* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire: 1916), 59.

profiles is genuine. First one is the *fedayees* who people see through the photographs which they created a “self” and reflected it to the photographs. The other type is the ones people could see through the photographs which authorities shot when *fedayees* were caught unprepared which can be seen above.

De Weindel was defining photography as “the bare truth” without considering the propaganda of ideological hegemony.¹⁴⁸ Although the Ottoman government was not quite successful in managing public opinion, Abdulhamid II’s attempts were worthy of commendation on shaping of public opinion through photography as it was argued in the second chapter.

While Armenian *fedayees* act as members of a regular army with the help of their equipment and clothing which they assume as “Armenian” in the photographs, the other side’s photographs should be scrutinized carefully against the manipulation of public opinion through the photography. The photograph reveals that the Armenian *fedayees* do not seem as flamboyant as they were before when they posed (see Figure 7). It should not be forgotten that *fedayees* in the photograph were arrested shortly before the photo shoot and they may have been forced to pose wretchedly. As it is in their photo shoots, this also may be a theatric pose which was fictionalized by the Ottoman authorities. The way the Ottoman Empire portrayed the *fedayees* in the photograph may have been intentional to influence public opinion. This intention may have served the purpose of influence the Great Powers to prevent outsourcing or *reaya* to portray an image as protector.

Although they dress as they posed before in their photographs, stances of the *fedayees* make them look like different. Discrepancy between two photographs

¹⁴⁸ Henri de Weindel, “Les Atrocités Turques en Macédoine—Quelques Documents,” *Vie Illustrée* 228 (27 February 1903): 334.

indicates that eliciting the daily clothing practice of *fedayees* is unreliable to come to a verdict. On the other hand, these two photographs give various information about both self-representation of the *fedayees* and the empire's perception on them. Nevertheless, the clothing practice of Armenian paramilitary organization, *fedayees*, in both photographs reveals the similarity between Armenian and traditional Anatolian especially Kurdish clothing.



Figure 8: An Armenian *fedayee* known as Baghdasar who is in the guise of Kurdish Imam.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ BOA. Y..EE.. 164/1 (H-20.09.1312/ M- 17 March 1895); the document is about the *Fedayee* who were arrested because of getting into Talori Incidents. He was captured while he was changing location from Hınıs to Muş. What makes his clothing Kurdish is the color of the *turban* he wore. The color was the distinction.

3.4 The Same Voice: Kurdish Traditional Clothing

As it is in Armenian *fedayees* clothing, Kurdish men clothing was shaped by climate, geography and interaction with others who lived in the same region. Even though clothing practice of Kurds varies from region to region in accordance with the given conditions which were beyond the fashion, Kurdish traditional costume resembles Armenian clothing in general terms because of the interaction of them with each other in the close regions.

Both James Baillie Fraser and Isabella Bird divide the traditional Kurdish clothing into two categories as poorer and richer ones costumes.¹⁵⁰ According to Bird's study, Kurds were wearing colorful woolen socks and showing them through their cotton summer shoes; camlet trousers; woolen waistcloths; short jackets and turban as headgear.¹⁵¹ However she fails to address some points such as defining camlet trousers. It is known that Kurds of the empire in most regions were wearing baggy trousers which were called as *shalwar* as illustrated in Figure 5. Although, Kurds' turbans are twisted in a peculiar manner, it shares similarity with Armenian style.¹⁵² It is also possible to come across the Kurds who wear fez or wrapped fez in some regions.

¹⁵⁰ Isabella Bird who was a British traveller might have been under the influence of James Baillie Fraser's work. Bird came to the Ottoman Empire around 1889, about fifty years later from Fraser's arrival. She also does not deny this influence in her study and defines Fraser's work as "charming" in her book. James Baillie Fraser who was a Scottish employee in India wrote his book during his journey on the way home while turning back in Scotland. On the other hand, Isabella Bird was not from a diplomatic or military family and she was an independent traveller who can decide where to go. Because of this reason, her book might be more reliable than Fraser's. That is, Bird had a chance to plan her own travel to write it without any restriction; for more information see, Isabella Bird, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan 2 Volumes* (London: John Murray, 1891); James Baillie Fraser, *Travels in Kurdistan and Mesopotamia* (London: Richard Bentley, 1840).

¹⁵¹ Isabella Bird, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1891), 353.

¹⁵² Jill Condra, *Encyclopedia of National Dress: Traditional Clothing Around the World*, vol. 1 (California: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 41.

Isabella Bird also generalizes the Kurdish clothing all around the east part of the empire. However, it is hard to define Kurdish traditional clothing without showing regard to regions they lived. Geography was the most important factor which had an impact on Ottoman clothing practices. Contrary to Bird's statement, Rouben Der Minasian's memoir and the photographs given above provides example of the similarity between Kurdish and Armenian clothing.

It should be highlighted that the clothing practices of both Armenian and Ottoman common people could have evaluated in the context of geography and financial situation. As it may be seen in the photographs, while Armenian *fedayees*' clothes seem entirely new and elaborated, Kurdish porters' outfits seem frayed even if their clothes were also elaborated once. Buying clothes frequently was not a common practice among the poor reaya in the Ottoman Empire. Each of them usually had only one flamboyant outfit to wear on special occasions such as wedding ceremonies and eids. On the other hand, Armenian *fedayees* in the photo frames, rich Kurdish chiefs or rich bandits in the Ottoman Empire share similarities as silhouette.

The Kurdish bandits were also carrying daggers which were named *khanjar* in their girdles and two cartridge belts were crossed over the chest as *fedayees* practiced.¹⁵³

The differences between the Armenian and Kurdish bandits were carrying Russian rifle, having sword and wearing different colors.¹⁵⁴ In the memoir of Gulizar who was abducted by a Kurdish bandit leader, she defines the Kurdish clothing as:

“...He [Musa Beg] was wearing an *arkhaloukh* which was made of green fabric... and a shalvar [baggy trouser].... He had a couple of dagger which was studded with

¹⁵³ Bird, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, vol. 2, 353.

¹⁵⁴ In the memoir about her abduction by a Kurdish bandit - Musa Beg- which was written by her daughter, Gülizar states that “There were lots of Kurdish bandits who wear long and white turban... They were carrying swords...”; for more information on Gülizar's story see, Armenouhie Kevonian, *Gülizar'ın Kara Düğünü* (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2015), 25.

mother of pearl inlaid and its haft was made from silver... Tassels of the silken veil which wraps his white turban was covering his forehead and restricting his vision....”¹⁵⁵ In addition to Isabella Bird’s account and photographs which were given, Gülizar also gives well-supported details about Kurdish clothing practices and this demonstrates that silhouettes of Kurdish and Armenian clothing were too similar to be distinguishable. However, Ottoman Anatolia was hosting different cultures. Especially in the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire became more heterogeneous after the migrations allowed.

3.5 The Different Voices: Circassian, Georgian, Laz Traditional Clothing and The Uniform of Hamidian Cavalry

Circassians’ traditional costume differs from Kurdish and Armenian clothing in the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to Armenians and the Kurds in Anatolia; Circassian, Georgian and Laz dress were shaped by tradition and culture rather than climate conditions. Circassian and Georgian traditional clothes were kept even after the migration although the Ottoman government forbade wearing it except during special occasions. It should be highlighted that these dresses which indicate ethnic affiliation were not worn in daily life because of both their impracticality and being forbidden. The reasons for the prohibition of these clothes were the disappearance of the affiliation and the fact that these traditional clothes contained weapons which was also not permitted in the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁵⁵ Kevonian, *Gülizar’ın Kara Düğünü*, 27-28.

3.5.1 Circassian Traditional Male Costume

Through the thesis I will use the term “Circassian”¹⁵⁶ as an inclusionary name for all the North Caucasian folks who migrated in the Ottoman Empire. It is known that the costumes of these folks differs from each other through the regions they lived. Although I am going to emphasis on the main differences, the silhouettes of these costumes do not differ greatly from each other. Moreover, it is hard to distinguish them among each other in the Ottoman Empire’s archival documents and photographs because the empire was also labeled them all under the name of “Circassian”.¹⁵⁷

The Circassian men clothing consists of ten main pieces mostly made from locally produced leather, sheepskin, wool, woolen cloth, and thick felt.¹⁵⁸ The first piece is the *besmet* a type of caftan.¹⁵⁹ The tunic-shaped caftan was designed to wrap the

¹⁵⁶ Circassians’ migration *en masse* reached to peak in 1864 although it started after Sheikh Shamil was captured by tsardom of Russia. Circassian started to migrate to Ottoman Empire. For more information about the Circassian migration see, John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908); Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographics and Social Characteristics* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Kemal Karpat, “The Status of the Muslim Under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Cerkes” *Journal of Institute Minority Affairs* 1, no.2 (2004): 7-27; Mark Pinson, “Demographic Warfare: An Aspects of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854-1866,” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1970); David Cameron Cuthell, “The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860-1866,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005); Fabio L. Grassi, *A New Homeland: The Massacre of the Circassians, Their Exodus to The Ottoman Empire and Their Place In Modern Turkey* (İstanbul: İstanbul Aydın University Press, 2018); Nihat Berzeg, *Çerkes Sürgünü: Gerçek, Tarihi ve Politik Nedenleri* (Ankara: KAFDAV, 2010); Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkasya Göçleri 1856-1876* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1997); Cahit Aslan, “Bir Soykırımın Adı: 1864 Büyük Çerkes Sürgünü,” *Uluslar arası Suçlar ve Tarih* 1 (2006): 103-155; Cemal Gökçe, *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Kafkasya Siyaseti* (İstanbul: Şamil Vakfı Yayınları, 1979); Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010); Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1995); Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013); Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Georgi Chochiev and Bekir Koç, “Migrants from the North Caucasus in Eastern Anatolia: Some Notes on their Settlement and Adaptation,” *Journal of Asian History* 40 (2006): 80-103.

¹⁵⁷ The empire used the term of “Çerkes/Çerkez” or “Çerakise” (plural version of Çerkes/z), but some documents use their own separated names to emphasize a certain group.

¹⁵⁸ Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Chechens: A Handbook* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 147.

¹⁵⁹ James Stanislaus Bell, *Journal of a Residence in Circassia During the Years 1837, 1838 and 1839*, vol. 1 (London: Edward Moxon, 1840), 58.

waist firmly and reveal the contours of the body besides being in perfect harmony with the Caucasian climate.¹⁶⁰ *Beshmet* was usually reached down to two or four inches above the knees and its color was brighter than other pieces of costume to create contrast.¹⁶¹ It was worn under *cherkesska* which was a tight outer garment or surtout made from woven wool and commonly in black and grey.¹⁶²

Although black represents darkness and evil in Circassian legends, the contrast colors were associated with good/bad or day/night when the other pair was selected among the brighter colors such as white.¹⁶³

Cherkesska was worn in special occasions such as during religious *bayrams* which were religious days. This vest-type garment which come together on the waist tightly and has cartridges on the right and left sides of the chest while leaving a gap between them.¹⁶⁴ There were a total of 14 to 20 cartridges, which were made of a mixture of silver or wood with iron, ivory, stag-horn, walrus.¹⁶⁵ *Cherkesska* became a national symbol of Circassians especially after the nineteenth century although it turned into an ornamental piece with the invention of the modern rifles.

The trouser, shirt, *beshmet* were wearing under the *cherkesska*, while the *burka* which was a semi-circular shaped sheepskin fur cloak covered the shoulders were wearing over it.¹⁶⁶ The trouser of Circassian traditional costume aims to be practical

¹⁶⁰ Edmund Spencer, *Travels in Circassia, Krim-Tartary, &c*, vol. 2 (London: H. Colburn, 1837), 214.

¹⁶¹ Jaimoukha, *The Chechens*, 142.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁶³ David Hunt, "Colour Symbolism in the Folk Literature of the Caucasus," *Folklore* 117, no. 3 (Dec., 2006): 329-338.

¹⁶⁴ King, *The Ghost of Freedom*, 41.

¹⁶⁵ Jaimoukha, *The Chechens*, 142.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 148; John F. Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 68-69.

to be comfortable while riding and walking. The trouser made from unbleached linen is tightened around the leg.¹⁶⁷



Figure 9: Circassian men in Istanbul, Abdullah Frères, Constantinople, 1875.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Kadir I. Natho, *Circassian History* (New Jersey: Xlibris, 2009), 106; Florence Crauford Grove, *The frosty Caucasus* (London: Spottiswood and Co., 1875), 259.

The Circassians were also wearing a silver belt which was attached a dagger on it.¹⁶⁹

The belt was also supporting a long pistol besides the silver-mounted dagger which was known as two edged Circassian *kama*.¹⁷⁰ These daggers were more often distinguished by their large size in the nineteenth century.¹⁷¹

They never went out unarmed, at least without their daggers.¹⁷² The arms considered as a part of the traditional clothing as a reflection of the innate paramilitary structures of the Circassian men.¹⁷³

Although the soft leather black boots were mostly preferred by the Circassian men because of their practicality while walking, riding and fighting, some of them were wearing shoes which were fastened by thongs.¹⁷⁴ The boots were handcrafted and were produced as tightly fitted to each man in accordance with his feet.¹⁷⁵

Men were wearing big size round-topped sheepskin *kalpak* or *papakha* which was rounded with curled, longer and wavy fur as headgear and they were not removing them.¹⁷⁶ Although the color and the material of the headgear show alteration

¹⁶⁸ Pierre de Gigord collection of photographs of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey; Abdullah Frères, “Constantinople, 1875”, Circassien, Neg. no. 86, accessed June 21, 2019, https://rosettaapp.getty.edu/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE528775

¹⁶⁹ Douglas W. Freshfield, *Travels in the Central Caucasus and Bashan: Including Visiting to Ararat and Tabreez and Ascents of Kazbek and Elbruz* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1869), 227.

¹⁷⁰ George Leighton Ditson, *Circassia: or, A tour to the Caucasus* (London: T. C. Newby, 1850), 181; Moritz Wagner, *Travels in Persia, Georgia, and Kurdistan with Sketches of the Cossacks and the Caucasus*, vol. 1 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1856), 311.

¹⁷¹ Isa Askhabov, *Chechenskoe Orujhie* (Moscow: Moscow House of Press, 2001), 79.

¹⁷² Julius von Klapproth, *Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia: Performed in the Years 1807 and 1808, by Command of the Russian Government*, trans. F. Shoberl (London: H. Colburn, 1814), 322.

¹⁷³ James Bryce, *Transcaucasia and Ararat: Being Notes of a Vacation Tour in the Autumn of 1876* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878), 66.

¹⁷⁴ Ditson, *Circassia*, 182.

¹⁷⁵ Emilia Sheudzhen and Ruslan Tleptsok, “The Circassians (Adyghe): The Symbolic Meaning of the Caucasus Mountains” in *Fashion Through History: Costumes, Symbols, Communication*, vol. 1, ed. Giovanna Motta and Antonello Biagini (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 195.

¹⁷⁶ According to Sir Arthur Augustus Thurlow, who traveled to Caucasus, the size of a kalpak was as big as a whole skin of a small sheep; Arthur Augustus Thurlow, *Travels in the Eastern Caucasus, on the Caspian and Black Seas, Especially in Daghestan, and on the Frontiers of Persia and Turkey, During the summer of 1871* (London: John Murray, 1872), 185; Edmund Spencer, *Turkey, Russia, The Black Sea, And Circassia* (London: George Routledge&Co., 1854), 316; Ditson, *Circassia*, 182;

according to the region, its silhouette informs about the origin of people who wear it. The headgear represents the honor of the men who wears it in the Circassia culture, so the kalpak was accepted as one of the main parts of the clothing.

3.5.2 Georgian Traditional Male Costume

Georgian¹⁷⁷ traditional male costume, *chokha*, has several characteristics in common with *cherkesska* which was analyzed above. As it is in *cherkesska*, *chokha* was also popular among people during the special occasions. Therefore it would not be wrong to say that *chokha* or *cherkesska* was the common dress in the Caucasia in the name of mountaineers' cloth. It is known that the V-cut long coat was in common not only with Georgians, but also with Russians and Cossacks.¹⁷⁸

The Georgians also were wearing a tight collarless coat with cartridges on its chest.¹⁷⁹ The aim of the collarless coat which was named *chokha* was the same with *cherkesska*: displaying the beauty of the body. It was coming down as low as the knees although the trouser shows itself before it.¹⁸⁰

The weapons were also a part of national dress. Georgians were also attaching daggers to their belts. The sash which was rounded the waist was attached to the

William Jesse, *Notes of a Half-pay in Search of Health: or, Russia, Circassia, and the Crimea, in 1839-40* (London: J. Madden and Co., 1841), 261;

¹⁷⁷ For more information about Georgian immigrants see, Oktay Özel, "Migration and Power Politics: The Settlement of Georgian Immigrants in Turkey (1878-1908)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 4 (July 2010): 477-496; Karpát, *Ottoman Population 1830 1914*; McCarthy, *Death and Exile*.

¹⁷⁸ Agnes Herbert, *Casuals in the Caucasus: The Diary of a Sporting Holiday* (London: John Lane, 1912), 37.

¹⁷⁹ Vaxušti Bagrationi, *Description Géographique de la Géorgie* (Saint Pétersbourg: Typographie de l'Académie, 1842), 65.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Ker Porter, *Travels In Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia During the Years 1817, 1818, 1819 and 1820*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1821), 134.

sword.¹⁸¹ Unlike Circassian clothing, the belt of Georgian costume was leather.¹⁸² The male costume was embellished with golden lace.¹⁸³

Georgians were wearing *arkhalukhi* which was shirt-like cotton piece inside the chokha. Shaggy pants made from silk or linen were worn inside the long leather boots.¹⁸⁴ The long papakha of Astrakhan fur was one of the common pieces with Circassian clothing.¹⁸⁵



Figure 10: Georgian men wearing chokha in nineteenth century.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁸² Stephen Graham, *A Vagabond in the Caucasus: With Some Notes of His Experiences Among the Russians* (London: John Lane, 1911), 126.

¹⁸³ Porter, *Travels In Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia*, 134.

¹⁸⁴ Bagrationi, *Description Géographique de la Géorgie*, 65.

¹⁸⁵ Oliver Wardrop, *The Kingdom of Georgia: Notes of Travel in a Land of Woman, Wine and Song, to Which Are Appended Historical, Literary, and Political Sketches, Specimens of the National Music, and a Compendious Bibliography* (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888), 84

¹⁸⁶ Although the exact date of photography and photographer are unknown, the original photography is on display in Georgian Ethnographic Museum, Kaartl-kakhuri Chokha.

The dress of Circassians and Georgians and their silhouettes were quite similar. Thus although there were differences between two national clothes, they were evaluated as Caucasian costume or Muslim Caucasian male costume in the Ottoman Empire.

However, it should be said here that the photograph illustrated above does not exactly reflect the clothes of the Georgian paramilitary groups who emigrated to the Ottoman Empire. Especially the Georgians in the empire who migrated from Adjara region generally wore a dress similar to that of Laz people. Even in many British sources, Adjara Georgians are called as Laz.¹⁸⁷ Considering that the migrations to the Ottoman Empire were generally made from this region, it is more likely to observe this dress in the Ottoman Georgians.



لوط اوغلی توفیق

کامل آغا

Figure 11: Two Georgian men: Tefvik the son of Lot on the left and Kamil Agha on the right

¹⁸⁷ This information was reached by e-mail (Oktay Özel, 2019, personal correspondence., 16 August).

This dress, another variant of the Georgian dress, draws attention with its similarity to the Laz dress, which will be explained in detail under the next subtitle. This second type of costume was worn more frequently by the paramilitary Georgian men in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, through this thesis Georgian costume refers to the second type of dress unless otherwise specified. The costume will be examined in detail under the heading of Laz costume because of the great similarity between them.

3.5.3 Laz Traditional Male Costume

Another ethnic group that is paramilitary in nature was Laz¹⁸⁸ who played important roles in Ottoman military forces in so-called *başibozuk* troops as Kurds.¹⁸⁹ The empire was applying these armed Laz men if required.¹⁹⁰ Apart from this, the innate warrior characteristics of the Laz were reflected in their clothing just like the Circassians and Georgians.

As it may be seen on the photograph (see Figure 12), Laz traditional men clothing, *şıpka*¹⁹¹, was including a collarless shirt, a baggy trouser, highly polished black leather boots, a jacket, bandolier around both waist and chest, a belt made of fabric to attach the pistols and daggers to, and a distinctive turban shaped headgear.

¹⁸⁸ For more information about Laz see, M. Recai Özgün, *Lazlar* (İstanbul: Çiviyazıları, 1996); Ali İhsan Aksamaz, *Kafkasya'dan Karadeniz'e Lazlar'ın Tarihsel Yolculuğu* (İstanbul: Çiviyazıları, 1997).

¹⁸⁹ Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War 1853-1856* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 52.

¹⁹⁰ In 1853 during the Crimean War, there were 18000 men in Ardahan and half of whom were *başibozuks*, that is Laz irregulars and others; William E. D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 61-62.

¹⁹¹ The term “*Şıpka*” is borrowed from Atabaki and Zurcher’s book; Touraj Atabakia and Erik Jan Zurcher, *The Man of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942* (London: I.B. Tauris&Co., 2004), 226.

Shirts were yellow or red, usually in concordance with their black trousers.¹⁹² The baggy trouser or salwar was called as *dzikvi* were abundant up to the knees and narrows after knees to wrap the lower leg. The belt holding the pants is adorned with chains besides its role as scabbard to carry pistols and daggers. The Laz attach importance to their guns due to their nature. They were also carrying home-made rifles.¹⁹³

The relatively poorer Laz were wearing an upturned shoe, which they called *tsuga* instead of leather black boots.¹⁹⁴ They put socks in these shoes and tied them with ropes that made the *tsuga* and socks a whole.



¹⁹² Muhammed Vanilişi and Ali Tandilava, *Lazlar'ın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1992), 102.

¹⁹³ Humphry Sandwith, *A Narrative of the Siege of Kars, and of the Six Months' Resistance by the Turkish Garrison Under General Williams to the Russian Army: Together with a Narrative of Travels and Adventures in Armenia and Lazixtan; With Remarks on the Present state of Turkey* (London: John Murray, 1856), 144.

¹⁹⁴ Vanilişi and Tandilava, *Lazlar'ın Tarihi*, 108.

Figure 12: A postcard shows the costume of Laz in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire.

Apart from the headgear, Laz clothes are reminiscent of the previously mentioned Kurdish and Armenian clothes, namely the Anatolian clothes which vary according to the regions. It would not be wrong to say that, all three of these ethnic groups were in interaction with each other. Although the silhouette of these three groups seems similar, Laz's peculiar headgear which covers the head with a special tying style was the distinctive piece of the clothing.

3.5.4 The Uniform of Hamidian Cavalry

In 1891, Hamidiye corps was created to keep country from the external threats or attacks, and to induct the ones who were hard to follow in the army according to Ottoman records.¹⁹⁵ However it can be deduced that the cavalry was used to bring Armenian revolutionary movements under control besides the reason of strengthening the army.¹⁹⁶ Keeping the Kurds under control by giving them an official status was also another reason to create the Hamidian Cavalry. The Ottoman Empire preferred to use Kurds, Circassians, Turcoman, Albanians and Arabs who were paramilitary groups had tribal political entities.¹⁹⁷

Participation in Hamidiye Regiments was based on voluntariness. Some Kurdish tribes even sent petitions stating that they could not attend because there was too

¹⁹⁵ Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 20.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 20; for more information about Hamidian cavalry see also, Maurizio Russo, "La Formation des Régiments de Cavalerie Kurde Hamidié d'après les Documents Diplomatiques italiens." *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine* 1 (1995): 31–44; Stephen Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia" *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, no. 2 (May, 1973): 139-155; Cevdet Ergül, *II. Abdülhamid'in Doğu Politikası ve Hamidiye Alayları* (İzmir: Çağlayan Yayınları, 1997); Necati Gültepe, "Hamidiye Alayları" *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* 12 (July 1976): 47-50;

¹⁹⁷ Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2009), 60-61.

much demand but they were loyal.¹⁹⁸ The reason behind the excessive demand was probably the concessions which Hamidian troops obtained such as being exempted from taxes and wearing uniform.¹⁹⁹

Hamidiye Regiments began wearing uniforms soon after its establishment. It is actually more accurate to say semi-uniform rather than saying uniform.²⁰⁰

These uniforms were both to convince Kurdish chiefs to attend the corps and to modernize these ethnic warriors as a new force of the Ottoman Army. In the beginning, Kurdish leaders perceived these uniforms as a sign of status. They started to abuse the uniforms, soon after their adoption. Kurds realized that they would procure whatever they wanted by force of uniform thanks to its being official.²⁰¹ On the other hand, the empire's main aim was to decrease the visibility of national clothes which varies according to regions while increasing the existence of state even in the uniforms to prevent the rise of local chiefs.²⁰² That is, Ottoman Empire gained strength while giving less power to Kurds they already had.

As it may be seen in the photograph (see Figure 13), they were wearing similar clothes with Circassians: a dark long skirted coat which was adorned with a cartridge case, and with a belt that tightly surrounds the waist on it.²⁰³

However, unlike the Georgian and Circassian dress, the chest is closed in the uniform of the Hamidiye Regiments. In other words, in the Circassian and Georgian costumes

¹⁹⁸ Bayram Kodaman, "Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları: II. Abdülhamid ve Doğu Anadolu Aşiretleri," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 32 (1979): 427-480.

¹⁹⁹ Although they were only paid money during the war-times, they were exempted from all taxes except the tithe and the animal tax. For more information see; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 246.

²⁰⁰ Robert Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East: Personal Memories 1879-1929* (London: Hutchinson&Co., 1933), 113.

²⁰¹ Klein, *The Margins of Empire*, 39.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁰³ Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. 2, 5; It should be noted that not all troops were wearing uniforms. Even wearing uniforms was rare. The majority of them were only wearing headgears of the cavalry or even an affiliation in their clothing was not understood. However, it is essential to mention this outfit due to the subject of the thesis.

the cartridges standing on the left and right sides of the chest do not merge in the middle of the coat. Contrary to Circassian and Georgian costumes, cartridges of Hamidian Cavalry's skirted coat on both sides appear in a single row even though they are separated by buttons. Their trousers were gray and they were putting the lower part of the trouser legs in their long boots.²⁰⁴



Figure 13: A group of Kurdish Hamidian Cavalry member with uniforms.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Klein, *The Margins of Empire*, 37.

²⁰⁵ Henry F. B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), 4-5.

They were wearing a lambskin *kalpaks* which have badges on them. The headgear was the most significant part in the uniform by the reason of being a sign of belonging. It was accustomed to wear only the headgear with badge when the cost of all members' uniform could not be afforded. Although this practice could not be observed in the photograph, the ribbons in different colors around the caps were representing the tribal belonging of wearer.²⁰⁶

Another privilege of joining the Hamidian Regiments was the freedom to carry weapons. Most of them were carrying Martini and Berdan carbines.²⁰⁷ In addition to firearms, they were also carrying daggers and swords attached to their belts.

Although there were significant differences between uniform of Hamidian Cavalry and Caucasian mountaineer clothing, their silhouette were too similar to be distinguished by villagers during the night time attacks.

Although it is important to analyze these paramilitary and military groups' clothes as silhouette without having regard to their anthropological features and details, to visualize them while examining the propaganda activities of the Armenian bandits - handled in the fourth chapter - it is very difficult to distinguish these clothes because of their similarities. The solution of the problem -distinguishing these clothes- may be grouping them as mountaineers' clothing and Anatolian clothing.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 37.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 36.

CHAPTER IV

IMPERSONATION OF ARMENIAN *FEDAYEES* DURING THEIR ACTIVITIES IN BETWEEN 1890 - 1910 IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: PRACTICE OF DISGUISE AS A STRATEGY

*Benden selam olsun Bolu Beyi'ne
Çıkıp şu dağlara yaslanmalıdır
Ok gıcirtısından kalkan sesinden
Dağlar seda verip seslenmelidir*

*Düşman geldi tabur tabur dizildi
Alnımıza kara yazı yazıldı.
Tüfek icat oldu mertlik bozuldu
Eğri kılıç kında paslanmalıdır*

*Koroğlu düşer mi yine şanından
Ayırır çoğunu er meydanından
Kırat köpüğünden, düşman kanından
Çevrem dolup şalvar ıslanmalıdır*

- Koroğlu

Disguising in enemy or in another group during the commissions was not a tactic practiced by the Armenian *fedayees* for the first time. This was a well-established and common strategy. However, this strategy was used for many different purposes throughout history. It will be more feasible to discuss the subject within the scope of the Ottoman Empire before the Armenian *fedayees*' case.

4.1 Practice of Disguise in the Ottoman Empire

As we learned from the Ottoman archival documents, the practice of disguise was used in the Ottoman Empire for the purposes of safe travelling, spying, concealment, usurpation, propaganda and as a strategy to misdirect in provocative actions. While travelling in the Ottoman Empire, wearing Islamic clothes as it was defined in the first chapter was safer to not to get robbed. They were also adopting a Muslim name. It is a common situation to encounter documents about it in the Ottoman archives.²⁰⁸ Even if it was forbidden by law to travel in the garb of Islamic clothes, the practice was applied by non-Muslims.

In addition to travellers, spies were also trying to complete their missions while wearing clothes of Muslims.²⁰⁹ In the garb of Islamic clothes, they were trying to act as Muslims to hide. The empire was aware of the situation. Therefore, the edicts were enacted to be on the alert.²¹⁰

Concealment was another reason to wear Muslims' clothes in the empire. While crossing borders, especially bandits were using this strategy.²¹¹ They were using both Muslims' clothes and a certain groups' clothes such as clothes of an occupational group or an ethnic group. To illustrate, Armenian *fedayees* were disguising while crossing the border to reach Caucasus or to come to Anatolia from there. Most of the

²⁰⁸ BOA. Y..MTV. 288/128 (H- 29.05.1324 / M- 21.07.1906); the document is about an Armenian man from Kayseri who came from Marseilles to Istanbul without a passport in the garb of mariner.

²⁰⁹ BOA. HR.TO.. 42/41 (H- 18.10.1306 / M- 17.06.1889); the document is about Russian spies who disguised in Muslim women in the villages of Romania where disorder appeared; BOA. HAT 1411/57441 (H- 29.12.1205 / M- 28.08.1791); it is about the person who arrested in Çorlu in the garb of Tatar clothing was suspected of being a spy;

²¹⁰ Mithat Aydın, "19-20. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Balkanlarında Rusya'nın Casusluk Faaliyetleri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 32, no. 53 (2013): 26-27.

²¹¹ BOA. A.}MTZ.(04) 35/45 (H- 12.02.1314 / M- 23.07.1896); the document is about Macedonian bandits who were taken precaution to not to pass the border in the garb of coal dealer as they did before; BOA. HR.TH.. 66/75 (H- 05.01.1304 / M- 04.10.1886); it is about ten Serbian bandits who attached to border of Rogozna in the garb of Albanian villagers.

time, they were wearing Kurdish traditional clothes which were similar to Armenian clothing except the colors. In addition to Kurdish clothes, they were also wearing Laz traditional costume while travelling along the Black Sea.²¹²

Also, some people whether Muslims or not sometimes disguised themselves as soldiers were persecuting the people on the strength of the weapon and uniform for usurpation.²¹³ Wearing military uniforms was making road agents and usurpers more legitimized. Thus, people were not resisting or afraid to complain. The soldiers in uniform had also right to carry gun. That is, the uniform made these robbers both more unbearable and legal.

Strategy of disguise was also used as a tool of propaganda. In the Ottoman Empire, activists were wearing common people's costumes to provoke the community and shape their ideas as a person who look like one of them. It was a powerful tool to shape public opinion. For example, in 1886, the Ottoman State had provided intelligence that Russian officers would come to Bulgaria in civilian clothes to incite the people against Prince Alexander in order to cause confusion in Bulgaria to delegitimize him.²¹⁴ The practice of disguise for the purpose of propaganda was occasionally performed by using clothes of people who were accepted as religious leaders of a society.²¹⁵ The reason for disguising as religious leaders was because they were accepted by the society as pioneers, and that the society was open to their

²¹² BOA. DH.TMIK.S.. 46/51 (H- 29.03.1321 / M- 25.06.1903); the document is about the armed Armenian bandits who planned to across Black Sea in Laz clothing and come to Trabzon.

²¹³ BOA. DH.H... 69/52 (H- 19.12.1331 / M- 19.11.1913); the document is about ten bandits who disguised as soldiers in the garb of uniforms and attacked five coal dealers in Aydin.

²¹⁴ BOA. Y..A...HUS. 193/54 (H- 16.10.1303 / M- 18.07.1886); for more information about Prince Alexander of Bulgaria see, Adolf Koch, *Prince Alexander of Battenberg: Reminiscences of His Reign in Bulgaria, from Authentic Sources* (London: Whitaker & Company, 1887); Charles Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism: Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879–1886* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

²¹⁵ BOA. Y..PRK.AZJ. 44/63 (H- 25.04.1320 / M- 01.08.1902); the document is about Russian officers who dressed in the priest's clothing wandered in the province of Edirne and Bulgaria; BOA. C..DH.. 133/6602 (H- 29.05.1120 / M- 16.08.1708); the document is about the Europeans who came to the Ottoman Empire in the garbs of doctor and priest to incite people in province of Sivas.

guidance. However, in some cases priests were wearing civilians' clothes not to be caught while making propaganda.²¹⁶

Practice of disguise as an actions strategy was used by both Armenian *fedayees* and komitadjis in the Balkans. This practice is often seen in the Balkans with Bulgarian bandits wearing Albanian clothing.²¹⁷ In addition, the Islamic costume mentioned in the second chapter, which may be distinguished from its colors, was frequently used to blame the Muslim subjects of the empire and to confuse the target.²¹⁸ In the archival documents, it is seen that the Serbian bandits also used the same strategy while disguising as Albanians.²¹⁹ In addition to this, it is noteworthy that the Bulgarian bandits, who were active in the Balkans, also used Circassian clothing and kalpak during their actions.²²⁰ In fact, the first archival document on the implementation of the disguise as a strategy in the Balkan case is about Bulgarian or Coptic bandits in the guise of Circassian costume.²²¹ According to the document, it was estimated that in the Lom district, eight or nine bandits entered the Todor Raskal's house at night and stole money, and that they were Coptic or Bulgarian, though they were dressed in Circassian clothing.

²¹⁶ BOA. DH.MKT. 1399/93 (H- 21.05.1304 / M- 15.02.1887); the document is about priests who came to Bursa, Gemlik and Mudanya incognito to provoke Rums to take the cap round for the Greek movement; BOA. Y..PRK.UM.. 16/21 (H- 14.07.1307 / M- 06.03.1890); the document is about the priests who disguised in civilians to distribute leaflets against the Ottoman Empire in Akşehir; BOA. Y..PRK.UM.. 18/31 (H- 14.01.1308 / M- 30.08.1890); the document is about that the subject mentioned in the previous document which is about disguised priests in Akşehir is unfounded.

²¹⁷ BOA. TFR.I..A... 22/2110 (H- 29.10.1322 / M- 06.01.1905); the document is about the Bulgarian *eşkiyas'* desire to get past endurance of the Muslims by abusing the Muslim population in Albanian dress and details about it.

²¹⁸ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 295/107 (R- 09.08.1318 / 13.10.1902); It is about that the Petko, a Bulgarian *çete* member who was arrested because of the reports that Bulgarian *çetes* were wearing Muslims' costume in order to put the blames they committed on the Muslim population and Petko's costume while he was captured enforced claims.

²¹⁹ BOA. HR.TH.. 66/75 (M- 04.10.1886); the document states that the Serbian Government has been notified that ten Serb bandits in Albanian garments attacked people and wounded someone; and violated the border in Rogozne region of Peć District.

²²⁰ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 194/87 (R- 01.05.1312 / 13.07.1896); BOA. A.}MTZ.(04) 35/14 (H- 04.02.1314 / M- 15.07.1896); the document states that the committees in Eastern Rumelia and various regions of Bulgaria were dispatched to the Sofia; and that they wore Circassian costumes and kalpaks.

²²¹ BOA. YB..04. 8/201 (H- 05.06.1291 / 20.07.1874)

Although the aim of the Serbs and Bulgarians to use the strategy of disguise seems to confuse the target, it is well suited to be a follow-up study that requires a deeper study on this issue. For this reason, it is very difficult to reach a definite conclusion about the practice of disguise in the Balkan case without making a deep study on the region in this thesis which aims to dwell on practice of disguise in the Armenian *fedayees'* case in the eastern Anatolia of the Ottoman Empire.

Armenian bandits were also using the practice of disguise for different purposes. Since the main subject of the thesis is the practice of disguise as an action strategy of the Armenian bandits, it would be appropriate to dwell on the other situations in which the *fedayees* used this strategy before. The Armenian bandits were not disguising only in their provocative actions. They used this strategy to avoid being caught when moving from one region to another; to conceal their identities while conducting propaganda activities and to misdirect the external forces. It was already customary to wear Kurdish clothes and to go to the Caucasus during the journey. The aim of the Armenian *fedayees* was to minimize the risk of getting caught, as the clothes were very similar, as it was explained in the third chapter of the thesis. For example, Rouben Der Minasian, an Armenian *fedayee*, recounts in his memoirs that he wore Tatar clothes to return to Russia from the Persian region.²²²

It is also known that Armenian *fedayees* were catering food in city centers wearing different clothes.²²³ The reason behind it was to try to get the necessary provisions to feed the large number of *fedayees* who did not live in the center but who were still *çete* members. However, of course, it was not possible to avoid the attention of the

²²² Rouben Der Minasian, *Hay Heghapokhagani me Hishadagnere*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Hamazkaini Vahé Sethian Dbaran, 1979) 343, quoted in Hartmann, "Shaping the Armenian Warrior," 136.

²²³ BOA. HR.TH.. 254/90.

authorities because it was not possible not to draw attention while buying such a large quantity of meat products in the small Ottoman cities.

The Armenian activists, again as a strategy, were posing as armed Muslims in the photographs to charge the Muslims with terror which in fact they created. As an example, five Armenian young men named Agop, Sehak, Artin, Ardaş and Logofet who involved in a crime before had their photo taken in the garb of Muslims, to bring a charge they planned to commit against the Muslim men in Yozgat.²²⁴ After receiving intelligence, the authorities of the Ottoman State captured the Armenian activists and handed them over to the courthouse with their clothes in the shot and photographs.²²⁵ Bulgarians also used this strategy, and they disguised as Circassians to lay the crimes they committed Muslims' charge.²²⁶

Armenian activists also used Muslim attire as a strategy to incite Muslims against Armenians by going to Muslim neighborhoods. In the incident that took place in Kayseri, 200 Armenians were disguised as Muslims; and they tried to provoke Muslims against the Armenian people by saying "Armenians burned mosques".²²⁷ In another incident, a few Armenians in Sivas province visited the Muslim villages in the garb of Circassian and Kurdish traditional costumes and provoked them by saying "What are you waiting for? It was ordered to kill the Armenians and to plunder their properties".²²⁸ In this way, the Muslim people would have attacked the Armenians, so they would have the right of self-defense in order to protect themselves and would get help from Christian Europe.

²²⁴ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 201/72 (H- 16.05.1323 / M- 19.07.1905).

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ BOA. HR.SFR.1... 114/47

²²⁷ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 200/61 (R- 24.08.1312 / M- 05.11.1896)

²²⁸ BOA. HR.SFR.1... 112/28

Another practice of disguise as a propaganda tool similar to this was to attack the citizens of the external powers live in the Ottoman Empire by wearing Muslim clothing. In a telegram translation dated November 4, 1895, the American ambassador in Istanbul, Alexander W. Terrell, prevised the Ottoman authorities about that the Armenian *fedayees* that caused confusion in the Ottoman Empire would soon attack the American missionaries in the garb of Muslim clothes and put the blame on the Ottoman subjects.²²⁹ Soon after the news was published in an article in the *Boston Advertiser*, a daily newspaper in America, even before the intelligence was received by the Ottoman authorities. The American State stated that the empire was responsible for the safety of life and property of the missionaries living in the Ottoman Empire.²³⁰ In the telegram mentioned above, Terrell explains the reason for the suspicion that this action is likely to occur. Terrell's first statement was that this action was exactly similar to other Armenian activities.²³¹ It may be deduced that the practice of disguise had been widely used by the Armenians as a strategy at the end of the nineteenth century. Another reason convinced Terrell that this action would take place was that Armenian *fedayees* had used many ways to disrupt the public order in the territories of the Ottoman Empire in the last eighteen months and it was assured that these actions would continue for a longer time.²³² The Ottoman State issued an edict on 3 November 1895, 6 days after the intelligence was received from the Washington Embassy, which stated that the necessary measures were taken and the recommendations were made to the provinces.²³³

²²⁹ BOA. HR. SYS. 28/57 (R- 15 *Teşrin-i Sani* 1311 / M- 27.11.1895)

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ BOA. HR.TH.. 166/84 (H- 15.06.1313 / 03.11.1895)

American ambassador Terrell had given this intelligence to the Ottoman Empire and informed the empire about the situation in advance while remarking that it was the responsibility of the state to protect the missionaries. However, seemingly America helped the Armenian movement and the *fedayees* even after this date.

Although these grants were not made by the state, the missionaries acted as intermediaries to subsidize and to sustain the movement. An American missionary named Monsieur Pitt was collecting aid for Armenian nuns in Zeytun.²³⁴ Another American missionary, Mr. Geroge Nap²³⁵, was complained to the American embassy in Istanbul because he drew attention for his frequent visits to the Armenian Church in Erzurum.²³⁶ About 8 months later after the denunciation, on 3 June 1896, it was ascertained that the American missionaries helped the Armenians who killed three Muslims and wounded three others in Van.²³⁷

As explained, the Armenian *fedayees* were disguising as Muslims of the Ottoman Empire for different purposes. *Fedayees* were also wearing military uniforms of other countries in the same manner as they disguised as Muslims. It was reported that the Ottoman authorities who followed the Meşdudciyan School director who met Armenian youths in a house in Bakırköy had photographs of Armenian youths

²³⁴ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 3/9 (H- 29.10.1313 / M- 13.04.1896)

²³⁵ Although the name given in the archive document is given unchanged in the text, it has been concluded that the name Geroge Nap is George Perkins Knapp. George Perkins Knapp's father and mother Alzine were the first American Board missionaries in Bitlis. The couple's son, George Penkins, was born in Bitlis in 1864. After completing his education at Harvard University in the United States, he returned to Bitlis in 1890 as a missionary with his wife Anna.

²³⁶ BOA. HR.TH.. 163/76 (H- 20.04.1313 / M- 10.10.1895)

²³⁷ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 6/8 (H-21.12.1313 / M- 03.06.1896); It can be deduced from the documents that the missionaries who helped the Armenians were not only Americans, but also the British, French, Russian and German citizens who met with the *fedayees* in the Ottoman Empire. With the support of British missionaries in Hakkari, it was known that there are Armenian *fedayees* who disrupt public order in Baskale and in its vicinity; see, BOA. DH.ŞFR. 130/107 (H- 26.04.1302 / M- 12.02.1895). In addition, intelligence was provided by the Ottoman State about the demand for weapons of Armenian *fedayees* from the British and the Germans which accepted to send the support to Armenia through Iran; see, BOA. Y..PRK.AZJ. 20/38 (H- 27.02.1309 / M- 02.10.1891).

wearing British soldiers' uniforms.²³⁸ Although it was not explained in the document, the reason why Armenian youths wore British soldiers' uniforms was probably to attack the Ottoman Empire forces by wearing this outfit and to get support from England after disrupting Ottoman-British relations. This strategy was also implemented by the Armenians in 1905. According to an archival document dated May 15, 1905, Armenian *fedayees* were planning to attack the Ottoman border in the garb of Russian uniforms; and they also planned a counter-attack from the Ottoman border while wearing Ottoman military uniform on the purpose of creating tension between the two states.²³⁹

Whilst up until that point, the purpose of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire while disguising and for what purposes they performed this strategy was discussed. They were disguising as Kurds to travel in safe; as ordinary people to fulfill their needs in the bazaars; as Muslims for propaganda; and as other states' military uniforms to create confusion. None of these mentioned actions were intended to engage in close combat, except in the case of wearing others' military uniform. As discussed in the case of wearing uniforms, the strategy was applied to change the current situation by provocations rather than the intention of killing people. In this case, the main purpose was to muddy the water in incognito and thereby achieving their goals. It serves a similar purpose with *fedayees*' practice of disguising as a strategy of action which is to wear traditional clothes of paramilitary minorities of the empire organized by the state's itself or voluntarily ganged up against the Armenian bandits in the certain regions. Before discussing the circumstances in which the *fedayees* wore their own clothes -mentioned in the third chapter- and the

²³⁸ BOA. Y..PRK.ŞH.. 7/69 (H-19.04.1314 / M- 27.09.1896).

²³⁹ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 197/50 (H- 10.03.1323 / M- 15.05.1905); the document also mentions the Muslims in Russia and Iran who armed against Armenians preparing to attack.

situations that they were disguised as paramilitary minorities, it is important to examine their activities for their purposes. This is to ensure that the content is traceable, and in fact this is to contextualize Armenian practice of disguise. The activities of the Armenian *fedayees*, which took place during the time period this thesis concerns with, can be divided into two categories as propaganda and provocative actions.

4.2 Armenian Fedayees' Actions

Since the subject of this thesis is not the Armenian activities between the years of 1890 and 1910, instead of delving into it, this chapter enlarges upon the utilization of clothing as an action strategy by giving an example to each category. The categories were divided according to the aims of *fedayees'* actions and thereby the clothes worn by them during the acts as mentioned above.

Since it is impossible to dwell on all the actions that have been carried out in both categories; especially in the first category which is “Political Propaganda Actions of *Fedayees*”, the case which contains the most distinctive features in is identified and discussed through the selected example.

4.2.1 Political Propaganda Actions of *Fedayees*

These activities were premeditated actions that the *fedayees* did not conceal their identities, quite the contrary these were the ways to become popular among the Ottoman community in the form of propaganda. Thus, they were reaching to the people and they were relaying to state what they wanted and what they could do. As

may be read from the memoirs, the *fedayees* were attaching great importance to these actions and began their preparations long ago. So much so that the photographs of *fedayees* dwelled on in the third chapter through the clothing were taken before the commissions to they regarded as significant, while considering the possibility of death. All these photographs were actually things to keep as memories. Therefore, they were proud of these commissions rather than being in need of concealing their identities and thought that they had fulfilled their missions.

Kumkapı Demonstration, Sasun Mutiny, The Sublime Porte Demonstration, The Zeytun Revolt, The Van Revolt in 1896 with *fedayees* own words and the Seizure of the Ottoman Bank may be given as examples of the propaganda activities organized by Armenian *fedayees* or organizations between 1890 and 1910.²⁴⁰ Although the aforementioned events were classified under the title of propagandistic acts, all of them were terrorist actions in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities. However, it should be noted that the purpose and intentions of the Armenian *fedayees* and organizations were taken into consideration while making the classification.

For instance Kumkapı Demonstration on July 1890 was the first organized commission which eventuated in İstanbul by The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party. The starting point of the demonstration was to respond the Musa Bey and Erzurum incidents.²⁴¹ The demonstration was given great importance by the leaders of

²⁴⁰ Another example is the assassination of Abdulhamid in 1905. However, since this action is mainly based on the plans of the organizations, it is not shown here as an example, for more information see, Houssine Alloul, Edhem Eldem and Henk de Smaele, eds., *To Kill a Sultan A Transnational History of the Attempt on Abdülhamid II 1905* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁴¹ Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (İstanbul: Documentary Publications, 1988), 716; for more information about Musa Bey and Erzurum incidents see, Musa Şaşmaz, *Kürt Musa Bey Olayı 1883-1890* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2004); Kevonian, *Gülizar'ın Kara Düğünü*; Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*; Ertuğrul Zekai Ökte, ed., *Ottoman Archives Yıldız Collection: The Armenian Collection* (İstanbul: The Historical Research Foundation, 1989).

organization in order to draw the attention of the ambassadors to the Armenian issue.²⁴²

On July 27, the Armenian Patriarchate in Kumkapı was raided by the party members and despite the objection of Patriarch Aşıkyan; the communiqué about the "Armenian awakening" was read on the lectern. Although the protesters forced Patriarch Aşıkyan to go to the Yıldız Palace to relay the demands of the Armenians to the sultan, when the police arrived at the scene, an armed fight took place between the demonstrators and the police and this confrontation was suppressed by the deaths of ten people.²⁴³

Although this demonstration is classified as a propagandist act, it is not necessary to examine it in depth as it is not exactly the case in point of propaganda activity proposed by the thesis because of being organized by members of the Hunchakian Party rather than *fedayees*. The Sublime Porte Demonstration²⁴⁴ and Seizure of the Ottoman Bank²⁴⁵ have the same characteristic with the Kumkapı Demonstration in term of the starting points and organizers.

²⁴² Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, 118.

²⁴³ Musa Şaşmaz, "Kumkapı Ermeni Olayı (1890)," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 19, no. 1 (2004): 107-108. For more information about Kumkapı Demonstration and Damadyan who organized the event see, Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*; Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei 1839-1938* (Zurich: Chronos, 2000); Rouben Paul Adalian, *Historical Dictionary of Armenia* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2010); Yavuz Ercan, *Toplu Eserler I: Ermenilerle İlgili Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2006); Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*.

²⁴⁴ For more information about The Sublime Porte Demonstration see, Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*; Ertuğrul Zekai Ökte, ed., *Ottoman Archives Yıldız Collection*.

²⁴⁵ For more information about Seizure of the Ottoman Bank see, Necdet Sakaoğlu, "Osmanlı Bankası Olayı," in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, ed., Çağatay Anadol (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı & Tarih Vakfı, 1994); Armen Garo, *Osmanlı Bankası Baskını: Armen Garo'nun Anıları*, trans., Attila Tuygan (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2009); Edhem Eldem, *A History of The Ottoman Bank* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Historical Research Center, 1999); Edhem Eldem, "26 Ağustos 1896 Banka Vakası ve 1896 Ermeni Olayları," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 5, (Spring 2007): 113-146.

Sasun Mutiny²⁴⁶, The Zeytun Revolt of 1895²⁴⁷ and The Van Revolt of 1896²⁴⁸ cases were the regional responses towards the policies of the Ottoman Empire. At heart, the starting points of these revolts were based upon protesting an implementation. Therefore, even though these propaganda activities were led by *fedayees* contrary to the demonstrations given above, they do not serve as a pattern which will be examined in detail because of being a response rather than being a planned action. In this sense, Khanasor Expedition of 1897 which contains all the required specification in itself will be exemplary.

4.2.1.1 Khanasor Expedition of 1897

As briefly mentioned in the third chapter, Khanasor Expedition of 1897 was organized by the *fedayees* against the Kurdish Mazrig tribe to take revenge as it is understood from the flag and motto of the movement which is “Vrezh, Vrezh” [վրէժ

²⁴⁶ For more information about Sasun Mutiny see, Haluk Selvi, *Bir Ermeni Komitecinin İtirafı* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2009); Raymond Kévorkian, “The Armenian Population of Sassoun and the Demographic Consequences of the 1894 Massacres,” *Armenian Review* 47, no. 1-2 (Spring 2001): 41-53; Mehmet Polatel, “The Complete Ruin of District: The Sasun Massacre of 1894” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, eds., Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 179-198; Rebecca Morris, “A Critical Examination of the Sassoun Commission of Inquiry Report,” *Armenian Review* 47, no. 1-2 (Spring–Summer 2001): 79–112; Stephen Duguid, “Centralization and Localism, Aspects of Ottoman Policy in Eastern Anatolia 1878–1908” (Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1970); Owen Miller, “Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015); Justin McCarthy, Ömer Turan and Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Sasun: The History of an 1890s Armenian Revolt* (Utah: University of Utah Press, 2014).

²⁴⁷ For more information about The Zeytun Revolt see, A. Latif Dinçaslan, *Zeytun ve Çevresindeki Ermeni İsyancıları 1895-1921* (Kahramanmaraş: Ukde Kitaplığı, 2008); H. Nejat Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler* (İstanbul: Gültepe Yay. 1983); Burhan Çağlar, *İngiliz Said Paşa ve Günlüğü* (İstanbul: Arı Sanat, 2010); Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*; Dikran Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology Under Ottoman Rule: 1908-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

²⁴⁸ For more information about The Van Revolt see, Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Van/Vasurakan* (California: Mazda Publishers, 2000); Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); Sami Önal, *Sadettin Paşa'nın Anıları: Ermeni-Kürt Olayları: Van, 1896* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004); Dilşen İnce Erdoğan, *Amerikan Misyonerlerinin Faaliyetleri ve Van Ermeni İsyanı, 1896* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008); Şenol Kantarcı, “Van’da Ermeni İsyanı (1896-1915),” *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5 (Spring 2002): 135-145; Antranik Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*; Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*.

վրեժ] means “Revenge, Revenge”.²⁴⁹ At this point, it would be useful to understand the background of the incident by briefly introducing the violence in Van before examining Khanasor Expedition.

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, in eastern Ottoman provinces such as Van and Bitlis, there was already an authority gap due to the soldiers’ seclusion to the front.²⁵⁰ Lake Van was about eight hundred miles from Istanbul, two hundred and fifty miles from Trabzon on the Black Sea, and only fifty miles from the Russian and Iranian borders.²⁵¹

After the war, the authority gap due to the soldiers who could not come back to the city continued in Van, which is such a remote province of the Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, Van and its environs were the regions where Armenian radicals were very strong and rooted. Even before 1878, there were Armenian bandits fighting in this region against the local authorities of the Ottoman Empire.²⁵² In addition, Van was the region where The Armenakan Party, which was established to protect the sovereignty of the Armenian people, was the most active.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, 158. For more information see also, Mikael Varandian, *Hay Heğapoğgan Taşnagsutyun Badmutyuni* [The History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation] (Yerevan: University Press, 1992).

²⁵⁰ Justin McCarthy et al., *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2006), 54.

²⁵¹ Frederick Davis Greene, and Henry Davenport Northrop, *Armenian Massacres, or The Sword of Mohammed Containing a Complete and Thrilling Account of the Terrible Atrocities and Wholesale Murders Committed in Armenia by Mohammedan Fanatics, Including a Full Account of the Turkish People, Their History, Government, Manners, Customs and Strange Religious Belief* (Chicago: National Pub. Co., 1896), 43.

²⁵² Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, 21.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 25.

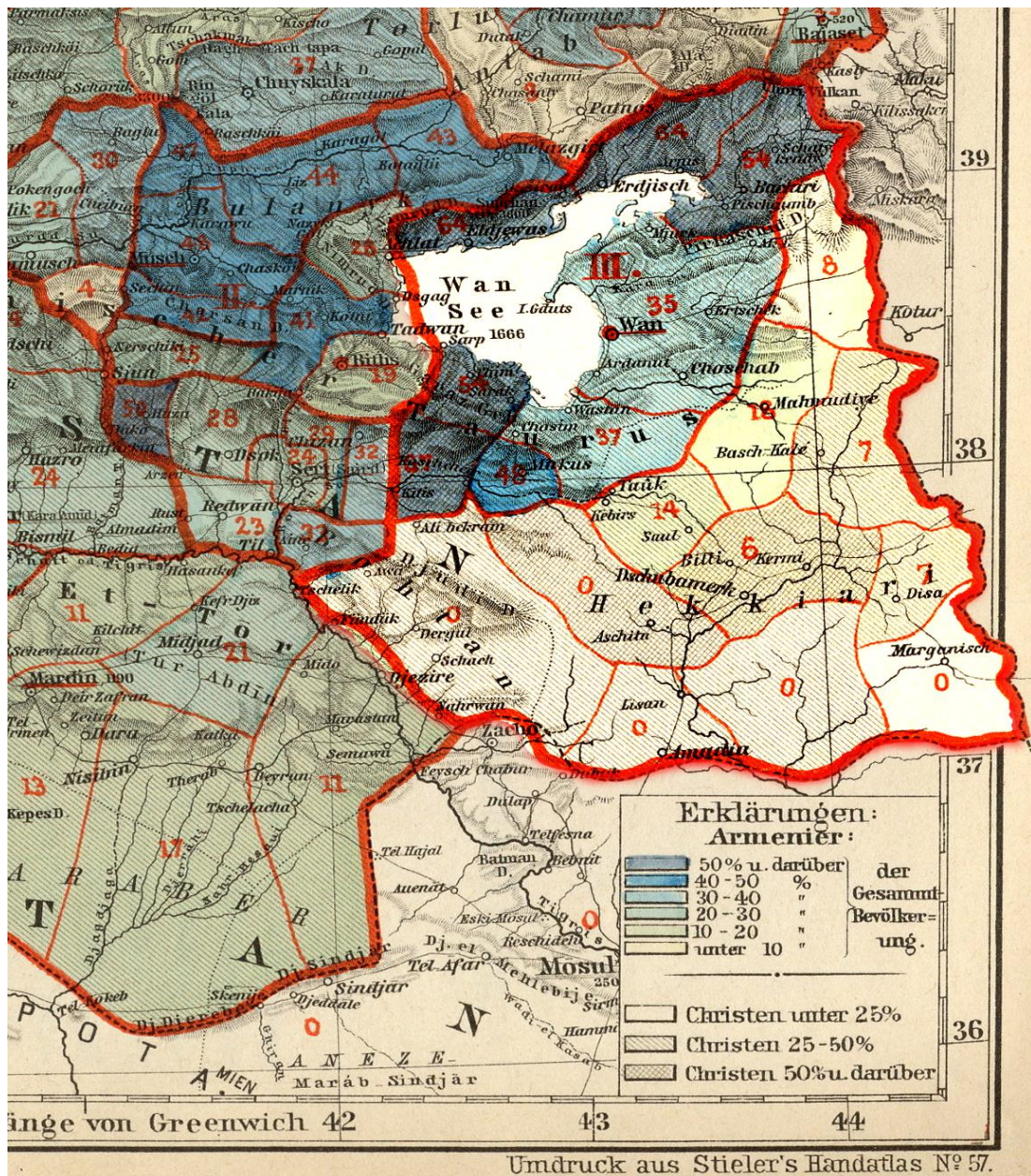


Figure 14: Armenian population in Van around 1896 during the violence.

In 1878, as a result of treaty of Berlin signed after Russo-Turkish War, the Ottoman Empire had to send a delegation committee headed by Sadettin Pasha to the region in order to make reforms these places where Armenians lived in the eastern Anatolia.²⁵⁴ Although the report written by Sadettin Pasha stated that the Kurds living in the region should not engage in counter-attacks during any incident, they disobeyed the

²⁵⁴ Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*, 69.

order by asserting "We are soldiers, we are not under the control of the governor. We are the member of Hamidian Regiments."²⁵⁵ In addition to the movements of the Kurds, which were reflected in the American missionary reports about their being free to walk around armed in the region, another reason for the Van rebellion was the violence shown to the Armenians between the years of 1895-96.²⁵⁶

In March 1896, many people and *fedayees* gathered in Van, the main center of Armenian ideological and military power.²⁵⁷ Although the authorities of the Ottoman state said that there would be no agreement and that the city should be cleared of Armenian radicals as soon as possible, the events broke out at midnight on June 14, 1896.²⁵⁸ Although both sides blamed each other for the beginning of the incident, after a week of events, the leaders of the Armenian party decided to flee about 600 armed Armenian radicals to Iran.²⁵⁹ However, on the road from Van to the Iranian border, all Armenian radicals in the troops were followed and killed by Ottoman soldiers.²⁶⁰

Khanasor was the largest operation which was planned by ARF to take revenge of the violence in Van in 1896. The Kurdish Mazrig tribe was notorious among the Armenians during the Van incident. In the course of ARF Rayonagan conference which was hold in 1896, the Kurdish tribe was designated as the villain of the piece, and the Van incident was also called as "Massacre of Van" by the Armenians in the

²⁵⁵ Önal, *Sadettin Paşa'nın Anıları*, 30.

²⁵⁶ Letter dated August 21, 1896 from Acting Secretary Alvey A. Adeo to Alexander W. Terrell; Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, 40; for more information Kurdish-Armenian relations in that term see also, Hamit Bozarslan, "Les relations kurdo-armeniennes 1894-1966," in *Die Armenische Frage und die Schweiz (1896-1923)*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser (Zurich: Chronos, 1999), 329-340; Elke Hartmann, "The Turks and Kurds are Our Fate: ARF Self-defense Concepts and Strategies as Reflected in Ruben Ter Minasian's "Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary", *Armenian Review* 54, no. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 2014): 1-44.

²⁵⁷ BOA. Y. PRK. UM 35/9 (R- 07.04.1312 / M- 19.06.1896).

²⁵⁸ Arman Dzhonovich Kirakossian, ed., *The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1896: U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 186.

²⁵⁹ Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*, 69.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

conference.²⁶¹ In addition, a pro-Ottoman Kurdish tribe was endangering the delivery in Iran-Ottoman border, where was the most convenient and reliable way of introducing weapons into the country.²⁶²

Preparations for the expedition lasted for months. The preparations mentioned included not only weapons and money, but also written and visual propaganda. First of all, very large amounts of money were collected from Armenians under the name of donations.²⁶³ In addition, the flag, slogan and banners of the expedition were prepared by the ARF. Khanasor Expedition was seen as an opportunity to regain the lost motivation of the Armenian movement. For this reason, instead of concealing their identities and making the perpetrator unknown, the *fedayees* intended to identify themselves and assume the event. All of these reasons are sufficient to examine this expedition as a propaganda activity.

On the night of July 24, after taking their oaths, the *fedayees* departed and reached their destination the next day.²⁶⁴ A group of 250 *fedayees* under the command of Vardan Mehrabian were commissioned to cross the Ottoman-Iranian border and kill the aforementioned Kurdish tribe which was led by Şeref Bey.²⁶⁵ The *fedayees* slaughtered almost all the men in the plain of Khanasor.²⁶⁶ Şeref Bey managed to escape from the massacre while disguising as a woman.²⁶⁷ According to the

²⁶¹ Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 50.

²⁶² Mehmet Törehan Serdar, *Bitlis'te Ermeniler ve Ermeni Mezalimi* (Bitlis: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1996), 185.

²⁶³ K. S. Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the So-Called Dashnagtzoutune* (Boston: Baikar Press, 1934), 22.

²⁶⁴ Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, 50.

²⁶⁵ Hourri Berberian, *Armenians And The Iranian Constitutional Revolution Of 1905-1911* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 50.

²⁶⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else" A History of the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 143.

²⁶⁷ Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, 50.

Armenian publication *Droshak* dated November 11, 1897; twenty Armenians had died during the campaign.²⁶⁸

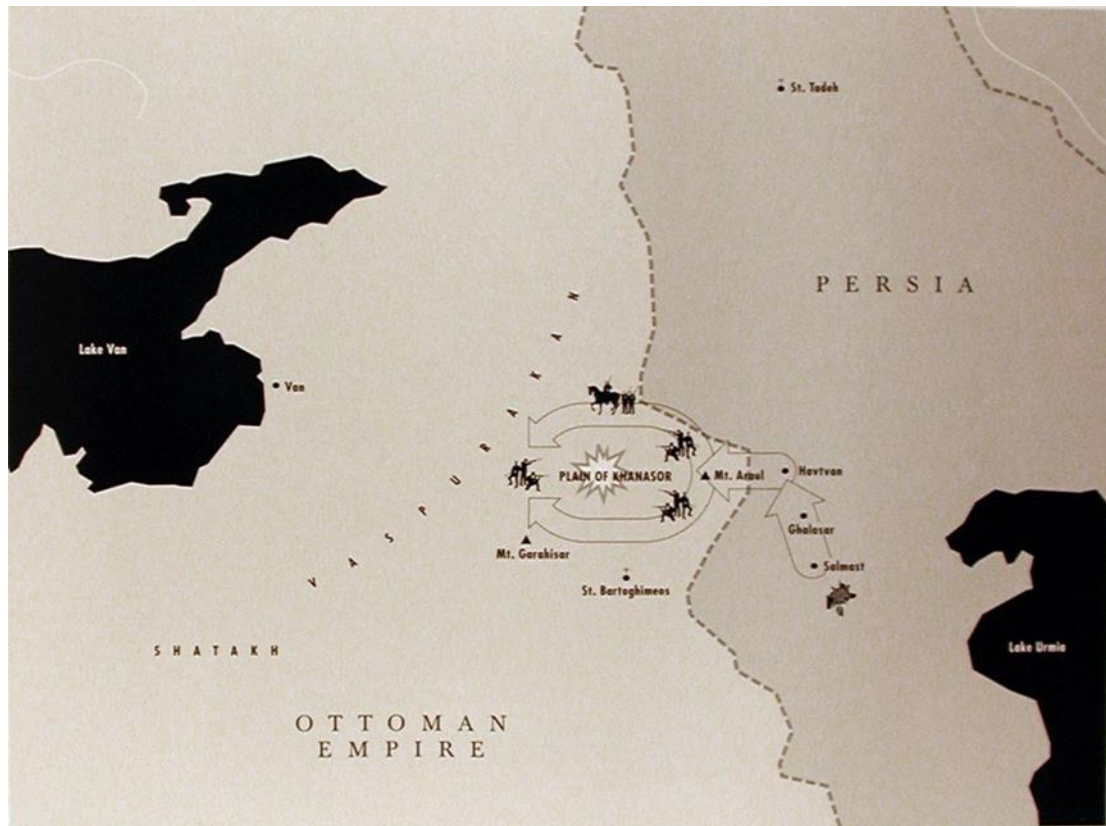


Figure 15: Plan of the Khanasor Expedition which was conceived by Nikol Duman who proposed the act in the Rayonagan Conference.²⁶⁹

Because of the great importance which was attributed to this expedition, the names of the people who were lost here were also kept under record. 26-year-old Aristakes Zorian, *nom de guerre* Karo; 27-year-old Khan, *nom de guerre* Karapet Davtian; 26-year-old Astvadzatur Mirzayan, *nom de guerre* Kretatsi; 24-year-old Yegor, *nom de guerre* Artashes Barikian; 45-year-old Bitsa, *nom de guerre* Vardan Ter Tavtian; 24-year-old Grigor Loretsian; 27-year-old Lorto; 22-year-old Ruben Der Karapetian of

²⁶⁸ Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted*, 22.

²⁶⁹ Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 51.

Tbilisi; 24-year-old Panosian; 22-year-old Aslanian; Stepan Nazaretian; 25-year-old Hakobian; 24-year-old Voskanian; 29-year-old Sergo; 36-year-old Abrahamian; 34-year-old Geosian; 20-year-old Zohrabian; 30-year-old Khechantsi; 40-year-old Vanetsi; and Mkrtych Sultanian, *nom de guerre* Mko were the ones who lost their lives in the operation.²⁷⁰

The only reason that the names, ages, and even the war names of these *fedayees* are known and kept in record until today is the importance attributed to the operation. In addition to this information, pictures of the flag designed only for Khanasor Expedition and banners of the event are still available.

Of course, the greatest means of reaching this information are the memoirs and the tradition of taking photographs before the important commissions of the *fedayees* as mentioned before. Khanasor Expedition was one of these important commissions. For this reason, there are many photos of it. Moreover, in these photographs we see the *fedayees* in their most elaborate clothes and how they want to be remembered later.

Each *fedayee* was equipped with a Russian rifle, Mosin, and was supplied with four cartridges of 250-300 bullets.²⁷¹ As mentioned earlier, Mosin was able to shoot at a much longer distance than the rifle used by the Ottoman army and the Kurds in the region, and it was not possible to determine where the fire commenced due to the smoke-free feature of it.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 61.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 60.

²⁷² Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*, 139.

The Armenian *fedayees* were also provided with supplies, water, medicine, needles, cigarettes and matches for eight days.²⁷³ Before the expedition, the *fedayees* were often informed about the importance of the operation, and they believed that it was a great opportunity to make a martyr of themselves.²⁷⁴



Figure 16: Photograph of commanders posing under the flag of the Khanasor Expedition right before commissioning.

The *fedayees* were even blessed by a priest after taking their oath the night before the operation.²⁷⁵ In some photographs taken before the Khanasor Expedition, the priests even posed with the *fedayees* while holding the cross in their hands.

The *fedayees* in the photograph deliberately reflect themselves as the heroes of the Khanasor Expedition with the intent of shaping public opinion and in case this is the

²⁷³ Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 60.

²⁷⁴ Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*, 143.

²⁷⁵ Manjikian, *Houshamatyan of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Album-Atlas Volume I*, 50.

last photo of the group. If this was the last photo they took, they would be commemorated with the depiction they created in the photography given above.

They achieved their goal of perception management to some extent. Although this is the subject of another research, it is worth mentioning that in 1915 some foreign newspapers and magazines published these photographs. Accordingly, people who did not see the clothes that were worn in Anatolia at the same time period interpreted what they saw in the photograph as a *fedayee* uniform. However, these were clothes varied from region to region but were worn in the same environment regardless of religion.

However, when the photograph is examined carefully, it will be seen that there is no standardized uniform in this frame. In the photo above, it is possible to observe the clothes that were worn in Van without regardless of religion; the Caucasian or mountaineers' clothes; and a garment that resembles the uniform. The same applies to the headgears seen in the photograph. In the photo frame, there is not any headgear that was never worn by other people or ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire did not glitter.

However, it is possible to say that the *fedayees* succeeded in creating the image of self with their cartridges, Mosins, pistols, daggers and theatrical poses. The photographs of the *fedayees* taken by the Ottoman authorities can be cited as a counter alternative against these photographs. However, as mentioned in the third chapter, photographs taken by the Ottoman Empire have their own methodological problems.

In this part of the thesis, it is desired to be conveyed with this photograph that during the propaganda activities, the *fedayees* were wearing these clothes which they saw as

uniforms and they were involved in these events without disguising their identities. On the contrary, they were creating a new self rather than what they were in real mountain life; and thanks to the glory they reflected through the photography, they were trying to gain public support while shaping people's perceptions on *fedayees*.

4.2.2 Provocative Actions of *Fedayees*

Armenian bandits were one of the groups that used clothing very subtle as a strategy. So much so that when the related Ottoman Archival documents are examined, it will be seen that empire had difficulty in tracking the bandits even after comprehending this strategy. The Armenians used this strategy skillfully and then often lost their traces or did not reveal themselves by keeping their identities secret which were not reflected in the documents because of being unsuspected.

Although the reason why Armenian bandits used this strategy was reflected in the Ottoman State archives as creating grounds for complaints in order to get help from Europe, there is no deeper explanation about this issue in the documents. Before addressing the strategy by giving examples, it would be more appropriate to explain the reason briefly why Armenian *fedayees* implemented it.

As a consequence of Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, San Stefano Treaty was signed on 3 March 1878 between the Ottoman Empire and Russian Tsardom.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ For more information about Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 see, M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett, eds., *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011); Archibald Forbes, *Czar and Sultan: The Adventures of a British Lad in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894); William Edward David Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); David R. Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006); Lora Gerd, *Russian Policy in the Orthodox East: The Patriarchate of Constantinople 1878-1914* (Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2014); Quintin Barry, *War in the East: A Military History of the Russo-Turkish War 1877-78* (Solihull: Helion&Company,

According to the treaty provisions, an autonomous Bulgarian state under the occupation of Russia for two years will be established; Montenegro and Serbia will receive land from the Ottoman Empire; Kars, Ardahan, Batumi and Doğu Beyazıt were to be left to Russia and extensive reforms were to be implemented in Thessaly and Epirus.²⁷⁷

In addition to these clauses, which meant a great devastation for the Ottoman Empire, there was also an article on Armenians' situation settled in the Eastern Anatolia. Article 16 of the Treaty was directly and exclusively related to Armenians.²⁷⁸ It would be more accurate to quote this article of the Treaty as it is.

Article 16: Since the invasion of the Russian troops in the East and the evacuation of the places that should be returned to the Ottoman Empire may cause confusion that would harm the good relations between the two states in this region, the Ottoman State undertakes to make necessary reforms, without further delay, in the provinces where the Armenians live and to ensure the safety of the Armenians against the Kurds and Circassians in the region.²⁷⁹

As a result of San Stefano, Russia's superiority in the Balkans and Asia Minor by changing the balance of power in Europe disturbed the great powers, especially Britain and Austria.²⁸⁰ For this reason, a congress was held in Berlin in June 1878 and the conditions of the San Stefano Treaty were alleviated and the Berlin Treaty

2012); Howard Molyneux Edward Brunker, *Story of the Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78* (London: Forster Groom & Company, 1911); Barnwell, R. Grant, *The Russo-Turkish War; Comprising An Account of the Servian Insurrection, the Dreadful Massacre of Christians In Bulgaria and Other Turkish Atrocities, With the Transactions and Negotiations of the Contending Powers Preliminary to the Present Struggle Together With A History and Description of Russia and the Russians, the Rise, Progress and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, and Sketches of the People, Manners and Customs and Domestic Life of Both Nations* (Boston: W. H. Thompson & Co., 1877).

²⁷⁷ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 74.

²⁷⁸ Rafael Ishkanian, "The Law of Excluding the Third Force," in *Armenia at the Crossroads: Democracy and Nationhood in the Post-Soviet Era: Essays, Interviews, and Speeches by the Leaders of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia*, ed. Gerard J. Libaridian (Watertown: Blue Crane Books, 1991), 16.

²⁷⁹ Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa, *Mir'at-ı Hakikat*, ed. İsmet Miroğlu (İstanbul: Berekat Yayınevi, 1983), 578-579.

²⁸⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 74-75.

was signed instead of it.²⁸¹ With this treaty, Russia's monopoly on the Eastern question was abolished and European states were involved.²⁸² The issue of providing the security of Armenians in Eastern Anatolia, which constitutes the 16th article of the San Stefano Treaty, took its place in the Berlin Treaty, but this time it was placed in article 61, as follows:

Article 61: The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.

It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.²⁸³

Although the article related to the Armenians of Anatolia seemed to lose its priority due to the relocation, this article gave the European powers the right to openly interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and to control the Armenians under the name of ensuring their safety. This was the sign of an intervention by the European States at any time to the Ottoman Empire under cover of Eastern question.

On this occasion, Armenian *fedayees* organized provocation actions to assert the claim that the article 61 was violated by the Ottoman Empire to achieve their goal of independence they dreamed of and to get the assistance from Europe for this process. *Fedayees* used disguise as a strategy of provocation in line with this objective. Their aim in implementing this strategy was to prove that the aforementioned article had

²⁸¹ Ibid., 75.

²⁸² Arman Dzhonovich Kirakosian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question: From the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003), 79; see also William Norton Medlicott, *Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement 1878-1880* (London: Frank Cass&Co., 1963).

²⁸³ Great Britain Foreign Affairs, Parliament Sessional Papers, 1878, Vol. 82, Turkey, No. 2, 3; see also Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire: 1860-1908* (London: Routledge, 1977).

been violated, rather than publicizing the claim of Armenian independence to the public and authorities as they aimed while making propagandist acts.

In order to gain their independence with the help of the European intervention, the Armenians used the strategy of organizing provocative actions by changing their clothes two-sidedly.²⁸⁴

In other words, the *fedayees* both used the Islam clothes to incite Muslims against the Armenians by convincing people to adopt a particular attitude towards Armenians and convincing Muslims to attack Armenians; and used the paramilitary ethnic minorities' clothes to attack Armenian villages to show Europe that the Empire was not providing their security. That is, *fedayees* both attacked the Armenian villages in the garb of Kurds and Circassians; and tried to convince Muslims to attack in the garb of them.

Since the strategy of attacking Armenian villages by disguising as paramilitary groups' costumes will be discussed in more detail under the next subtitle, it would be more appropriate to give an example of the strategy of convincing Muslims to attack the Armenian villages in the garb of Islam clothes.

In Sivas, for example, a group of disguised Armenian while wearing Muslim clothes, tried to provoke Muslim subjects in the region to attack Armenians by spreading a word "What are we waiting for? Sultan ordered to slaughter the Armenians and

²⁸⁴ In the memoirs of Antranik Ozanian, it is stated that the intervention and assistance of the European States was expected. It is also mentioned in the book that it is decided to do whatever is necessary in this direction; Çelebyan, *Antranik Paşa*, 48-49.

plunder their properties”.²⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, after this call of the Armenians who masqueraded as Muslims, the social order in Sivas was disrupted.²⁸⁶

In fact, Armenians carried out these provocative actions from time to time in the guise of Circassian, Kurdish and Ottoman officers and tried to convince Muslims that this was a definite order given by the authorities of the empire and that the Armenians should be attacked as soon as possible.²⁸⁷

In the town of Örek, Kayseri, approximately two hundred Armenian *fedayees* who disguised as Muslims shrieked and tried to create further escalation of the conflict among the Muslims and Armenians while spreading rumor of that Armenians burned mosques.²⁸⁸ Here, the Muslims of the empire were tried to be hostile to the Armenians while taking advantage of harming the sacred places of worship. It is known that the Ottoman Empire was ruled by Sharia. The protection of the places of worship and sacred places of Islamic religion were customary. In other words, the issue of burning mosques in the content of the rumor spread by the disguised *fedayees* meant an attack on both Islam and the state in the eyes of the Muslims. After such provocative rumors, the Muslims were agitated and this was the reason behind the attacks against Armenians occasionally.

These provocative actions planned by the *fedayees* somehow achieved their purpose. These were not suddenly emerged and implemented plans, but rather detailed designed actions. It may be deduced from the testimony of the Lüsunklu Kaspı, who was a captured *fedayee*, that the strategy of disguise to incite Muslims against the Armenians was planned before the action while making preparations. The *fedayees*

²⁸⁵ BOA. HR.SFR.3... 438/64 (M-16-12-1895)

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ahmet Halaçođlu, “XIX. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Anadolu’daki Ermeni Terörü,” *Türk Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* 28, no. 32 (2007): 73.

²⁸⁸ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 200/61 (R- 24-08-1312 / H- 05.11.1896)

involved in such actions changed not only their clothes, but also their names.²⁸⁹ They were adopting Muslim names during their commissions.

Considering the attention, devotion and preparations of the Armenian *fedayees* in these provocation activities, it should not be underestimated that these actions of the *fedayees* may also have taken part in many incidents that were not reflected in the Ottoman State archives due to lack of validation.

Considering the fact that the Ottoman Empire officials realized this strategy used by the Armenian *fedayees* in the middle of 1890s and the difficulties in identifying it because of the breadth of the borders of the empire, it should not be ignored that the Armenians may have used this action strategy before or even after the state became familiar to it while taking advantage of being in a large empire.

Nevertheless, no matter how wide the boundaries, it can be seen from the archival documents that the Ottoman Empire was investigating the people who exhibiting suspicious attitudes in the garb of Muslim clothes through the agency of the local authorities. Although it is not possible to make a definite judgment, the reason why the Ottoman Empire have examined the Armenians disguised as Muslim may be the possibility of involving in such provocative actions besides the suspicion of espionage. However, since the language of the Ottoman documents is not favorable enough to reach this decision,²⁹⁰ and because this issue requires a deeper research; it would be more appropriate to address the provocative actions of *fedayees* as strategy while disguising as other paramilitary ethnic groups in Anatolia such as Kurds, Circassians, Georgians and Laz who were defined as silhouettes in the third chapter.

²⁸⁹ BOA. İ.ASK. 28/29 (R- 26.09. 1311 / H- 08.12.1895)

²⁹⁰ About an interesting work on the language of Ottoman archives on the Armenian issue see, Edip Gölbaşı, "The Official Conceptualization of the anti-Armenian Riots of 1895-1897: Bureaucratic Terminology, Official Ottoman Narrative, and Discourses of Revolutionary Provocation" *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 10 (December 2017): 33-62.

4.3 Strategic Use of Costume in Provocative Actions as Part of Violence:

***Fedayee* Practice of Disguise as Encountered Paramilitary Groups in Anatolia (Kurds, Circassians, Georgians, Laz)**

While the above-mentioned strategy of disguise as Muslim in provocative actions does not contain violence in it, *fedayees* also resorted to the use of force in the context of another category of the provocative action. That is the strategy of attacking Armenian villages by wearing the clothes of other ethnic paramilitary groups living in Anatolia. As with the strategy of disguising as Muslims, the aim of the *fedayees* was to show the European powers that the decision taken at the Berlin Congress had been violated by the Ottoman Empire. The *fedayees* were so blinded by anger that they took the risk of attacking the villages of the Armenian people, whom they claimed to protect their rights, by disguising as Muslim paramilitary groups and even killed the Armenians during these attacks.

In this part of the thesis, instead of examining the attacks from region to region, I will examine the use of clothing of each ethnic group in separate paragraphs and look at the regional map as an outcome of the strategy.

4.3.1 *Fedayees* in the Garb of Traditional Kurdish Costume

The earliest document in the Ottoman Archives on the *fedayees*' strategy of slaughtering the Armenians in the guise of Kurdish people belongs to 1891.²⁹¹ In the Ottoman Archival documents, the strategy of killing the Armenians by disguising

²⁹¹ BOA. Y..PRK.BŞK. 24/26 (H- 20.04.1309 / M- 23.11.1891); the document is about two different issues which are Serbian komitadjis' preparations and the introduction of telegrams from the governorships of Kosovo and Bitlis that the Armenian bandits who were wearing Kurdish clothes were arrested in Bitlis.

themselves as Kurds was found at the earliest in 1891. Of course, it is not accurate to be of the opinion that 1891 when the telegram was wired about the capture of the Armenians who were disguised as Kurds in Bitlis was the date when the Ottoman Empire noticed the strategy for the first time. The reason why there is no document in the Ottoman archives on the starting date of the mentioned event in Bitlis seems to be very likely that it may not be recognized that it was a *fedayee* strategy in the first place. For this reason, it is highly probable that the bandits were supposed to be among the Kurdish people and that the relevant document was written accordingly.

In a document dated May 29 of 1893, it was stated that four Armenians were slaughtered by eight Armenian *fedayees*, disguised as Kurd, in Van and a prosecution against suspected individuals was started.²⁹² According to the report which was written four days after the incident, on 2 November, the killers of the Armenians were eight *fedayees*. Although the document does not mention what the evidences are, it is explained that the evidences were taken into consideration in making this judgment and the suspected Bedi Kilya confessed that they were the *fedayees* in the garb of Kurdish costume.

Similarly in Erçek, one of the Armenian settlements of Van on November 28, 1894, six of the *fedayees* who were aiming to misdirect the authorities and European powers by wearing Kurdish costumes, were arrested and their identities were revealed as a result of their inquiries.²⁹³ In this case, the act of violence is slightly different from the others. Instead of attacking and killing the Armenians, this time in the incident in Erçek, the *fedayees* wanted to harm them financially and attacked to steal the cattle in the village. Considering that the Armenian people were protecting,

²⁹² BOA. Y..A...HUS. 275/33 (H- 17.11.1310 / M- 02.06.1893)

²⁹³ BOA. A.}MKT.MHM. 750/21 (H-29-05-1312 / M- 28.11.1894)

subsidizing or forcing to help the Armenian movement in many regions, it will be seen that the objective of the movement claimed by the *fedayees* changed the direction in the provocative actions. In other words, the movement, which claimed that it emerged to protect the Armenian people from the Kurds and other attacks, suddenly became the danger itself.

It was 1894 that the events came to an extreme stage. At this date, density of the provocative actions was observed in Van and Bitlis, especially in Sasun region.²⁹⁴

The reason why provocations were reached its peak in 1894 was the uprising of the Armenians in Sasun on the same date and the existence of the turmoil in the region.

The Ottoman state, which wanted to take precautions against increasing actions due to the escalation of events, was busting the caves where the *fedayees* lived and mostly found them by disguise as Kurdish paramilitary groups.²⁹⁵

In 1894, when the mentioned provocation activities were intense, the Ottoman State used cipher telegram considering the espionage activities to prevent these incidents before they took place.²⁹⁶ The Ottoman Empire generally used three or five digit numbers as the encryption method in the documents. Each number was corresponding to one letter. An example of such documents is about the capture of a *fedayee* group, who are provided intelligence that they were planning to attack the

²⁹⁴ BOA. İ.HUS. 32/95 (H-04-06-1312 / M- 03.12.1894); BOA. HR.SYS. 2845/7 (M- 17.12.1894); BOA. HR.SYS. 2845/15 (M- 19.12.1894);

²⁹⁵ BOA. Y.EE.. 160/65 (H- 18.05.1312 / M- 19.10.1894)

²⁹⁶ For more information about telegram and cipher telegram in the Ottoman Empire see, Roderic H. Davison, "The Advent of the Electric Telegraph in the Ottoman Empire," in *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 133-165; Asaf Tanrıku, *Türkiye Posta ve Telgraf ve Telefon Tarih ve Teşkilât ve Mevzuatı*, 2 vols. (Ankara: Efem Matbaacılık, 1984); Korkmaz Alemdar, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Haberleşmenin Tarihsel Kökenleri: İletişim Sosyolojisinin Temelleri Üzerine Bir Deneme* (Ankara: Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi, 1981); Nesimi Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Telgrafında Dil Konusu," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 26 (1983): 751-764; Semavi Eyice, "İstanbul'da İlk Telgrafhane-i Amire'nin Projesi (1855)," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 34 (1984): 61-73; Nesimi Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Telgraf Fabrikası," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 22 (February 1983): 69-81; Nesimi Yazıcı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Haberleşme Kurumu," in *150. Yılında Tanzimat*, ed., Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), 139-210.

Armenian neighborhoods in Bitlis while wearing Kurdish clothes and were planning to blame Muslims about the assault.²⁹⁷ Another cipher telegram about the Armenian bandits in Bitlis who committed crimes in the garb of Kurdish clothes was written to give information about the process of investigation which was conducted in 1901.²⁹⁸

According to the letter sent to the Armenian Archbishop of Adana by the Joint Secretariat of the Armenian Committee of London and Marseille on August 9, 1892, the best garment for these provocative actions was the Circassian traditional male costume.²⁹⁹ Moreover, in the treaty signed in Berlin, the names of Circassians and Kurds were mentioned together. For this reason, a mixed group of Armenian *fedayees* disguised as Kurds and Circassians are occasionally seen in archival documents. These mixed groups were generally encountered around the Sandjak of Mersin between the years of 1896 and 1897.³⁰⁰ This may be due to the fact that Mersin has become a major *locus in quo* because of its being the port city of the Armenian rebellion.

4.3.2 *Fedayees* in the Garb of Traditional Circassian Costume

The earliest document about the *fedayees* attacking Armenian villages in the guise of Circassians is found in the Ottoman State archives on June 19, 1893.³⁰¹ According to this document, Taşçı village of Feke district located in Adana province was attacked on May 30, 1893 by eight horsemen Circassian bandits. The bandits took 50 liras from people by force and kidnapped Kirkor, son of Akranlı Artin, and demanded 500

²⁹⁷ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 170/83 (R- 07.10.1310 / M- 19.12.1894); See Appendix I.

²⁹⁸ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 261/89 (R- 29.04.1317 / M- 12.07.1901)

²⁹⁹ BOA. HR. SYS. 2789/8 (H- 09.08.1892)

³⁰⁰ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 31/8 (H-2.11.1314 / M- 04.04.1897); BOA. DH.ŞFR. 200/124 (R- 31.08.1312 / M- 12.11.1896); BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 5/64 (H- 18.12.1313 / M- 31.05.1896).

³⁰¹ BOA. Y..MTV. 79/15 (H- 04.12.1310 / M- 19.06.1893); See Appendix II.

liras for the ransom. However, an investigation was initiated because the bandits dressed in Circassian clothing were suspected to be Armenian *fedayees* that were also seen in the nearby Taghara district. The document also draws attention to the need to investigate how such a crowded group of bandits could move freely unbeknown to local commanders of the empire. Unlike many others, it is emphasized here that Armenians aim while disguising as Circassians which was seeking a reason to complain about the Ottoman Empire to Europe.

In another archival document about the same incident, it is mentioned that Armenian bandits in the garb of Circassian horsemen who raided the Taşcı village in Feke District of Adana were ordered to be captured on the sides of Haçin.³⁰²

In the incident, which was reflected in an archival document dated 16 July 1896, a Circassian dressed group attacked the Palandöken district of Erzurum province and robbed Kurdish passengers.³⁰³ As a result of the investigation, it was understood that this group was not of Circassian origin, but an Armenian *fedayee* group in their disguise. According to the document, the local commanders were ordered to warn the Armenian *fedayees* to drop their weapons to surrender and to attack only if they encountered resistance of the bandits. The fact that the Circassian population settled and lived in Erzurum in the mentioned period explains the reason why *fedayees* disguised as Circassian males in the province. That is, the Circassian population which was already living in this region could be logical and convincing for the Armenian activists to prove the so-called attacks to Europe.

³⁰² BOA. DH.MKT. 2062/73 (H- 06.12.1310 / M- 21.06.1893)

³⁰³ BOA. Y..PRK.BŞK. 46/97 (H- 05.02.1314 / M- 16.07.1896)

In January 1897, the Armenian *fedayees* in the Hınıs and Pasin districts of the Erzurum province were seen in the Circassian costume were reported and an investigation was started for their arrest.³⁰⁴

In another document dated October 17, 1893, the Armenian *fedayee* named Ohan, abducted Sosan, the daughter of an Armenian named Kirkork in the Azizli Village of the Payas District in Osmaniye Vilayet while he disguised as Circassian.³⁰⁵ The investigation revealed that the bandit was not of the Circassian people, but Ohan. After the first interrogation, Ohan and his friends, who were captured by Receb Agha, were sent to Istanbul with the Circassian dress on them and their trials continued there.

In the aforementioned incident, instead of the village attacking strategy, it was seen that abduction was practiced with strong hand. One of the reasons for changing the strategy as abduction may be that the story of the Armenian girl Gülizar, who was abducted by the Kurdish tribe chief Musa Bey in the spring of 1889 was quickly heard by the Armenian people and even by the European states.³⁰⁶ The Gülizar incident is considered by many scholars as the reason for the beginning of Armenian movement or the event that ignited the wick. For this reason, in this case of abduction in October 1893, it is necessary to emphasize the possibility that Ohan and his friends may have wanted to attract the attention of Europe as in the case of Gülizar.

³⁰⁴ BOA. A.}MKT.MHM. 640/43 (H- 05.08.1314 / M- 09.01.1897)

³⁰⁵ BOA. İ.HUS. 17/14 (H- 06.04.1311 / M- 17.10.1893); for more information about the trials of Ohan see, BOA. BEO 295/22116 (H- 07.04.1311 / M- 18.10.1893)

³⁰⁶ For more information about Gülizar's story see, Kevonian, *Gülizar'ın Kara Düğünü*.

Apart from attacking the villages, as a different act of violence, the *fedayees* in the garb of Circassian costume beat people outside the villages and stole their properties in many regions such as Yozgat and Kayseri.³⁰⁷

4.3.3 *Fedayees* in the Garb of Traditional Georgian and Laz Costume

The Georgian and Laz traditional costumes as mentioned in the third chapter of the thesis were fairly similar to each other except a few anthropological details. Since this thesis deals with the practice of disguise as an action strategy in *fedayees* provocations rather than an anthropological study, both dresses are examined as silhouettes. At this point, it is necessary to say that although disguise of Laz costume predominantly used in the Ottoman archival documents while describing the acts of violence of the *fedayees*, the term Georgian dress is also used from time to time to describe the costume which *fedayees* used.

However, due to the densely settled population of Laz people in the Ottoman Empire, it is important to note that these two similar dresses may have been called Laz costume in general manner in the archival documents as it is in the British sources. While it is not possible to make a definitive judgment on how exactly the authorities decided which ethnic minority's costume was disguised during the acts, it will be more consistent to examine the dress used in the aforementioned actions under a single heading, as mentioned in the third section. Even though the use of both clothes in the provocative acts of the *fedayees* which contains violence will be mentioned under this heading, practice of disguise as Laz will be examined first considering the possibility of calling both costumes as Laz dress.

³⁰⁷ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 311/ 96 (R- 22.06.1319 / M- 04.09.1903);

Although the article of the text signed as a result of the Berlin Congress were not related to the attacks of the Laz against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the *fedayees* also used the Laz costume in their provocative actions. Laz, like Kurds, Circassians and Georgians were paramilitary ethnic minorities that were inherently warriors. Since it is known that Laz were also opposed to the Armenian movement while supporting Ottoman Empire's attitude, *fedayees* may have used the costumes of Laz people as the garments of the Kurds, Georgians and Circassians.

The Laz costume was rarely preferred in provocative actions by the *fedayees*. One of the reasons for this may be that the practice of disguise in the regions where Laz people lived intensively was used to cross the border rather than violent acts.

For example, in the detailed report of the deputy district governor of the Tortum District of Erzurum province, Armenian *fedayees* were disguising as Laz to violate the Russian border and to rustle animals to left them in Muslim villages.³⁰⁸ In addition, the incidents of attacking Armenian villages in Laz dresses of *fedayees* first seen in this report in 1893.

In fact, according to an archival document dated 1908, the Armenian *fedayees* who had been trained in Russia even at that time, were practicing long felt cones and coarse woolen clothes that resembled the costume of the Laz tribe known as Hasenan.³⁰⁹

The district governor Reşid Bey, a military veterinary surgeon Armenian Bogos, Sarraçbaşı Çerkez Kasbulak, Mesud of Aziziye who was a sergeant of the Remont Troop, and Mehmed were attacked by a bandit group of sixty people in the Karnıçay

³⁰⁸ BOA. Y..PRK.AZJ. 25/64 (H- 29.12.1310 / M- 14.07.1893)

³⁰⁹ BOA. DH.ŞFR. 398/54 (R- 02.03.1324 / M- 15.05.1908)

region on the way to the Kemah Province from Erzincan.³¹⁰ The archival document which is the telegraph report of the Fourth Army of Erzincan states that it was an Armenian bandit group in the garb of Laz people which armed with the support of the notable Armenians of the region.

Apart from the aforementioned events, the Armenian *fedayees* did not take too much violence by disguising themselves as Laz. As mentioned earlier, it seems likely that the regions where the Laz settled were used to supply arms to the organization and pass the border.

As in the Georgian example, the Laz costume was rarely preferred in provocative actions by the *fedayees*. It should be also noted that the case of the Armenians wearing Georgian ethnic clothes proceeds differently in various aspects. The documents about the *fedayees* that attacked the villages in Georgian clothes and killed the Armenians are rarely found in the archive. Instead of this, documents about Armenian *fedayees* who changed location in Georgian dresses or engaged in propaganda activities were more intense.

For example, Sempan and his brother, who were caught on their way to Zeytun, carried a letter written by Bedros Maramyan, the head of the Armenian Fesad Committee in Trabzon in the Georgian costume in 1891,³¹¹ and a *fedayee* between Osmancık and Gümüşhacıköy in vilayet of Sivas, was arrested in Georgian clothing in 1892 when he was not involved in any provocation.³¹² Both cases lie outside the scope of this thesis because of perpetrators' being not caught during an act of violence against Armenians. Although Kasbar, the son of Yordan, an Armenian who was dressed in Georgian costume and killed a mailman in between Osmancık and

³¹⁰ BOA. HR.SFR.1... 108/ 46

³¹¹ BOA. DH.MKT. 1827/73 (H- 02.09.1308 / M- 11.04.1891)

³¹² BOA. Y..A...HUS. 264/168 (H- 22.02.1310 / M- 15.09.1892)

Gümüşhacıköy on September 22, 1892; the use of clothing is not suitable for examination under this title since the person killed was not an Armenian.³¹³

The bandits were also caught from time to time in the Amasya sanjak of the Sivas province.³¹⁴ However, it is not possible to make sure that these bandits wear the ethnic clothes mentioned.

The relatively small number of documents about Georgian clothes which were used by Armenians in provocative actions may be due to their similarity with Laz costume or in some cases rarely similarity with Circassian costume. That is, any type of these dresses may be identified as the Laz costume in the eyes of victims or authorities of the empire. Another reason may be that the perpetrators of the actions in Georgian clothing could not be caught or that these actions were not reflected in the documents at all. As mentioned before, such very similar clothes could only be distinguished from the speech styles of the people who wore them. It is also necessary to consider the possibility that these people may have continued their actions without words. In this case, surviving local Armenians, who were victims of the action, may have identified the costume as Laz dress because of the similarity again.

Nevertheless, there were *fedayee* groups disguised as Georgian men who attacked Armenian people. To give an example to these rare cases, seven Armenian bandits in the guise of Georgians killed the Shoemaker Makri of Merzifon, Sahak, and Milcanyan of Ordu in Bitlis Vilayet.³¹⁵

³¹³ BOA. BEO 79/5920 (H- 08.03.1310 / M- 22.09.1892)

³¹⁴ BOA. Y..MTV. 119/86 (H- 10.11.1312 / M- 05.05.1895); BOA. Y..A...HUS. 327/37 (H- 13.11.1312 / M- 08.05.1895)

³¹⁵ Hüseyin Nazım Paşa, *Ermeni Olayları Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1998), 15-16.

Apart from these relatively rare incidents, a document about the *fedayees* who attacked Armenian villages in Georgian costumes was not reflected in the archival documents, even if such actions really happened.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

*“acta est fabula, plaudite”*³¹⁶

This thesis aimed to clarify the *fedayees*' strategy of disguise as other ethnic paramilitary groups living in Anatolia such as Kurds, Circassians, Georgians and Laz in terms of violence. Based on close reading of existing sources, Ottoman archival documents and analyzing the clothes of all these aforementioned groups through the photographs, it is deduced that the objective of the thesis requires examining different subjects to comprehend the main issue to ensure the integrity of the subject.

Since the subject is the practice of disguise as strategy, first of all, it is profoundly examined in detail what the existing clothes of these groups were and what these clothes represented in the Ottoman Empire.

Although it is not the main subject of this thesis, it is seen in the second part, which is fulfilled as the necessity of the integrity of the subject, it is not possible to talk about a common garment for the Kurds and Armenians. Since these two groups were consisting of people who had been living together for centuries, their clothes were very similar to each other in terms of pieces, but not in color because of the rules and

³¹⁶ “The End.” A sentence commonly said at the end of Roman plays.

regulation enacted by the Ottoman Empire which was argued in the second chapter of the thesis. In this section, the analysis of the clothes is made with the support of visual sources. In order to prevent them from misleading the audience, self-perception of the *fedayees* is also discussed there.

The similarity of the two dresses does not cover all the clothes worn by these people living in the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that although it is not possible to talk about a general Armenian or Kurdish costume, it is one of the results of this study that this similarity is observed only in regional and local clothes. In other words, it is possible to talk about the clothes of Kurds and Armenians living in the same region. Apart from that, both groups have clothing along the Ottoman lands in many variants. Throughout the thesis, the clothes of these groups were classified region by region and it was underlined that they did not have standardized clothing dressed in the empire.

In the third chapter, the strategies of the *fedayees* on clothes are discussed and why they apply this practice is explained. By analyzing the regions and situations which *fedayees* implemented the strategy, a general map of it was produced.

To conclude all examples and explanations mentioned above state that effective from the early 1890s, the Armenian *fedayees* practiced the disguise as Kurdish, Circassian, Georgian and Laz as a strategy of action to prove to the European powers that their security was not provided by the Ottoman Empire. As reflected in the state archival documents, Kurdish clothing was first used by the Armenians in Bitlis in 1891 and later in Van, Tokat, Sivas and Erzincan. Although the first emergence of the *fedayees* in Circassian disguise in 1893 in Adana through the documents; Yozgat and Erzurum were also places where the practice was applied. Although the Georgian traditional

costume was not fully used in acts of violence, one of the rare examples was found in Bitlis. Other than that, it is seen that the costume was used for different purposes in Sivas such as to attack the Ottoman officials and to travel in secure. Although the Laz dress was not as unpopular as the practice of disguise as Georgian costume, it was not also preferred by the *fedayees* as much as the Kurdish and Circassian dresses. This practice, which is seen in the archival documents in 1893 for the first time, was generally preferred in Erzurum and its environs.

What needs to be discussed at this point is whether the strategy implemented by the *fedayees* has succeeded or not. If the success means a foreign intervention to the Ottoman Empire by the European states because of the breach of the Berlin treaty as intended by the *fedayees*, this never happened. Although the foreign states sent commissions to the areas where these events took place, a direct intervention never occurred due to the way the Ottoman Empire managed this situation between 1890 and 1910. In fact, it should be noted that the representatives of the foreign states in these regions generally wrote reports that the events were not convincing.³¹⁷

However, the *fedayees* managed to attract the attention of foreign states. Although the aim was to persuade them to carry out a direct foreign intervention as quickly as possible, the attention of the European states was concentrated in the regions where the Armenians were densely populated. Thus, with or without a strategy, policies of the empire in these regions were carefully planned because of these observers.

Moreover, the great interest also made the *fedayees* heard exactly as they wanted. Maybe it was a bandit romance; maybe the image perceived by the Europeans was really the one what the *fedayees* wanted to reflect. However, as a result, perception

³¹⁷ BOA. DH.TMIK.M.. 153/34 (H- 24.06.1321 / M- 17.09.1903); It is about the confession of French and British consuls that the statements, that Muslims entered the Şuha Monastery in Erzincan in the garb of Kurdish clothes and wounded the Armenians, were contrary to the facts.

management was successful and the movement was supported by many circles. In this way, the movement spread widely and gathered fans. In other words, it is not correct to say that even though the *fedayees* have not achieved their original goals, the movement did not fail. The extent to which success is satisfactory varies entirely with what the criterion is.

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