

**Midhat Paşa (1822-1884)'s policies vs.
N. P. Ignatiev (1832-1908)'s Pan-Slav mission**

By

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Abstract

This thesis aims to analyze the targets of Midhat Paşa from his governorship in the Danube Province in 1864 to his dismissal from the grand vizierate in 1877 compared to the political mission of N. P. Ignatiev in Istanbul between 1864 and 1877. The inspiration to choose this comparison as a thesis subject stemmed not only from my personal interest in the problem, but also from the rather obvious observation that a comparative approach to the issue provides new insights to the mid-19th century concepts of Ottomanism vis-à-vis Pan-Slavism. In analyzing the issue, I've attempted to compare Midhat Paşa's progressive regulations, which were executed so as to provide solutions to disintegrating Balkan Peninsula with Ignatiev's conservative reactions to these reforms and the pragmatic policy he pursued during his ambassadorship in Istanbul. I aim to show the reasons of Midhat Paşa's failure in providing the Ottomanism as a solution to the nationalities problem of the Ottoman Empire and Ignatiev's failure in establishing a Pan-Slav federation under the control of Russia in Balkan Peninsula. Apart from their exclusive politics and the reasons of their failures, the dilemmas of their personal and imperial policies in conjunction and comparison with each other are significant issues that I've dealt with in this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

How come two prominent historical figures from the second half of the 19th century, one from the Russian Empire Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev (1832-1908), the other one from the Ottoman Empire Midhat Paşa (1822-1884), following totally exclusive politics during the most heated times of the Balkans, were remembered among the men who were the founders of modern Bulgaria? The answer of this question requires more than solely understanding the imperial policies of these two empires since these two figures etched their names in history as always having personal agendas for the sake of the interests of their empires. It is certain that the interests of these two rival empires did never intersect during the 19th century. However, as having imperial visions and personal agendas, these two men would always suffer clash of interests with each other, as well as with the policies of autocratic regimes they belonged to. At that point, it is quite interesting that both could not reach their eventual targets during their life time and in one sense, they failed. I dedicated my thesis to find out the dilemmas of their personal and imperial policies in conjunction and comparison with each other.

The focus of my research is to analyze the targets of Midhat Paşa from his governorship in the Danube Province in 1864 to his dismissal from the grand vizierate in 1877 and the political mission of N. P. Ignatiev in Istanbul between 1864 and 1877. It is worth studying that both had mutually exclusive ideologies to solve the same question in the Balkans. Since both Ignatiev and Midhat Paşa had imperial visions, it is also very exciting to follow their rotations throughout the empire, and see how they were determined to pursue their aims.

The promulgation of *Tanzimat-ı Hayriye* (Auspicious re-ordering) on November 3, 1839 was a landmark in the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire. Midhat Paşa, as a reformist-minded bureaucrat but differing from the men of *tanzimat* to a certain extent, put into practice many reforms in the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Early in his career, Midhat Paşa proved himself as a capable man to introduce the notion of *tanzimat* to the provinces. Especially, his reformist policies in the Balkans materialized shifting the focus of the *tanzimat* reforms away from the center and toward the periphery of the state. As it happened in the other provinces of the empire, these reforms started a modernization process in the Balkans and fostered the idea of Bulgarian nationalism, which turned into a conflict with Midhat Paşa's ultimate aim of *Ottomanism*. The emergence of nationalism to the detriment of the Ottoman *millet* system,¹ which had already started to dissolve in the second half of the 19th century, was also inconsistent with the Pan-Slav politics of Russian Empire. In this regard, I will compare Midhat Pasha's progressive regulations, which were carried out so as to provide solutions to disintegrating Balkan Peninsula with Ignatiev's conservative reactions to these reforms and the pragmatic policy he pursued during his ambassadorship in Istanbul.

There were several important reasons for the urgent need of reformation in the Ottoman Balkan provinces in the mid-19th century. The problems of the new landowning system, so-called *gospodarlık* regime put the peasants in a difficult position. They had to pay state taxes and a rent to the landlords and do corvée work in landlords' private farms. Discontent of the

¹ The *millet* system has been highly controversial issue among Ottoman historians, who have never been all of one mind either the emergence of the *millet* system or the course of it until the end of 19th century. Since the balance between the degree of Ottoman acquiescence of non-Muslim groups (Orthodox, Catholics and Jews) and the extent of their jurisdictions vis-à-vis the Ottoman system is a moot point, some historians even ask whether the *millet* system was imperium in imperia or not. For the *millet* system in the 19th century, see: Kemal H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era", in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, Vol.1, Homes & Meier Publishers, NY, 1982, pp. 141-169., Roderic H. Davison, "The Millets as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire", in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, Vol.1, Homes & Meier Publishers, NY, 1982, pp. 319-337.

peasants due to banditry, *gospodars* and their abusive way of collecting taxes continued until 1839. However, the improvement of the peasants' social and economic conditions seemed difficult to be realized due to the fact that these *gospodars* supported the old traditional regime and they were against the *tanzimat* reforms.²

Apart from economical and administrative problems, separatist movements and Pan-Slavist policies of the Russian Empire threatened the integrity Ottoman rule in the Balkans. National movements in Serbia, which “was now becoming a rallying point for Christian sympathizers throughout the Balkans”³, the emergence of the Bulgarian nationalism as a reaction to the Greek hegemony, and the events concerning the establishment of the Bulgarian National Church increased travails in the Ottoman Balkans. The Ottoman Empire under the governance of reformists Ali and Fuat Paşas witnessed the execution of a set of regulations, essentially for increasing the authority of the center on the provinces while incorporating both Muslim and non-Muslim population into the political mechanism. Midhat Paşa emerged on the political scene as the first and prominent executive of *tanzimat* ideology in the provinces.

The restless provinces of the empire in the Balkans (Silistra, Vidin and Nish), organized into a single government under the name of the Danube Province on October 13, 1864 and Midhat Pasha was appointed to the governorship of this province. The Danube Province was a region where the *tanzimat* reforms would be executed as example for the rest of the Empire. Even though the conservative groups were against the set of regulations of the new province and the nomination of Midhat Pasha for the implementation of it, the actual reaction against Midhat Pasha's appointment arose from the Russian side. A powerful

² Halil İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, (Eren Yayınları, İstanbul), 1992, pp. 8-10.

³ Avigdor Levy, "Ottoman Attitudes to the Rise of Balkan Nationalism", *War and Society in East Central Europe*, Vol.1., eds. Bela K. Kiraly and Gunter F. Rothenberg, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 328.

Ottoman administration in the Balkans would be a big threat against the Russian interests in the region. It must be more than a coincidence that a passionate Pan-Slavist and director of the Asiatic Affairs of Russian Foreign Ministry, Count N. P. Ignatiev was appointed to the Russian Embassy in Istanbul in 1864. Ignatiev became the follower and critic of administrative, economic, educational, structural and other developments in the Danube Province during Midhat Paşa's governorship from 1864 to 1868. Ignatiev's anti-Midhat standing and his personal diplomacy were the proofs of his aspirations in the Balkans, which differed from the political motivations of the Tsar and the men of Foreign Ministry.

The Ottoman central administration was not unaware the rising Russian propaganda of *Slavdom* among the Slavic nations of the Balkans. Midhat Paşa's policies toward the Slavic groups of the Balkans were directed as a reprisal to the Russian threat. Basically, all his reformist attempts should be analyzed within the context of Russia's political and military challenge to the Ottomans and imposition of Pan-Slavist ideology in the Balkans. Furthermore, the impacts of the 1848 Revolution on the Ottoman Balkans and the bad effects of the Crimean War (1853-1856) on both empires formed the policies of these two rival empires.

Pan-Slavism became an ideological life jacket for most of Russian elite after the Crimean defeat. The final goal of this profoundly anti-Western ideology was to restore the Constantinople as the capital of a Christian empire, thereby implying the liberation of the Balkan Slavs under the Russian guidance. Pan-Slavs believed that Russia, together with the other Slavs, were invincible and the future belonged to them. The primary goal was to destroy the potential threats against the *Slavdom* coming from of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. However, the men of autocracy behaved prudently when the ideology

of Pan-Slavism reached its zenith in the second half of the 19th century. During the reign of Nicholas I, Pan-Slavs were rarely to be found in official circles, and their teachings were never became government doctrine. Alexander II and his ministers did not readily adopt Pan-Slavism.⁴ Apart from personal predisposition of Alexander, the structural weakness of political system, especially the poor coordination of Russian efforts on the diplomatic front made Alexander hesitate to take concrete actions. In the middle of 1860s, he was unwilling to adapt Russian foreign policy to Pan-Slavic ideology. Emphasizing the weakened state of Russia, he demanded

to avoid an internal uprising of Ottoman Christians ‘for the moment’ in order to prevent ‘a certain disaster’ which the Russians ‘had long foreseen’ from overwhelming the Empire. The Tsar’s deep-seated fear and hatred of all revolutionary upheavals underscored his reluctance to embark on a Pan-Slavic crusade in the Balkans.⁵

Only once in response to popular pressure to intervene in Bulgarian and Serbian affairs in 1876 and 1877 did Alexander succumb to Pan Slav agitation. Yet, even at the height of nationalist fervor during the Balkan crisis of 1875-1878, when Pan-Slav pressure reached its zenith, the Tsar and the government did not identify itself with the movement, but dissociated itself from it and at times penalized it.

There were also several fundamental impediments to the resumption of Russia’s traditional sway over the Balkan Christians. One of the major factors was Russia’s poor showing in the Crimean War. The other one was the rapidly spreading nationalist sentiment among the

⁴ Compare to Alexander I and Nicholas I, Alexander II was less knowledgeable about foreign affairs. Even though he revealed commendable caution and common sense, he avoided great risks. He was prone to follow advises of various elements and interest groups. Alexander lost overall control of Russian foreign relations at some strategic places such as in Central Asia in 1865 and in the Balkans in 1877-78. This left the political arena to nationalist and pro-Slav elements to impose their policies. David MacKenzie, *Imperial Dreams & Harsh Realities: Tsarist Foreign Policy, 1815-1917*, (Harcourt Brace College Publishers, USA), 1994, p.57.

⁵ Alfred J. Rieber, *The Politics of Autocracy, Letters of Alexander II to Prince A.I. Bariatinskii 1857-1864*, (Mouton&Co, Paris The Hague), 1966, p. 83.

Balkan peoples at the expense of Pan-Slavic ideology. Previously Russian support of the Christians of the Ottoman Empire had been based not on their nationality, but on their Orthodox confession. As in the case of Greek-Bulgarian dispute, “modern nationalism was not only replacing this unity with distinct national groupings, it was also causing these groupings to be mutually hostile.”⁶ The Greek-Bulgarian dispute was also a sign of decline of the *millet* system in the sense that nations started to be defined in connection with their territorialities under the Ottoman regime. The appearance of nationality problems soon after the promulgation of *tanzimat* and the strategies of the Ottoman Empire to deal with these problems should be taken into consideration within this context.

Ignatiev’s reaction to Pan-Slavism differed greatly from the central bureaucracy, finally eliminating him from the active political life in 1880s. Within the borders of this thesis, I basically attempt to show why Ignatiev’s diplomatic mission in Istanbul turned into a failure and damaged his career in the long run. It’s quite logical to seek the reasons of Midhat Paşa’s failure in providing the Ottomanism as a solution to the nationalities problem of the Ottoman Empire. A correct answer to these questions would require analyzing Midhat Paşa’s ambiguous relations with the Ottoman Porte and exploring his personal struggle vis-à-vis the Ottoman autocracy.

Even though Midhat Paşa has been studied by several Russian scholars, such as I. E. Fadeeva⁷, these works do not give analytic explanations of Midhat Pasha’s governorship in the Danube Province and his standing as a dedicated reformist. Also, in Ottoman Historiography, there is no comprehensive study, devoted solely to N.P. Ignatiev and his political and diplomatic mission. My research at the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in

⁶ Thomas A. Meininger, *Ignatiev and the Establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate 1864-1872*, (Arno Press, INC., NY), 1970, p.3.

⁷ I. E. Fadeeva, *Midhat Pasha Jizn i Deyatel’nost*, İzdatel’stvo Nauka, Moskva, 1977.

Istanbul showed that the Ottomans were following Ignatiev step by step in the course of his diplomatic mission in Istanbul until 1877. However, no study has ever focused on his Pan-Slav mission and his anti-Midhat standing during his stay in Istanbul. Thus, in my research, I aim to delineate the interaction between Ignatiev and Midhat Paşa, which could yield some valuable insights into the different conceptions of a Pan Slav and an Ottoman solution to the nationalities problem.

FIRST CHAPTER: THE EARLIER CAREERS OF IGNATIEV AND MIDHAT PAŞA

Ignatiev (1832-1864)

Ignatiev was born in Saint Petersburg in 1832 as the first son of Paul N. Ignatiev (1797-1879), who held several important posts, such as Governor-General of Saint Petersburg by 1861, and after 1867, President of the Imperial Council of Ministers.⁸ Since he was born into an elite family, he had opportunities to receive a prestigious education. He was educated in the Corps of Pages and then he entered Hussar Life Guard regiment in 1849. After two years, he was appointed to the War Academy and took part on the Guards General Staff. During the Crimean War, he served on Berg's staff in the Baltic Provinces. At the beginning of his career in 1850s, Alexander II showed his favor toward young Ignatiev.

In 1856, he was a military attaché in London where he paid special attention to Chinese, Indian and Persian problems and Great Britain's policies in the Near East and India. He attracted attention of British Foreign Office. His already deep hostility to British foreign policy increased during his stay in London. As if a natural born diplomat, he entered the diplomatic service at a young age "with the mentality of a reactionary" and "with the energy of a revolutionary".⁹ Ignatiev was assigned to his first diplomatic mission at the Paris Peace Conference in 1856-1857. He gave his full support to the Russian Ambassador in Paris, Pavel Dmitriyevich Kiselev, in the negotiations over the frontiers of Bessarabia. Kiselev

⁸ For four generation of Ignatiev's family story, see Michael Ignatieff, *The Russian Album*, (Penguin Books, London), 1987.

⁹ B. H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans 1878-1880*, (The Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1937, pp. 30-31.

stated that as a result of Ignatiev's work at the conference, Russia won back much more of her former Bessarabian territory. Also, the year 1857 was one of landmarks in Ignatiev's life. On a tour of Bohemia he met with such famous Slav leaders as Palacky, Brauner, Rieger and Dobriansky. In spite of their emphasis on cultural Pan-Slavism, Ignatiev's contacts with these prominent men stimulated his belief in the Pan-Slavism cause of Russia in Eastern and Southern Europe.¹⁰

Ignatiev began his upward climb in Russian diplomatic circles soon after his maneuvers in Paris for the treaty negotiations. Through the suggestions of Aleksandr Ivanovich Bariatskii, Alexander II slated the young Ignatiev for drawing up a memorandum on the significance of Central Asia. As a supporter of the forward policy, Ignatiev claimed that only in Asia, Russia would be able to outflank Britain in case of an eventual war. He also convinced Alexander II by arguing that

an exploration of Central Asia, the establishment of diplomatic relations with various khanates in the area, and the rise in Russian influence 'does not necessitate the great sacrifices by the Treasury to cover the expenses of the expeditions undertaken in order to explore local conditions...Many wealthy merchants and industrialists will be eager to help this enterprise'.¹¹

In 1858, Gorchakov nominated Ignatiev to Khiva and Bukhara for a diplomatic expedition.

¹² Even though Gorchakov had divergent views than Ignatiev, at least, he could trust Ignatiev's energy and loyalty to keep the expedition under the control of the Ministry. The

¹⁰ Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar : Reprintnoe Vosproizvodenie İzdaniia, Vol: 24, F.A. Brokgauz -I.A. Efron , (Moskva :Terra), 1990, p.785.

¹¹ Rieber, 1966: 77-78.

¹² See, Mehmet Saray, "Kont Ignatiev'in Buhara ve Hive'yi Ziyareti (1858)", *İstanbul Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Araştırma Merkezi*, İstanbul, 1993; J.W. Strong, "The Ignat'ev's Mission to Khiva and Bukhara in 1858", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, XVII/2-3, 1975.

Prince A.M. Gorchakov (1798-1883), a cousin of the general of the Crimean War, who served most of his diplomatic career in Germany, was ambassador in Vienna and Russian delegate at the Paris conference and succeeded Nesselrode as foreign minister at the end of 1856.

aim of the diplomatic mission was to extend Russia's diplomatic and economic influence into the unexplored territories of Central Asia. To counter the British commercial interests in the region, one of the most important aims of Russia was the improvement of commercial relations with Central Asian khanates. It was apparent that to Ignatiev, the Russian expansion into the Central Asia would open up exciting possibilities for Russia. He also drew attention to the issue that the military weakness of the khanates and the difficulty of British penetration into the region would favor Russia's expansion.¹³

Ignatiev completed his mission successfully and this success earned him fame as a negotiator and a soldier of initiative and courage in diplomatic affairs. When he was sent to China in 1859, he had been already promoted to a General's rank. He worked hard to defend his forward policy in China. Thanks to his diplomatic maneuvers, the territorial and commercial concessions given to Russia in the Treaty of Peking were more extensive than the original Russian demands.¹⁴ Completing his missions with great success, he was rewarded with greater honors and promoted to a more important position in the bureaucracy. He was regarded as the 'star of Russian diplomacy'. On his return to Saint Petersburg, he was made *aide-de-camp* General to Alexander II in 1860, which was a sign of the Tsar's personal trust and favor toward Ignatiev.

Ignatiev's adventure in Istanbul started in 1861 when he was sent there as the Tsar's diplomatic representative to attend the coronation of the new Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. It was also his first contact with the politics of the Ottoman Empire. His appointment as the

¹³ Rieber, 1966: 81.

¹⁴ With the Treaty of Peking, Russia received substantially all the territory she had claimed between the Ussuri and the Pacific and more importantly, Russia's position as a Great Power in the Northern Pacific was assured. Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917*, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 439-441. In addition, the Treaty of Peking did much to compensate Russia for the Crimean debacle. (McKenzie, 1994: 104)

director of the Asiatic Department occurred at the same year and he remained as the head of the Department until 1864.

The Asiatic Department, which had officially been established in 1819 to deal with Eastern states, took a different view toward the international affairs than the main department of the Foreign Ministry. During the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881), the Asiatic Department was more active than before because of its greater autonomy under the competent direction of Ignatiev (1861-1864) and his successor P.N. Stremoukhov (1864-1875). Unlike their colleagues who dealt with Western and Central Europe, the Asiatic Department was staffed with ethnic Russians, middle-class professionals and people of Balkan and Asiatic origin, who conducted their correspondence mainly in Russian. Generally they had special training in Oriental languages and they were strongly nationalistic in outlook. Their activities were marked with boldness and tough-mindedness. The Department turned into almost a semi-autonomous institution and sometimes conducted a policy in contradiction to the official lines of tsarist diplomacy. Moreover, most eminent representatives of this group, like their forerunner Count Nicholas Muraviev, were soldier diplomats. They devoted themselves to the politics of the East, to the extension of the imperial frontiers. Unlike the men of the main departments of Russian Foreign Ministry, the men of Asiatic Department favored Russia's independence from the constraints of the European concert. They were basically opposed to international conferences as the means to settle the disputes.¹⁵

The main ideological basis of the problematic relation between the Asiatic Department and the Foreign Ministry was their commitment to the cause of Pan-Slavism. Ignatiev claimed that Pan-Slavism justified Russian expansion into Southern and Eastern Europe. As I will

¹⁵ Meininger, 1970: 8-9.

explain in the second chapter, during his almost a quarter-century stay in the Ottoman Empire, Ignatiev struggled for freeing the Balkan nations from the Ottoman rule and creating client states controlled by Russia.

Midhat Paşa (1822-1864)

Midhat Paşa was born in Istanbul in 1822, as the son of Hacı Ali Efendizade, a native of Ruschuk and a judge from *ulema*, who had worked in several posts in the Balkans. His education started in an old-fashioned manner and he spent his early years in religious schools. He could recite the Koran by heart at age ten. As the protégé of Akif Paşa, he entered the offices of the Imperial Councils in 1833. Subsequently, he transferred into the offices of grand vizier, in this way his working life began as a clerk in government offices in his teens in 1840. At the same time, he studied Arabic and Persian. Compared to other officials who knew French, he only started to learn it when he was thirty-five and he never mastered it. Nevertheless, what separated Midhat's career from other officials was that contrary to them, he considered it necessary to leave the department in order to advance in his career.¹⁶

The Ottoman government assembled the notables, who were the civil, religious, and military officials from the various provinces, in order to discuss policy in times of conflict and direct the administrative affairs. After the promulgation of *tanzimat* the government increased the number of such meetings. The last meeting of these notables before the establishment of the national parliament in 1877 was carried out in 1845. It speeded up the process of sending commissions to conduct provincial inspection. As secretary to two of the commissions,

¹⁶ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, (Cambridge, London, and New York: Cambridge University Press) 1977, p. 67.

Midhat Paşa gained some of his earliest experience in the Asian provinces during the first half of the 1840s.¹⁷ His first provincial appointment was the assistantship of the Damascus Document Officer in 1842. He stayed two years in Damascus and Saida. Afterwards, he became the secretary of Bekir Sami Paşa and together with him, he went to the inner Anatolian cities, Konya in 1845 and Kastamonu 1847.¹⁸ During his five years work in several provinces, he began to acquire a far more intimate knowledge of provincial affairs than the other men of the *tanzimat*, Ali and Fuad Paşas.¹⁹

With the reference of his previous provincial experiences, Midhat Paşa was temporarily assigned to the various provinces, where he was entrusted with investigating malfeasance. While Midhat Paşa performed honorable and honestly, he was exposed to the everlasting enmity of several bureaucrats, who once regained their places in the Ottoman hierarchy, caused him considerable trouble. Relying on his previous experiences, he was sent to Damascus and Aleppo to resolve the problems of these regions governed by Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa, a wrongdoer and prospective enemy of Midhat Paşa. He was charged with solving the problems in collecting taxes in the tariffs of Damascus and Aleppo and treasury holdings and with investigating the accusations directed against Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa. Midhat Paşa stayed there six months. Even though he could not bring malefactor Paşa do justice due to the fact that he was a protégé of the Sultan, he could succeed in reducing the corruption.

Midhat Paşa was made chief scribe of the Anatolian Department of the Supreme Council by Mustafa Reşit Paşa in 1853 and remained in this position until 1856. Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa, who was temporarily appointed as grand vizier in 1856 took his revenge. He accused

¹⁷ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Gordian Press, NY), 1973, p.48.

¹⁸ İslam Ansiklopedisi, Cilt: 30, (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul), 2005, p. 7.

¹⁹ Shaw, 1977: 67.

Midhat of holding an illegal tax farm threatening him with imprisonment. He failed in his attempt and Midhat's prestige increased at the Porte. But as a reprisal, Emin Paşa sent Midhat Paşa away from the capital during the Crimean War. Then he was assigned to establish order in Edirne and surrounding Balkan areas by eliminating hands of looters. After an earthquake in Bursa, he immediately went there for repairing the damage. When Mustafa Reşit Paşa returned to his sixth term as grand vizier in October, 1857, he sent Midhat Paşa on an investigatory mission to Silistra and Vidin. Midhat Paşa was again not able to prosecute the criminal governors there due to the Sultan's intervention. Frustrated Midhat Paşa requested permission to go to Europe. In 1858, Midhat Paşa left for Europe for six months, paying visits to Vienna, Paris, Brussels and London. His stay in various European cities contributed to his greater understanding of European civilization.

A general dissatisfaction with the government, especially during the grand vizierate of Ali Paşa (from January 1858 to October 1859) led to a conservative plot against the throne in 1859. Apart from a reaction to the excessive spending of Sultan Abdülmecid and a discontent due to generally difficult economic and financial situation, in the Kuleli incident, the conspirators launched a movement against the reforms of the government.²⁰ They lacked unity, composed mainly of *ulema*, theological students and army officers. Even though Ali Paşa's administration seemed to ignore the conspiracy, it took some precaution in order to prevent its spread throughout the city. The conspiracy collapsed after the arrests of the ringleaders. They were sentenced to varying punishments. As the second secretary of the Supreme Council, which he was made on his return from Europe, Midhat Paşa took part in the investigation and earned the favor of the palace by conducting the trials.

²⁰ The leader of the conspiracy, Şeyh Ahmed, a teacher in the medrese attached to the Sultan Beyazid Mosque, was against the great reform decrees of 1839 and 1856 since they were in conflict with the Muslim law, especially the equality of Muslims and Christians. (See: Uluğ İğdemir, *Kuleli Vakası Hakkında Bir Araştırma*, (TTK, Ankara), 1937.

As a part of its centralization policies, the government sent out commissioners with extraordinary powers, often civil and military, to the provinces, where they could control the provincial governors and discover the reasons for discontent and revolt. Capable commissioners also provided the Porte with information on the provincial conditions. Midhat Paşa's appointment as a governor of Nish in 1861 was the result of these centralization policies of the government. This appointment took place during Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa's third term as grand vizier (from May 1860 to August 1861). Kıbrıslı Mehmet Emin Paşa, whom Midhat had investigated and caused his removal from the office in Syria, most probably was content to put him in charge of the governance of Nish and to get him away from the Sultan. Nish was one of the ungovernable spots of the empire and Midhat Paşa's mission was not easy to accomplish. Midhat Paşa started to work by cooperating with the local Bulgarians in order to identify the reasons of unrest in Nish. Tension between Muslims and non-Muslims, banditry, heavy tax burden on shoulders of farmers and absence of means for public transportation were the primary reasons of unrest in the province. Unsurprisingly, Midhat succeeded in reestablishing public order, suppressing brigandage and building roads.²¹

What concerned Midhat Paşa during his three years service as a governor in Nish was the imminent separatist movements among the Bulgarians. He was aware of rising nationalist sentiments among Bulgarians and he cautiously approached this issue. He did not concede to any separatist groups and fiercely suppressed their actions. At the same time, he did not discriminate between Muslims and non-Muslims and provided a common forum, where he listened to their complaints and views on various matters and demanded reaching a joint

²¹ Nejat Göyünç, "Midhat Paşa'nın Niş Valiliği Hakkında Notlar ve Belgeler", *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, XII, İstanbul, 1982.

resolution for a possible action. Having understood these social problems, Midhat Paşa produced a new reform law for the provinces. Fuad Paşa summoned him to Istanbul in order to ask his opinion on the provisional reform law. With the final modifications of Midhat Paşa on the basis of his experiences, the new provincial law of 1864 was released in November, 1868. One month before the introduction of this law, Midhat Paşa was appointed as the governor of the Danube Province.

A closer look to the earlier careers of Ignatiev and Midhat Paşa shows us that the first several decades of their lives were success story of them. Soon after they occupied the bureaucratic posts, they immediately acquired a reputation among the highest officials. Their radical standings in deed and discourse were substantiated, while they worried the men of autocracy. Ignatiev and Midhat Paşa were chosen to carry out several important official missions. Their rotations also inspired an imperialistic vision, which would determine the cause of their subsequent careers. The most prominent aspect of their earlier careers is the emergence of Ignatiev's Pan-Slavism and Midhat Paşa's Ottomanism.

SECOND CHAPTER: IGNATIEV IN CONSTANINOPLE (1864-1877)

His ideas about the Eastern Question

Ignatiev became Minister Plenipotentiary in Constantinople in 1864 and officially appointed as Russian Ambassador in March 1867 and remained at this post until 1877. Because of Russian interests in the Ottoman Empire and the prominence of the Eastern Question in European diplomacy, Constantinople had always been a major center of Russian diplomatic activity. The Foreign Ministry usually assigned its better diplomats to the diplomatic posts in this capital city. None of the Panslavist of his time held a higher post in the Foreign Ministry than Ignatiev. Due to his diplomatic reputation, his appointment soon alarmed the Western powers fearing that Panslavism was the chief motivating force of Russian foreign policy during the 1870s.²² Moreover, as I will mention later, Ignatiev's long-term diplomatic policy sharply differed from Gorchakov's. He followed the paths of personal diplomacy and independent course of action.²³

It might be claimed that his appointment symbolized the growth and politicization of the Panslavism in Russia, although it was not the basis of Russian foreign policy in the 1860s. Disregarding the European intervention in Russia's Eastern politics, Ignatiev formed his concept of Russian foreign policy solely for the sake of the interests of Russia.²⁴ Moreover,

²² Michael Boro Petrovich, *The Emergence of Russian Panslavism 1856-1870*, (Columbia University Press, NY), 1956, pp. 258-259.

²³ Meininger, 1970: 7-8.

²⁴ John Erickson, *Panslavism*, (The Historical Association, London), 1964, p. 23.

as one of the most active participants in the negotiations concerning the Eastern Question crisis in 1875-1878, he aimed at pursuing an independent course in solving the Eastern Question and he engaged himself with the internal politics and mutual conflicts of the Balkan Slavs (Serb, Bulgarian and Montenegrin) and Greeks.²⁵

As head of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Ignatiev realized that Russian foreign policy must follow three main objectives: the revision of the Treaty of Paris (1856), the control of Constantinople and the Straits, and some form of common action by the Slavs under the direction of Russia.²⁶

1) *The revision of the Treaty of Paris (1856)*: For Ignatiev, the most serious consequence of the Treaty of Paris was the ascendancy of the Coalition Powers (Great Britain, France, Austria) at the seat of the Ottoman Empire. In order to compete with these powers, Russia had to regain her leading place in the Black Sea. This could be achieved by obtaining a part of Bessarabia and the Danube's delta, the abolition of the Black Sea neutralization and naval limitation clauses, as well as by reducing Western European influence in Turkey. In the case of the revision of the Treaty, the conflict between Ignatiev and Gorchakov was not over ends but over means in policy. Contrary to Gorchakov, who believed in the European concert and international conferences for eventual solutions, Ignatiev trusted neither of them. He was quite sure that as far as the Eastern question was concerned, all states were anti-Russian and were willing to form coalitions against it. Therefore, for Ignatiev, Russia had to conclude a

²⁵ Erickson, 1964: 27

²⁶ The Treaty of Paris (1856) and its Black Sea clauses were insulting to national pride of Russia. The Black Sea and the Straits were becoming matters of economic concern with the Empire's increasing dependence on the export grain trade of its southern provinces. In addition, one of the clauses of the Treaty concerning the replacement of Russia's sole guarantee of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects with a collective guarantee by the Great Powers meant that Russia lost her prerogative she had since the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774). Destroying the consequences of this treaty became a chief foreign policy goal for many educated Russians, primarily Tsar Alexander II. Also, see Meininger, 1970:10-12; 60.

direct agreement with Turkey about the returning of the territories lost in 1856. As for Bessarabia, he wanted to encourage the local Russian and Bulgarian population's disaffection with the Romanian administration, to provoke a war between Romania and Austria or Turkey, and thus to get Bessarabia as a reward for the military support that Russia would provide.²⁷

2) *The Control of Constantinople and the Straits*: For political and economic reasons, Russia had to gain access to Bosphorus & Dardanelles because an alternative road to Constantinople required curbing thoroughfares. Hence the ultimate aim of being the master of Constantinople could be achieved either by obtaining strong influence over the sultan or by occupying the city. Ignatiev seemed to opt for pursuing the peaceful policy of dominance over the Sultan and providing a *de facto* Russian control over the Straits.²⁸

3) *Some form of common action by the Slavs under the direction of Russia*: Russia needed to take steps to restore its influence over the Christian peoples. In order to be the dominant power in Europe and prevail over the Western European states, Russia needed the help of Slavic peoples, who were linked to Russia by ethnic, linguistic and religious ties. However, first of all, Russia needed to do away with the independent particularism of the Slav peoples so that they could unite under the banner of the Russian Tsar in order to be used as allies in struggle with the West. The powerful enmity of Austria-Hungary and threats of this dualistic

²⁷ N.P. Ignatiev, *Zapiski (1875-1878)*, (Izdatelstvo na Otechestvennii Front, Sophia), 1986, pp. 49-51. His Notes published posthumously in Russia for the first time in 1914 (and in 1915- 1916) in *Istorichesky Vestnik* and *Russkaya Starina*. The book *Zapiski* contains his daily notes, commentaries to the notes, thoughts, conclusions that he added later, memoirs, and private correspondence-letters, instructions and reports. Ignatiev depicted a panoramic picture of the problems in the Balkans during the Eastern Crisis (1875-1878) in this book. The book reveals that even before the 1870s, Count Ignatiev was an active supporter of Panslavism in the Russian Foreign Ministry. See also, B.H.Sumner, "Ignatyev at Constantinople, I", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 11 (1932/1933), p. 343.

²⁸ Sumner, 1932/1933: 343.

empire toward the Slav people in the Balkans would cause a big tension and most probably end with a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary.²⁹

The majority of Austria-Hungary's population was Slav. But, Ignatiev was concerned that unfortunately, Austria-Hungary followed the policy of spreading Catholicism among the Slavs and its final aim was to Germanize them. For him, the other problems were that Hungarians were in the government in Vienna and that the Poles were the leaders of the Slavs. In his view, the political strategy of Austria-Hungary was to create an Eastern Habsburg Empire aiming at reaching the Aegean Sea. The ultimate target of this strategy was to subordinate the Slavs to the leadership of the Poles. Therefore Austria-Hungary was a natural enemy of Russia. One day Russia would inevitably have to fight with Austria for the hegemony in the East and for preserving the right to be the representative of the Orthodoxy and the Slavic world, granted to Russia by God. He insisted that the Slavs under the Austrian and Turkish rule must become Russia's allies in its anti-German policy. To accomplish this mission Russia had to work for their protection and liberation. Otherwise, Ignatiev claimed that for Russia, to content itself with a policy of humanitarianism would be "unreasonable and criminal".³⁰ Moreover, in case a possibility occurred to Russia that the Slavic peoples would fall under an enemy's influence after their liberation, Russia should not give up its own interests just for the sake of an honorable deed.³¹

Ignatiev openly declared that his policy in Turkey from 1861 to 1877 was aimed at securing Russia's hegemony in the Balkans and the Black Sea. Since there were two rival groups

²⁹ Ignatiev and Gorchakov (and his nearest counselors Jomini and Novikov at the Vienna Embassy) differed greatly in their attitudes toward Austria-Hungary. Ignatiev opposed to their compliance to Austrian influence on Eastern and Slav affairs. Ignatiev's belief in the salvation of the Balkan Slavs exclusively by the Russian Tsar directed his efforts from 1861 to 1877. (Sumner, 1932/33:344.)

³⁰ Petrovich, 1956:261.

³¹ *Zapiski*, pp. 52-53.

who had stakes in the control of Balkan Slavs, Russia had to prevent its rival (Austria-Hungary)'s expansion in the Balkans and meanwhile convince the Slavs that their only friend was Russia.³² In order to eliminate Russia's rival, Ignatiev did his best to strengthen the Russian influence in Turkey. He established close ties with Sultan Abdülaziz, tried to play the Western embassies against one another and thereby neutralize them.³³ He was sought to set in motion all Slavic peoples in order to prepare them for independence. He intended to continue working in this direction until a propitious concurrence of circumstances gave Russia an opportunity to solve the Eastern Question on its own and take control of the straits.³⁴

Since the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty on 30 March 1856, Alexander II and his Foreign Ministry Gorchakov were determined to seek its revision. However, a defeated nation could not expect to overthrow the treaty by force. They tried by diplomatic maneuvers to revise two provisions of the treaty.³⁵ Even though Ignatiev also struggled for the revision of the Treaty, Gorchakov was preoccupied with the Black Sea Question *per se* more than Ignatiev, who depicted the main objectives of Russian policy on Eastern Question differently. For Ignatiev, the primary method changed for augmenting the Russian state prestige by unifying the related Slavs under the aegis of the Russian autocrat. Russia had to solve the Eastern Question on its own, neutralizing and precluding the interference of the Western powers. Armenians, Greeks and even the Sultan himself could be manipulated for purposes of the Russian cause.³⁶ As a long-term ambassador in Istanbul, Ignatiev was in contact with

³² *Zapiski*, p. 54.

³³ Y.EE. Dosya No: 80, Gömlek No:15.

³⁴ *Zapiski*, pp. 54-55.

³⁵ "The return of the portion of Bessarabia ceded to Moldavia and especially the abrogation of the clauses relating to the Black Sea." Chester W. Clark, "Prince Gorchakov and the Black Sea Question, 1866: A Russian Bomb that did not Explode", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 48, No.1, (Oct. 1942), p. 53.

³⁶ "Ignatiev thought that by living in amity with the Sultan and controlling his ministers we could prepare the way for the autonomy of the Christians indebted to us and sharing our religion, render Turkey harmless...by finding such a radical solution to the Eastern Question, which will provide us with indisputable control over the

Abdülaziz and his grand vizier Mahmud Nedim Paşa and many other Turkish dignitaries.³⁷

It is undoubted that Ignatiev had an influence on the Sultan and Ottoman state officials and influenced the process of their decision-making. Especially he skillfully manipulated the decision-making processes of Mahmud Nedim Paşa and persuaded him to accept his politics during the Bulgarian revolt in April 1876.³⁸

During the Crete rebellion (1866-1869) Ignatiev wanted to solve the crisis in favor of the Greeks and tried to convince the Russian government to support the rebels who proclaimed the Crete's annexation to Greece. This way Russia would have been able to replace the Western influence in Greece and later use the Greeks as allies in the liberation of the Slavs. The outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 also gave Ignatiev hope that it was the right time to ask for the revision of the Treaty of Paris and to stir to action the Balkan nationalism. However, soon after the revolt in Crete actually broke out, Ignatiev had to withdraw his demands.³⁹

In the beginning of 1867, France and Russia tried to come up with a solution for Crete. The French proposals, the union of Epirus, Thessaly, and Crete to Greece and the improvement of the Christian subjects of the Porte, were firmly rejected by Ignatiev, but accepted by the government. Since Ignatiev's main objective was to maintain the possibility of combining

straits, ensure our influence over the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and Armenians...to turn to the Bulgarian and Greek population on the one side and the Armenian on the other into a reliable tool of the Russian policy and constant allies, by precluding all possibilities of their switching to our enemies." Romyana Komsalova, "Bulgarians and Greeks during the Eastern Crisis (1875-1878) in Count Ignatiev's *Notes*", *Études Balkaniques*, No.4, 2005, p. 30, *Zapiski*, p.6, pp. 51-52.

³⁷ *Zapiski*, p. 76. He had long talks with the Sultan and the Grand Vizier. *Zapiski* p.100-101. He had close relations with İzzettin (Abdülaziz's son) and Murad (Abdülaziz's nephew). Murad even wanted to find an asylum in Russia and asked Ignatiev for help. However, this was not allowed by the Russian government. Ignatiev knew İzzeddin personally for a long time. İzzeddin stayed in touch with Ignatiev trying to use his and Russia's assistance in order to win the Sultanate to become a sultan. Elizabeth W. Latimer, *Russia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century*, (University Press of the Pacific Honolulu, Hawaii, 2002), p. 209. *Zapiski*, pp. 317-318.

³⁸ Süleyman Kocabaş, *Avrupa Türkiyesi'nin Kaybı ve Balkanlarda Panславизм*, (Vatan Yayınları, İstanbul), 1986, pp. 124-131. I should state that Kocabaş, as one of the historians of the mainstream Ottoman Historiography, is not able to depict Ignatiev other than a hypocrite concerning his relations to the Porte.

³⁹ Sumner, 1932/1933: 346-347.

the Christians on the mainland in some form of common action, he was against any kind of intervention of the Powers in the Cretan issue. In September 1867, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Paşa arrived in Livadia to talk over the problems of the Balkan Christians with the Tsar and attempted a compromise solution, but it remained a vain attempt. The assassination of Prince Michael of Serbia in June 1868, the successes of Hüseyin Avni Paşa in Crete and suppression of the uprisings in 1867 and 1868 by Midhat Paşa in the Danubian Province won the favor of the Porte. A Greek delegation, which had attended the Paris Conference, came together in order to decide whether the Crete would be annexed by Greece. It was decided that the status quo should be kept with a new government. Ignatiev regarded this decision as a failure of Russian foreign politics.⁴⁰

After the Fuad Paşa's death in 1869, Ali Paşa struggled against his opponents and removed from Constantinople his two most dangerous rivals, Midhat and Namık Paşas in order to place everything under his control. Meanwhile, his relation to Ignatiev improved because the French defeat in Franco-Prussian War led to a rapid change of attitude on the part of the Porte toward Russia. Ignatiev did not lose time in approaching Ali Paşa about the ceded Bessarabian districts and the clauses limiting Russia's naval strength in the Black Sea. He also stated that there was no intention of attacking the principle of integrity of the empire. Reluctant to accept any changes in the naval clauses, Ali Paşa allegedly came to an agreement with Ignatiev.⁴¹ The French defeat and the London Conference's acceptance of Russia's insistence on revision of the Treaty of Paris opened a new period on the straits, igniting a rivalry between Ignatiev and Midhat Paşa. Ignatiev did his best to undermine

⁴⁰ Komsalova, 2005:31. Ignatiev wrote that the Crete rebellion was suppressed and the Greeks turned away from Russia and became an English tool against Pan-Slavism. *Zapiski*, p.70. Moreover, Ignatiev criticized Gorchakov's and Russian government's policy on the Cretan affair at almost every step and specifically when Gorchakov joined the Western Powers in a declaration of nonintervention in September 1867. For Ignatiev, Russia was again being deceived by the duplicity of a Western power, this time France. (Meininger, 1870, 64.)

⁴¹ On 31 October, 1870, Gorchakov officially declared to his circular that Russia no longer consider herself bound by the Treaty of Paris in regard to her sovereign rights in the Black Sea. On 13 March 1871, in conference met in London, the unilateral declaration of 31 October was accepted. (Sumner, 1932/1933:560-561.)

Midhat's relations with the Sultan because his political standing was pro-British and anti-Russian.

Ignatiev's dream of establishing a federation of orthodox states with the capital in Constantinople and under the leadership of Russia would probably have been refused by the Greeks, who had historical claims on the city. However, the struggle over Constantinople did not prevent Ignatiev from defending the interests of all the Christian peoples within the Ottoman Empire at the Constantinople Conference in December 1876.⁴² Ignatiev emphasized that Russia was not renouncing the interests of the Greeks, but was trying to please all Orthodox nationalities in the Balkans.⁴³

Ignatiev's role in the Greek-Bulgarian Church Dispute

The historical reasons of the Greek-Bulgarian Church dispute was directly related to the decline of the *millet* system during the second half of the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire. Under the influence of rising nationalism in the Balkans, Bulgarians identified their national independence with their religious emancipation from the Greek Patriarchate. The Ottoman conquest of Bulgarian lands in the 14th century meant the destruction of the Bulgarian state, monarchy, church and nobility.⁴⁴ After the conquest, the Turnovo Patriarchate was dissolved and the Bulgarian archbishop of Ohrid was allowed to continue technically as a Bulgarian institution under the domination of the Greek Patriarchate in

⁴² Komsalova, 2005:33. In the Constantinople Conference, Austria refused most of Ignatiev's proposals even though it also secured Bosnia Herzegovina. Austria strove for preventing the emergence of a large autonomous Bulgaria because thereby Russia would be dominant in the Eastern half of the Balkans, which would pave the way for the extension of Russia's interests to other Slavic provinces. Moreover, the Porte rejected the proposals of the Powers in the Conference since they threatened independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Mihailo D. Stojanovich, *The Great Powers and the Balkans, 1875-1878*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p.131,132,135.

⁴³ *Zapiski*, p.213.

⁴⁴ R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria*, The Oxford History of Modern Europe, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, NY), 2007, p. 19.

Istanbul. Actually, soon after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed II granted some form of recognition to Patriarch Gennadios, although whether the authority granted him was personal or institutional has been still open to discussion.⁴⁵ The Ottomans basically gave a religious and political authority to the Patriarch, who was officially accepted as the spiritual leader of all Orthodox groups under the Ottoman rule. Since the Patriarchate was autonomous in its internal affairs, it abolished the Bulgarian archbishop of Ohrid in 1767 that crippled the religious and cultural institutes of the Bulgarians. .

At the very beginning of 19th century, Bulgarians were exposed to the Patriarch's policy of "hellenization". The Patriarch demanded the closure of the Bulgarian Church School, the use of only the Greek texts and abolition of any religious books other than the Greek one at churches. While he forbade the publication of religious books in Bulgarian, he also did not allow Bulgarians to perform their religious ceremonies in their native language.⁴⁶ In addition, until the end of 1840s, the Bulgarian reaction to the Patriarchate was mainly due to social and economic reasons, specifically the greed of the local Greek bishops, who imposed high levy on Bulgarian peasants. A larger number of Bulgarian priests, who were being trained in the Slav dominated seminaries of Russia, rather than in the hellenized ones, took part great roles for raising the national consciousness among the Bulgarian communities.⁴⁷ After the promulgation of *tanzimat* in 1839, which declared the religious equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, some Bulgarians were encouraged to seek equality between groups within Orthodoxy. At the beginning of 1850s, their struggle evolved into a national one, with this motto: "Without a national church, there is no salvation."⁴⁸ Briefly;

⁴⁵ See Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Central Lands*, Vol.1., eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, London, NY, 1982, pp. 69-90.

⁴⁶ İnalcık, 1992: 19.

⁴⁷ Crampton, 2007: 66.

⁴⁸ Crampton, 2007: 69.

The church struggle achieved a notable success in 1849 with the establishment of a separate Bulgarian church in Constantinople and with what amounted to a unilateral declaration of independence by that church on behalf of all Bulgarians in 1860. After 1860 the chief objective was to secure recognition by the Porte and the Patriarchate of the separate Bulgarian Church as a discrete institution. This struggle was only partially successful because whilst the Porte stated in 1870 that a separate Bulgarian Exarchate should be created the Patriarchate refused to recognize it and in 1872 denounced the Exarchate as schismatic. The strivings to achieve a national Church both influenced and were influenced by the emerging sense of Bulgarian national consciousness.⁴⁹

Ignatiev had a significant role in solving the Greek-Bulgarian Church dispute. Since he was an Orthodox and favored an eastern union of Orthodox people, he was against schism between the Greeks and the Bulgarians over the church issue. Ignatiev's first efforts to resolve the dispute started between 1864 and 1866. In the course of this period, he tried to remain neutral in mediating between the Porte, Greeks and Bulgarians. Especially, in his relation to Greeks and Bulgarians, he strove to obtain the support of both.⁵⁰ However, it was not an easy work for Ignatiev to conciliate the Bulgars. They rejected the Balkan nations' traditional dependence on Russia as a protector and benefactor, especially due to the maltreatment by Russians of Bulgarians during the Ottoman-Russian wars. Ignatiev tried to negotiate with Patriarch Sophronius in favor of Bulgarians. Through the help of Ignatiev, one of the most influential leaders of the Bulgarian movement, Paisius of Plovdiv's proposals were discussed by four of the most prominent Greek businessman of Istanbul and some leading Bulgarians in an ad hoc committee in November 1865, to establish the basis for settlement. Although it was an unexpected move from the lay committee of the Greek side, both Greek lay and clerical members denounced the proposals as heretical and

⁴⁹ Crampton, 2007: 63-64.

⁵⁰ He reminded Najden Gerov that his activities were "constantly directed to a settlement ...in conformity with the important interests of the Bulgarians and at the same time...without breaking the unity of the church." (Ignatiev to Gerov, 2 Jan., 1865, in Meininger, 1970:32.)

democratic and further decried the project as an infringement of the natural rights of the Greeks.⁵¹

It is remarkable that one year after Greece won her independence in 1830, the Regency decided to separate the Church of Greece from the Patriarchate in Constantinople due to the belief that political independence should be completed by ecclesiastical independence.⁵² Opposing the ecclesiastical statism by the Greeks, the Bulgarians played the ethnic card, too with a major difference. They argued that ecclesiastical emancipation must precede political independence.⁵³ Moreover, the mutual enmity between both the Greeks and Bulgarians agitated by extremist groups, the deplorable financial and organizational state of the Patriarchate itself, and the maneuvers of the Porte complicated the Greek-Bulgarian dispute. For Ignatiev, the Ottoman government followed 'divide and rule' policy and the administration's practice of making mutually exclusive promises to both sides and its attempt to solve the issue in its own favor blocked a solution. Also, in mid-1860s, the government already hinted that it would disregard the authorities of the Orthodox *millet* and recognize the Bulgarians as a separate nation in every respect.⁵⁴ Moreover, the reforms which the Ottoman government had forced on the Church after the Crimean War damaged the Patriarch's authority, especially those which granted an increased voice to the laity in the administration of the Church and the Orthodox *millet*.⁵⁵ The national composition of the governing bodies of the Orthodox *millet*, the Assembly and the Mixed Council were predominantly Greeks, which was a notable obstacle to a settlement of the Church dispute.

⁵¹ Meininger, 1970: 36-37. To the Patriarchal Assembly, especially the Bulgarian request for having an official Church representation in Istanbul was unacceptable. When it met in April 1866, the Patriarchal Assembly categorically rejected all of the Bulgarian demands.

⁵² Not until on June 16/28, the Ecumenical Patriarchate extended its recognition to the new autocephalous Church of Greece. George G. Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism", *The Balkans In Transition*, ed. by Charles and Barbara Jelavich, (Archon Book, USA), 1974, pp. 134-135.

⁵³ Arnakis, 1974: 138.

⁵⁴ Meininger, 1970: 37-38.

⁵⁵ Meininger, 1970:40-41.

Ignatiev's major program between 1866 and 1867 favored the immediate dismemberment of the Ottoman state and a settlement of the Eastern Question to Russia's advantage that was tantamount to solving the Bulgarian Church question. During this time Ignatiev affiliated himself with a Panslavist solution of the Eastern Question more closely than before. He dispatched a long message to Gorchakov on October 16, 1866 proposing a spontaneous revolt of the Balkan Christians, thereby endorsing an imminent military alliance between the governments of Serbia and Greece. For Ignatiev, the Russian government should follow a joint declaration of noninterference with another power without sacrificing Russia's and those of its coreligionists' interests. Even though Ignatiev discounted the possibility of war with Europe, he suggested that the government should move the troops toward the Western borders and the Caucasus frontier of Turkey when the crisis expanded.⁵⁶ Since the government held to its policy of maintaining the European Concert as well as opposing a Panslav platform, Ignatiev's words were ignored. Moreover, since Ignatiev's plans for common Balkan action and the encouragement of revolutionary activities to win the Balkan states' autonomies failed, the matter of Bulgarian Church remained as the only concrete area, where he could apply his already existed plans: the national development and separatist ambition of Balkan peoples.⁵⁷

The appointment of new Patriarch Gregory VI in February 1867, behind which Ignatiev was an influential figure, was a turning point. The new Patriarch aimed at diminishing the Porte's and the Greek laity's interference to the Church affairs. Ignatiev seconded the arguments of Gregory for the state's withdrawal from Church affairs. Gregory also explicitly declared that he would seek to satisfy the grievances of the Bulgarians.⁵⁸ For the first time

⁵⁶ Meininger, 1870:61-62.

⁵⁷ Meininger, 1970:74.

⁵⁸ Meininger, 1970:81.

Patriarch Gregory VI proposed the creation of an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate and he was quite aware of the importance of this for the political independence of the Bulgarians.⁵⁹

Gregory's plan avoided comment on Bulgarian claims in the mixed dioceses of Macedonia and Thrace and did not mention the future position of the Bulgarian Church in Istanbul. Ignatiev was aware that Gregory's plan also did not settle Bulgarian territorial claims in a satisfactory manner. Yet, Ignatiev endeavored to persuade the Bulgarian leaders that the "exarchate, even in its most restrained form, offered a national nucleus upon which they could easily build."⁶⁰ The Bulgar Extremists petitioned the Porte directly for a free Church and they ignored Gregory's proposal.⁶¹ Throughout this whole period Dr. Stoyan Chomakov, the Russophobe Bulgarian extremist and an influential official in the Turkish administration, was the leading threat to the Ambassador's policies.⁶² Ignatiev tried to benefit the divided opinions among the Bulgarian Moderates and Extremist and in a short time he reached an agreement with the Moderates and the chief representative of them, at that moment, Bishop Paisius of Plovdiv, who was the firm supporter of the Moderates' program of rapprochement with the Patriarchate.

While Ignatiev struggled to reconcile the Patriarchate and the Bulgarians in the negotiations between Gregory and Paisius, the Ottoman government intervened. A six-point program

⁵⁹ Meininger, 1970: 82-83. "An Exarchate is an ecclesiastical jurisdiction headed by an Exarch, a rung on the hierarchal ladder falling between Metropolitan and Patriarchate. Though, in matters of dogma, still under the purview of the particular patriarchate to which it has ties, an Exarchate is generally free in administrating its affairs and handling local issues." (Meininger's 79th footnote)

⁶⁰ Meininger, 1970:85.

⁶¹ Chomakov succeeded in his arguments that the best safeguard against Russian influence on the Bulgars was for the Turks themselves to promote the setting up of a Bulgarian Exarchate within which a healthily anti-Russian national Bulgarian feeling could be developed. (Sumner, 1932/1933: 568.)

⁶² A Bulgarian victory, according to Chomakov and his supporters, entailed direct dealings with the Turks, but not negotiations with the Church or not subservience to the Russian Ambassador. (Meininger, 1970:88.) The Porte was a determinant factor to revise an agreement between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. The Porte pursued a policy to offset the relation between the Bulgarians and Greeks. However, due to the government's embattled position and a probable imminent joint uprising of the Balkan peoples caused it to continue a divide-and-rule approach to the Church dispute. (Meininger, 1970:90.)

fulfilling most of the Bulgar demands was promulgated by the Ottoman Council of Ministers. Apart from permitting them to elect their own bishops and retaining the churches built at their own expense, it also paved the way for creation of a Bulgarian Synod and a primate to head it in Istanbul. ⁶³ In October, 1868 the Bulgarians declared that they accepted the government's project, which was furiously opposed by the Patriarch and his Synod. For some notable Greeks, Russia was responsible for the government's infringement the rights of the Church. For the first time criticizing the motives of Gregory, Ignatiev claimed that the Patriarchate rejected the program because it did not want to recognize the right of the Bulgarians as a distinct nationality to have their own Church. ⁶⁴ Ignatiev tried in vain to reconcile the Greeks and Bulgars by arranging a meeting between Gregory and Bishop Panaret of Plovdiv.

Following the European states' involvement in the Cretan issue by calling a European Conference in order to relieve the tension between the government and the Greeks, the government retreated from their commitments to the Bulgars. The government left the solution of the Church question to a commission composed of both Greeks and Bulgars, which convened in the early spring of 1869. The commission did not arrive at a solution. However, Ignatiev, together with the moderate Gavril Krustevich, a member of the mixed commission could find a middle ground of compromise, which would avoid the decisive participation of the Turkish government. Krustevich's proposal which included an internal division of the mixed areas with respect to parishes, was accepted by the commission in April, 1869 and then by the government. ⁶⁵

⁶³ Meininger, 1970:97.

⁶⁴ Meininger, 1970:105.

⁶⁵ Meininger, 1970: 108. Krustevich's division of the mixed areas between the Greeks and Bulgars was rejected by the Serbian government, which introduced its own territorial aspirations in Macedonia. Being dissatisfied with the situation, the Patriarch Gregory demanded to gather an Ecumenical Council in order to sanction the autocephalous nature of the new Church. However, his last maneuvers did not retreat a few Bulgarian bishops

The years between 1867 and 1869 revealed the Ignatiev's concept of united action (pan-Orthodox) as impossibility because he became aware that he already lost the supports of the Greeks. In 1869, Ignatiev directed his efforts to the achievement of Bulgarian goals without hesitating on the matter of Hellenic sentiment that was a sign for his political transformation from pan-Orthodoxy to pan-Slavism.⁶⁶ Even though Ignatiev did not abandon his concern for Church Unity, he failed to achieve a joint settlement between the disputants, which cause the deterioration of relation between the Patriarch Gregory and Ignatiev.⁶⁷

On March 12, 1870 the Porte promulgated the *ferman* which authorized the formation of a national Bulgarian Church. The *ferman* of 1870 was based for the most part on Krustevich's proposal of early 1869 and the Bulgarian Moderates also had a notable role in drafting the legal enactment itself. The Bulgarians did not receive a fully independent Church. The *ferman* granted them the right to have an Exarch, who would be completely free of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with regard to matters of internal administration. Compared to the Krustevich's proposal the *ferman* reduced by one half its territorial allocations to the Bulgarians for the most part including Danubian Bulgaria and excluding Macedonia.

Although Ignatiev admitted that he would have certainly preferred a direct settlement, without the intervention of the Turkish government, he was satisfied with the *ferman*.⁶⁸ In the timing, form and content of this achievement, the Bulgarians owed much to the Russian Ambassador.⁶⁹ To seek a peaceful settlement with the Patriarchate and the Bulgars was the first task of Ignatiev after the *ferman*. The Greek nationalists and the Greek government

from declaring that they would officiate on the approaching feast of SS. Cyril and Methodius. (Meininger, 1970:111.)

⁶⁶ Meininger, 1970:120.

⁶⁷ Meininger, 1970:126.

⁶⁸ Meininger, 1970:132.

⁶⁹ Meininger, 1970:133.

were inconsistent in their policies. The Hellenic government did not defy the Porte's edict in spite of its threat to the Great Idea, which was to revive the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁰

After Gregory's resignation from the Patriarchate, Ignatiev struggled for increasing his influence in the Porte. He tried to convince Ali Paşa that the Russian Church's compromise with the *ferman* proved that the Porte had no grounds for being in doubt about the role of Russia and of its Church in Ottoman affairs. Ignatiev's main emphasis also included the Synod's view, which was the importance of Patriarchal assent for the implementation of the *ferman*. That was the reason behind Ali Paşa's urge to the Bulgarian delegation about a further attempt at reconciliation with the Patriarchate.⁷¹

The election of the new Patriarch, the former Patriarch Anthimus, showed the growing influence of Ignatiev on the Bulgarian-Greek dispute. The new Patriarch assured Ignatiev that he would end the Greek-Bulgarian dispute if he could receive the backing and protection of the Russian Embassy in return.⁷² The Bulgarian meeting with Anthimus was very promising for reconciliation between the Bulgarians and the Greeks, especially about the territorial issue. However, the gap between the Bulgarian designs and the limit to which the Patriarchate could go proved to be unbridgeable. The Bulgarian Extremists and the Moderates were of one mind about the division of dioceses in Macedonia. Their claim on ground of nationality and not on territory was the most prominent factor behind their demand to keep all dioceses within Macedonia. Concomitantly, to the Bulgarian leadership, the *ferman*'s plebiscite provision virtually granted these dioceses to the Bulgarians.⁷³

⁷⁰ Meininger, 1970:143.

⁷¹ Meininger, 1970:160.

⁷² Meininger, 1970: 163-164.

⁷³ Meininger, 1970: 172-173.

Despite the indignant reaction of Ignatiev and the Patriarch, the Grand Vizier authorized the Bulgars to establish the Exarchate on the basis of the *ferman*. The Patriarch's convocation of his *millet* organization into an extraordinary Patriarchal Assembly and Ignatiev's effort for an outlet among the Greeks for their frustrations proved abortive.⁷⁴ However, Ignatiev emerged as a crucial figure for the election of the new Exarch. The Moderates' choice, Bishop Anthimus of Vidin was elected on February 27, 1872 as the first Exarch, whom Ignatiev also supported.⁷⁵

In late July, the Sultan appointed Midhat Paşa to replace Mahmud Nedim Paşa as Grand Vizier. With the appointment of Midhat Paşa, Ignatiev lost his predominance at the Porte. His proceedings in the Church question were restricted to his attempt to prevent the Local Council from declaring the Bulgarians as schismatic during the short reign of Midhat Paşa.⁷⁶ For the Bulgarians, the consequences of the schism were political and not religious. The schism provided a new source for national unity. The Greeks were determined to take the anti-Slav side with the idea of an alliance with the Turks in order to fight against the advances of an imaginary Pan-Slavism. To Ignatiev, since Orthodoxy was a universal, catholic religion, the national and ethnic groupings ought not to set a limit on its borders. That was the main reason behind his endeavor for the reconciliation of Orthodox Bulgarians and

⁷⁴ Meininger, 1970: 178.

⁷⁵ Meininger, 1970: 179. During the celebration of the feast of SS. Cyril and Methodius on May 23, 1872, the new Exarch read a long act, which proclaimed the independence of the Bulgarian Church. As a prompt reply, the Patriarch stripped the new Exarch of his ecclesiastical dignity. Ignatiev's act in the summer of 1872 was to prevent a probable permanent pronouncement of schism between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Furious Hellenic nationalism was the reply for Ignatiev's attempts to keep the Orthodoxy together. The Church of Greek and the government of the Greek Kingdom acted in opposition to the Bulgarians by "stimulating its anti-Slav zeal". While Greeks cut loose Russia with the appointments of the Russophobe state officials, on the international arena, they lost support. Great Britain declined intervention regarding the Bulgarian question as a purely ecclesiastical dispute. By supporting the Bulgars, Austria-Hungary supported their complete separation from the Patriarchate. (Meininger, 1970: 181-184.)

⁷⁶ The Patriarchate organized the assembling of the twenty-nine ecclesiastics so as to act as a tribunal in punishing the Bulgarians and compelling them to obey the Patriarchate. Ignatiev's last effort in the Church dispute included the subversion of this Council. Ignatiev demanded to be propped up by the participants of the Council for the prevention of a declaration of schism against the Bulgarians. In spite of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem's backing of Ignatiev, the rest of the Council members declared the Bulgarian Church schismatic. (Meininger, 1970: 185-189.)

Greeks. However, he failed to have the disputants separate their nationalism from their religion.⁷⁷

Ignatiev and the Treaty of San Stefano

Ignatiev still insisted on solving the Eastern Question by mutual agreement between Russia and Turkey without the participation of the West. However, when Abdülaziz was deposed in 1876 and the Ottoman Empire's ruling class assumed a pro-British orientation, Ignatiev wanted an immediate war and supported Serbia and Montenegro in starting a war against the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁸ During the war between Serbia and Turkey and the rebellions in Bulgaria, Ignatiev was working out a concrete political agenda concerning the Eastern Question.⁷⁹

After Russia declared war on Turkey on 12 April 1877, Ignatiev supported to take an immediate action against Turkey with a joint revolt of the population in Bulgaria, Epirus, Thessaly and Candia (the island of Crete). He blamed the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian ambassador in Athens for localization of the conflict by discouraging the Greeks from taking a part in the conflict. He was inclined to contribute to

⁷⁷ Meininger, 1970: 190-192.

⁷⁸ *Zapiski*, p.19.

⁷⁹ Ignatiev presented a plan for dealing with the crisis in 1876:

- 1) Montenegro and part of Herzegovina should be independent.
- 2) In Serbia, the prewar situation has to be preserved except for small part of Old Serbia. Old Serbia (Kosovo) belonged to the Ottoman Empire at this time and it has to be given to Serbia.
- 3) Bosnia and the northern part of Herzegovina should have either autonomy or local government similar to that in Crete. Serbian should be the official language and half of the officials should be local Christians and local militia.
- 4) Bulgaria should have autonomy with an Orthodox governor, local government, administration and militia. In case this is not possible because of numerous Muslim populations, at least the reforms suggested for Bosnia should be applied in Bulgaria. Bulgaria will include the Danube Province, the Sliven Province, the Plovdiv Province, Sophia and Niš.
- 5) Europe should insist that the reforms promised in the *irades* and *fermans* of the late Abdülaziz should be put in practice, especially for the equality of Christians and Muslims.
- 6) Ottoman Empire should not use Caucasians, bandits (*başıbozuk*) and other irregular troops for their lack of discipline and brutal attitude towards Christians. (*Zapiski*, pp. 149-156.)

the realization of the common interests of Greeks and Slavs; otherwise antagonism between Russia and Greece would be intensified.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Ignatiev laid claim to the idea that Albanians could also be used as an ally. He put emphasis on the North Albanians' relations with the Serbs and the South Albanians' relations with the Greeks that would have made a possible union. The tribal leaders in North Albanian would be especially glad to receive Russia's assistance.⁸¹

Ignatiev's plans for the imminent war with Turkey in the context of his eastern question policy caused his dismissal from Constantinople. At the beginning of the war, Ignatiev had to leave the city. After his return to Russia, he was assigned first to a military position and then to the task of working on the project of armistice. Ignatiev wrote the draft of armistice several times and the final draft was more moderate than the previous ones in the sense that he agreed the establishment of a self-governing Bulgarian principality and the implementation of reforms, which would lead to the emergence of autonomous governments in the Christian areas of Turkey.⁸² Secret clause of the project was that the Black Sea would be closed in case of war to all states, which did not have territories on the Black Sea. The project was presented to the Russian Emperor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of War and other high officials on January 12, 1878.⁸³ In addition, Gorchakov asked

⁸⁰ *Zapiski*, pp. 233-234.

⁸¹ *Zapiski*, p. 63.

⁸² Komsalova, 2005:34.

⁸³ *Zapiski*, pp. 319-324. Here are the other clauses written by Ignatiev in his plan for provisional peace treaty. It is worth of noting that the clauses of this project were almost the same with the clauses of the Treaty of San Stefano.

- 1) Small territories should be added to Montenegro.
- 2) Serbia should be independent with its border extending to the East to the Morava River.
- 3) Romania should get some islands in the Danube Delta and the port Sulina.
- 4) In Bosnia & Herzegovina, the decision of Istanbul Conference should be applied.
- 5) Bulgarian borders should be at least the same as those prescribed by the Istanbul Conference.
- 6) Russian representatives and at least 50.000 troops will stay in Bulgaria (vassal) until the creation of a strong Bulgarian Army.
- 7) The Russian troops will evacuate European and Asiatic Turkey in three months.
- 8) The decisions of the Istanbul Conference about Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia will be applied for Epirus, Thessaly and the parts of Macedonia & Thrace that remain in the Ottoman Empire.

Ignatiev to present his views on the concession Russia should make in terms of the clauses of the treaty.

In the second half of January 1878, he was sent to Bucharest. As Russia's chief plenipotentiary, he arrived in Adrianople on January 29, 1878 in order to conclude a peace treaty with Turkey.⁸⁴ Even though he offered his project revised by Gorchakov, the Turkish representative Saffet Paşa firmly adhered to the idea that the establishment of a Bulgarian principality was incompatible with the existence of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁵ In spite of the difficulties in negotiations, Ignatiev achieved a victory as the main Russian negotiator of the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878. The treaty was a triumph for Russian policy but it threatened to involve Russia in a war with England and Russian officials feared a repeat of the Crimean scenario. The triumph of Ignatiev's mission in Constantinople lasted only a little until Russia demanded a revision of the treaty.

It is worthy of noting here the ideological differences between Ignatiev and the Russian central bureaucracy and the latter's firstly affirming and subsequently dismissing behavior of Ignatiev's proposals. As Saffet Paşa lost against the will of Ignatiev in San Stefano, Ignatiev failed to get his eventual goal accepted. The official Russian view towards the Ignatiev's solutions for the Balkan problems was already opposed when he was summoned to return from Constantinople already in January, 1877.

9) Better constitution for Crete

10) The Russian and the Orthodox clergy in Turkey will have the same privileges as those given to the Catholics and Protestants.

11) Turkey has to take active steps for the peaceful resolution of the lawsuits of Russians in Turkey who have been waiting for years to be compensated for the damages they have incurred.

12) Turkey has to let Russian ships pass through the Bosphorus including 10 warships per year.

13) Either 410 million silver rubbles, or Bessarabia, Kars, Ardahan, Batum, Kagizman and six armored and 40 million Ottoman liras should given to Russia.

⁸⁴ For an interesting article on Ignatiev's arrival in Adrianople and his oppositional comments on Russia's continuous war with the Ottoman Empire at that moment. Alexander Onou, "The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev (iii)", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 11(1932/1933), pp.108-125.

⁸⁵ Komsalova, 2005: 35.

The inevitable result of this situation was that Ignatiev was removed from pursuing his diplomatic career.⁸⁶ Gorchakov and Pyotr Andreyevich Shuvalov, Russian administrator and diplomat, represented Russia in the Congress of Berlin in July 1878 and Shuvalov's long knowledge of conditions in Great Britain and his friendly relations with Bismarck suited the occasion.⁸⁷ Ignatiev's notes did not affect the policy Russia would pursue in the congress. Ignatiev criticized the political strategies of Russia in the Congress of Berlin because they undermined his endeavors in Constantinople.⁸⁸ Ignatiev's aim to settle the problem of the Straits negotiating directly with the Sultan and preventing the issue from being discussed in an international congress failed.

Ignatiev's dismissal from the process of decision-making during the negotiations for the peace treaty can be seen as a failure from the point of his personal diplomacy. However, it should be remembered that his mission for solving the eastern question had been brought to a conclusion despite the political opposition to Gorchakov from the beginning.⁸⁹ The official policy of Gorchakov remained opposed to the policy of Ignatiev, which caused a split in Russian foreign policy, which led to the negotiations in Berlin. Unfortunately for him, Gorchakov manifested his opposition to the Ignatiev's plans due to his policy of gaining approval from the Western powers.

⁸⁶ Hans Heilbrunner, "Alexander III and the Reform Plan of Loris-Melikov", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.33, No.4, (Dec., 1961), p. 388. Ignatiev was put in office to reverse the policy of Loris-Melikov. Latimer, 2002:331.

⁸⁷ Stojanovic, 1968: 256.

⁸⁸ As a supporter of the Greek Orthodoxy against the pro-Catholic groups among the Bulgarian clergy, he wrote to Pobedonostsev in 1881 that "the Treaty of San Stefano would easily have made it possible to assure the integrity of orthodoxy in the Balkans. But after the Treaty of Berlin, I foresee and predict the resumption and success of efforts in favor of the reunion of the Bulgarian church with the Catholic Church". Melvin C.Wren, "Pobedonostsev and Russian influence in the Balkans, 1881-1888", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 19, No.2, (June, 1947), p. 134.

⁸⁹ In his article Splidsboel-Hansen mentions three main characters of Gorchakov's post-1865 foreign policy, which he calls as *Gorchakovism*. 1) the primacy of domestic restructuring, 2) the twin principles of predictability and non-aggressiveness, 3) a policy of revisionism. Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, "Aleksandr Gorchakov and Russian Foreign Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No.3, (May, 2002), pp.380-381. It is not surprising that *Gorchakovism* was inconsistent with the pragmatic politics Ignatiev pursued in terms of the Balkan problems.

THIRD CHAPTER: MIDHAT PAŞA (1864-1877)

His governorship in the Danube Province (1864-1868)

From its beginning in 1839, *tanzimat* reforms in the Ottoman Empire aimed to transform the center rather than the periphery. However, after 1860s, the imperial interests turned towards the peripheries of the empire. Midhat Paşa, as one of the prominent reformists of his era, was charged with an important mission of executing the *tanzimat* reforms in the countryside and was assigned to the post of governor in the new province. Due to his previous experiences, he was well equipped to fulfill his mission. The Danube Province, which was declared on 13 October 1864 together with a set of regulations, was a combination of the provinces of Nish, Vidin and Silistra.⁹⁰ The rise of nationalism threatened the integrity of these provinces with the empire, therefore the new province was formed to hold the empire together by connecting it to the capital from one side and to far-off places, such as Bosnia from the other side.

The regions under Midhat Paşa's responsibilities in the Balkans were the most troublesome places in the empire due to the influences of separatist groups and the ideology of Pan-Slavism supported by the Russian Empire. The developing Bulgarian national consciousness in the new province increased the uneasiness among native people. Russians incited the Bulgarian separatism, as well as a change of the status of the other regions on the frontier, such as Serbia and Roumania, which were resolutely agitating for independence from the Porte. Moreover, the internal problems in the region, such as banditry, class tensions

⁹⁰ Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi (*the Law of Danube Province*), BOA, I.M.M.S. No: 1245.

between landowners and peasants and unfair taxation demanded a reformation process in the Danube Province.

The implementation of the new provincial reform law of 1864 started in the Danube Province for the first time. Due to his previous experience as the governor of Nish, from the very beginning, Midhat Paşa was aware the deficiencies of the Ottoman rule in the new province. While strengthening the central authority by eliminating the separatist groups, his main intention was to include the local governments into the political mechanism of the state.

With the new provincial law of 1864, the local councils were reconstructed. Apart from these local councils, various administrative and judicial councils, which consisted of elected Muslims and non-Muslim members, were set up. Because these administrative and judicial councils supervised local councils, the top-down cooperation in the province was efficiently guaranteed. The Council of Provincial Administration was also instituted with an equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim delegates. This council dealt with the civil service, foreign affairs, public works and agriculture. As the highest administrative council in the province, it was responsible for the social and economic issues. This council not only took into the consideration the complaints of commoners, but also the problems among the governmental offices and officers.⁹¹ There was the Provincial General Assembly, which was composed of equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim delegates from different parts of the province. This assembly met annually in the capital city of the province under the

⁹¹ *The Law of Danube Province of 1864*, No:77-78.

leadership of the governor.⁹² The most prominent improvement in this structure was that the local Christians were represented in the councils for the first time in the Ottoman Empire.

The Appeal and Criminal Courts, which were combined in a later period, represented a distinct hierarchy of judicial bodies. It was the first time in the empire and outside of the capital that these judicial bodies were separated from the Islamic (*şer-i*) courts. In these new courts, again first time a comprehensive system of non-*şer-i* tribunals was established.⁹³ The Municipal Councils were also among the subsequent innovations of the new system in the Danube Province. They were responsible from carrying out many public works, such as paved roads, bridges, steamships, railroads, telegraph lines, street lights, public buildings and schools, shops and market places. Under the control of these councils, Midhat Paşa also gave weight to the cleaning, “beautification” and general “de-Orientalization” of the province’s urban centers.⁹⁴

In the course of enforcement of the new codes, the lower classes were prompted by “pervasive government rhetoric of progress and modernization”, since the government needed greatly the labor force of local people. There was a change in government’s rhetoric, which tried to persuade them that “their participation in the reform policies would result in the improvement of their own economic and social situation”.⁹⁵

⁹² Similar to the Ottoman Council of State in Istanbul, which received legislative recommendations annually from each provincial representative assembly and separated into five different departments as administration (police/military), finance, justice, public works (trade/agriculture), and education, the Provincial General Assembly worked with delegates from various parts of the province. In this way, both Muslim and non-Muslim groups could directly participated in policy making. Stanford J. Shaw, “ The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement Before 1876”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.1., No.1., January 1970, p. 74.

⁹³ Milen V. Petrov, “*Tanzimat* For the Countryside : Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Princeton University, September 2006, pp. 265., 271.

⁹⁴ Petrov, 2006: 117.

⁹⁵ Petrov, 2006: 133.

Indeed, one of the common assumptions about the *tanzimat* reforms is that this political project was to a large extent top-down project. Though the *tanzimat* was undeniably a state-led and elitist project with regard to issues of direction, timing and organization, it nevertheless had a more complicated and tangible interaction with the “cognitive and epistemological worlds of the non-elite Ottoman subjects.”⁹⁶ Focusing on the records of legal (*nizamî*) courts in the Danube Province where Midhat Paşa, as the first governor of the province, led serious modernization reforms in many fields of legal and institutional system, Petrov documents “the ability and willingness of Midhat Paşa’s subjects to play the new interrogation game.”⁹⁷ The discourses, arguments and strategies of the litigants clearly show how, “less than two years after the establishment of the *vilayet*, its new legal framework was already intimately understood and proactively taken advantage of by Midhat Paşa’s “ordinary” subjects.”⁹⁸

One of the main contributions of Midhat Paşa to the economic problems of peasants in the province was to establish the Agricultural Credit Cooperatives Banks.⁹⁹ When he was the governor of Nish in 1863, he established agricultural credit cooperatives to improve the economic conditions of peasants by providing them credits with low interests rate, seeds and animals. He also wanted to create solidarity among them, especially in terms of their unstable relations with their landlords. Midhat Paşa’s new agricultural regulation worked well in Nish and he was determined to continue the same system in the Danube Province. He

⁹⁶ Milen V. Petrov, “Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864-1868, *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 2004, p. 731.

⁹⁷ Petrov, 2004: 759. The macro-political implication of the willingness and ability of Bulgarians to learn the complex rules of the *nizamî* interrogation, according to Petrov, is that, “at least into the late 1860s, most of them regarded the imperial framework of which the interrogations were a part as a political arrangement that was likely to endure in the foreseeable future.”

⁹⁸ Petrov, 2004: 746.

⁹⁹ Midhat is still accepted as the father of the agricultural bank in Turkey and in Bulgaria, as the founder of the best-developed credit cooperatives in the Balkans. (Davison, 1973: 152) In the centennial of its establishment, the Turkish Republic Agricultural Bank (*T.C.Ziraat Bankası*) was devoted a book to the memory of Midhat Paşa as the founder of the bank. See, Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, *Midhat Paşa, Siyasi ve İdari Şahsiyeti*, (Ziraat Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul), 1964.

wrote an explanatory document, pointing out twenty principles of the agricultural credit cooperatives. Both Christians and Muslims equally took part in working the system of these agricultural credit cooperatives. On July 19, 1867 with a nine additional principles to Midhat Paşa's document, the law of agricultural credit cooperatives was issued in order to make them prevalent within whole empire.¹⁰⁰

Midhat Paşa came to the Danube Province with a cosmopolitan and Ottomanist cadre. The main members of the leading team were İsmail Kemal Bey, Odian Efendi, Ahmet Midhat Efendi and Kılıç Vasıf Efendi, who were Albanian, Armenian, Turkish and Croatian, respectively. This also clearly reflected Midhat Paşa's belief in sharing a common ideology of Ottomanism.¹⁰¹ Also, the technicians and engineers who had great contributions to the modernization and development policies in Danube were Polish and Hungarian refugees, who worked as civil and military engineers, telegraph employees, teachers, and cartographers. In addition, in the course of his governorship, Midhat Paşa was personally involved the appointments of capable and honest officials from Istanbul, who would work in the Province. He also dismissed the untrustworthy and corrupted lower and middle level officers, who were usually holdovers from the previous administration. Even though Midhat Paşa received some reactions due to his policies of innovation, the system he set up with his officials functioned well.

Midhat Paşa was not able to cooperate with the conservative bureaucrats of the Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarian nationalists. However, he was backed by the reformist grand vizier Fuad Paşa and the local notables, who sided with the Ottoman state against the

¹⁰⁰ Seçil Akgün, "Midhat Paşa'nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası'nın Kökeni", *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri*, TTK, Ankara, 1986, pp. 185-211.

¹⁰¹ İlber Ortaylı, "Midhat Paşa'nın Vilayet Yönetimindeki Kadroları ve Politikası", *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri*, TTK, Ankara, 1986, p. 227.

separatist movements. Actually, Midhat Paşa intended to generate a sort of Turkish and Bulgarian intelligentsia within the Danube Province as a natural outcome of his reform movements, such as the establishments of the schools, reformatories and printing houses. To a certain extent, he succeeded in collaborating with the Bulgarians, who were appointed to high positions in the provincial administration and awarded imperial medals.¹⁰²

Even though many Bulgarian nationalists appreciated Midhat Paşa's efforts to develop the province, they recognized him as a real and powerful opponent of the Bulgarians.¹⁰³ The Ottoman bureaucratic ranks opened to the Bulgarian elites during Midhat Paşa's governorship in Ruse. However, Bulgar nationalism obstructed the rise of Bulgarian officials in the bureaucratic ladders. One of the active participants in the 1876 Bulgarian uprising, Zakhari Stoianov, referring to this application in Ottoman bureaucracy, argued that

if that policy had been broader in its scope and more persistent in its application, the final outcome of Ottoman reform in the Balkans might have been quite different, since the Bulgarians in Ottoman government service invariably became *more loyal to Osman's throne than the Turks themselves*.¹⁰⁴

Midhat Paşa struggled against the threat of nationalism in three ways. Firstly, exerting good government and equitable treatment to all the ordinary inhabitants of the province, he was able to receive the support of them. Secondly, as a firm supporter of the modern education, he provided good education to both Christians and Muslims in mixed schools. Actually, Midhat Paşa wanted to change the school system in the province entirely. He aimed at preventing the Bulgars from pursuing their education in Russia. However, he could not

¹⁰² BOA, I.D.H. No: 38984.

¹⁰³ A petition [the text of this document was published in *Narodnost*, vol.2, issue 10] by Bulgarian émigré nationalists to the 1867 Paris Conference declared that "enlightened Ottoman administrators, such as Midhat, posed a greater danger to the Bulgarian cause than the unreconstructed fanatical Paşas of old; this new brand of Ottoman reformers know how to supplement their Asiatic oppression with the refined methods of Western political science." (Petrov, 2006: 11)

¹⁰⁴ Petrov, 2006: 12.

achieve this aim. The third way was to suppress the rebellions without showing any mercy.

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The Crimean War was a landmark in the history of the region. While Russia sought for recovering the wounds of the War, the Ottoman Empire had encountered the refugee problem since the beginning of the Crimean war. The regions of the Danube Province were flooded with Tatar and Circassian refugees from Russia, who were resettled within the borders of the new province. The resettlement of the refugees in the Danube Province was planned to serve as a border defense against Serbia and as a protection along the Danube. It was also thought as a preventive action against the separatist activity among the Bulgars. However, economically and socially, it had a cost to the government. One of the most meager sides of Midhat Paşa's reform movement in the Danube Province was to settle the Tatar and Circassian refugees.¹⁰⁶

Midhat Paşa thought that neither the proposal of some moderate Bulgar nationalists in early 1867 for the establishment of a dual monarch, which would give self government to Bulgaria, nor the petition asked for an autocephalous Bulgar Orthodox Church was acceptable. Bulgarian autonomy and an autocephalous Church were threatening to Midhat Paşa's efforts to create Ottomanism. Yet, in the course of his governorship of the Danube Province, he remained evenhanded and reticent to comment on the issue in public and he was not capable of offering a comprehensive solution to the conflict. In a conversation with both sides of the conflict, he declared his support to the members of each in a tacit manner, if their demands did not cause problems in any given locality.

¹⁰⁵ Davison, 1973: 154-155.

¹⁰⁶ See, 7.3. The Tatar and Circassian Migrations, Petrov, 2006: 346-382.

Midhat Paşa was aware that the resolution of the Church question was related to the fate of Bulgarian nationalism. Having kept this idea during his first grand vizierate, Midhat Paşa “informed the British consuls in Ruse and Belgrade that in his opinion, the Bulgarians’ religious demands should be granted in order to ‘keep them grateful to the Sultan’s authority and cool towards revolutionary propaganda’.”¹⁰⁷ Petrov continues by claiming that in spite of local variations and reversals, the administration’s policies were successful in separating the Church Question from the national question in the minds of most Bulgarians in the Danube Province. In 1878 Midhat Paşa declared an autonomous Bulgaria due to the political events after the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano.¹⁰⁸

The controversy over Midhat Paşa’s success in the Danube Province was related to Great Powers’ interests in the region. Ignatiev hinted that “Midhat Paşa’s reforms were steering the Danube province towards a de facto independence from the empire as has been the case with Egypt.”¹⁰⁹ Especially after he secured the issuance of a royal decree in February 1868, which permitted him to bring some emergency cases into the arbitration of plenipotentiary powers, a number of accusation were brought against him by his rivals and political opponents.¹¹⁰ Although unfounded, they led to Midhat Paşa’s dismissal from the Danube province’s governorship. He was recalled by the Porte three years after his appointment there as a governor. Although there was no a clear reason, both internal factors (his friction with Ali Paşa, his possible assignment to the presidency of the reorganized Council of State)

¹⁰⁷ Petrov, 2006: 345. Also, see whole part: “Midhat’s Policies on the Church Question” (Petrov, 2006: 338-346)

¹⁰⁸ In an interesting interview of William T. Stead with him, Ignatiev told that “A dozen years before the last war, I told Midhat Paşa that at the first opportunity, I would establish an independent Bulgaria. He [Midhat Paşa] laughed; but in 1877 he exclaimed, ‘You told us—you told us but we would not believe’.” William T. Stead, *Truth About Russia*, Cassell, London, 1888, p. 266.

¹⁰⁹ Petrov, 2006: 26.

¹¹⁰ Petrov, 2006: 418.

and external factors (Russia's pressure on the Porte, his maltreatment to any likely separatist move) might have caused his recall.¹¹¹

His Grand Vizierate

Midhat Paşa got along well with Fuad Paşa, but his relation with Ali Paşa was not the same. In 1868, Midhat Paşa became the first president of the reorganized Council of State, which accepted the separation of judicial functions from legislative and administrative in principle.

¹¹² Midhat Paşa quarreled with Ali Paşa over the operation of Council of State. Especially after the death of Fuad Paşa in 1869, the gap between these two rival men expanded. Ali Paşa provided control over the affairs in foreign ministry, while at the same time keeping the grand vizierate and removing his most prominent rivals from the capital. In 1869, Midhat Paşa, as a governor who had already proved his capability in running the new provincial system well, was sent out to Baghdad by Ali Paşa.

Midhat Paşa continued his reform activities in Baghdad with the same determination he showed in the Danube Provinces. Especially his activities in material improvements duplicated what he had done in the Danube Province. Even though Midhat Paşa worked in Baghdad at the cost of his own interests during his three-year tenure, he could not win over the Porte. Ali Paşa died in 1871 and his successor in the grand vizierate Mahmud Nedim Paşa was a manifest opponent of Midhat Paşa. A quarrel occurred between them over spending revenue from the budget of the Baghdad Province, which led to Midhat's

¹¹¹ In March 1867, Fuad Paşa declared that the necessity of extension and implementation of the provincial law throughout whole empire was the reason of Midhat's recall to Istanbul. Fuad Paşa seemed quite satisfied with Midhat Paşa's policies in the Danube Province, as it's seen in his memorandum of May 15, 1867, addressed to the European powers: "The Empire had found, said the Foreign Minister, 'a form of administration corresponding altogether to the needs of the country, to the customs of the populations and to the demands of the concept of civilization which pressed upon the empire from all directions.' "(Davison, 1973: 157-158.)

¹¹² Under Midhat Paşa's presidency, these following regulations were done by Council of State: "the new nationality law, the new organization of public education, and regulations on mining, the metric system, and a lending bank to extend credit to small employers." (Davison, 1973: 243.)

resignation at the end. Mahmud Nedim was warring against the provincial system and he virtually abandoned it by attempting to organize smaller provinces and by restricting the communication between the provincial general assemblies and the Porte. One of the reasons behind his reaction to the system was due to the fact that he was also worried about the possibility of any governor's becoming powerful and popular in his province. Midhat Paşa's reputation as a successful governor in Baghdad disquieted him a lot.

Contrary to Ali and Fuad Paşas, who had conferred with the British and French ambassadors, Mahmud Nedim was closer to Ignatiev. It was not without avail that Ignatiev was sometimes referred to as "Sultan Ignatiev" and Mahmud Nedim as "Nedimoff", though Ignatiev did not mention him as one of his agents in the Porte.¹¹³ Ignatiev's opposition to the previous policies of Ali and Fuad Paşa was quite understandable. Western-oriented Ottoman policies threatened the Russian interests in the Balkan provinces of the empire. The policies of Mahmud Nedim and Abdülaziz contradicted the centralizing policies of the previous diplomats and put the empire in a much more susceptible position vis-à-vis the great powers.

Midhat Paşa's presence in the capital worried Mahmud Nedim, who announced his appointment as governor of the Edirne province on July 29, 1872 without consulting Abdülaziz. However, Midhat's audience with the Sultan convinced him not to approve Mahmud Nedim's act and instead the Sultan appointed Midhat Paşa as new grand vizier on 31 July 1872.

¹¹³ Davison, 1973: 283.

Midhat Paşa's experience and character were not completely suitable for the grand vizierate. Also, the khedive Ismail and Ignatiev were completely opposed to Midhat Paşa's grand vizierate and looked forward to witnessing his fall. Under these circumstances, his grand vizierate lasted only eighty days. Midhat Paşa did not hesitate to implicate the Sultan into the investigation of financial scandal. He was also an overt opponent of the khedive Ismail and the Palace's cooperation with him over the right for Egypt to contract foreign loans in exchange for bribe. Disregarding the politics of office-holding, Midhat Paşa embarked on as he was a governor in the province. Under the influence of Halil Şerif, who had been ambassador at Vienna and was appointed as foreign minister of Midhat Paşa, a constitutional plan and a plan for federal organization of the empire began to preoccupy the mind of Midhat Paşa. The khedive Ismail and Ignatiev warned the Sultan about these men's constitutional aspirations and it was impossible that the Sultan would be indifferent to their warnings. Ultimately, Midhat Paşa's investigation of Mahmud Nedim's fraud in obtaining foreign loans caused his dismissal from his short-lived grand vizierate on 19 October, 1872. Ignatiev congratulated the Sultan on Midhat Paşa's removal from the grand vizierate.¹¹⁴ In this way, Midhat Paşa began eighteen months of unemployment.

Midhat Paşa and the promulgation of the First Ottoman Constitution

On August 21, 1875 Midhat was named minister of justice and Hüseyin Avni as minister of war. After several days, Mahmud Nedim Paşa was nominated as grand vizier for the second time. Midhat and Hüseyin Avni had similar views on the need to act against the Balkan rebels. However, they did not take any action against the dealings of the grand vizier and they were implicitly forced out of the government by late fall. Midhat Paşa actually resigned and because such acts were unusual in the Ottoman system, it attracted the attention of

¹¹⁴ Davison, 1973: 291-292.

public. In his resignation letters to the Palace, which circulated in manuscript in Istanbul, Midhat Paşa portrayed a dark picture of the international and internal situation of the empire. He complained about the measures taken to deal with the powers, the rebels, the Christian subjects and financial crisis.¹¹⁵ He had given the signals of his dissatisfaction during his ministerial duty and as a way out he had proposed creating a senate. Seemingly, Midhat Paşa's intensive endeavors to secure a constitution for the Ottoman Empire corresponded to time soon after his resignation and to his period out of office between 1875 and 1876.

Moreover, not only Midhat Paşa and Hüseyin Avni, but almost all groups of Ottoman society seemed to oppose the policies of Mahmud Nedim. The British Ambassador, the New Ottomans, those badly affected by the economic distress and those opposed to Mahmud Nedim supported the constitutionalist ideas of Midhat Paşa, who had a reputation for honesty and good provincial administration and was ready to risk all for the sake of his ideas. Midhat Paşa took the lead of an anonymous manifesto signed by 'the Muslim patriots' on March 9, 1876. The main emphasis of the manifesto was on the urgent need for a consultative assembly, representative of all races and creeds in the empire, the problems of the autocratic regimes, specifically the wretched government of the Sultan and Mahmud Nedim, and reiteration of one of the *tanzimat* mottos, the equality between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The theological students and some of their professors had already begun to go on strike in early May against the weakness of the government and the Russian influence. Midhat Paşa was supported by these softas. Their eventual demand was to install Midhat Paşa as grand vizier. Similar to the ideas of the Young Ottomans and other Islamic modernists of his era,

¹¹⁵ Davison, 1973: 318-319.

Midhat Paşa thought that the consultative principle of government was an integral feature of early Islamic politics and had legitimacy under Islamic law.¹¹⁶ With these thoughts, Midhat Paşa would be able to be very influential on clerics between 1875 and 1876.

Almost one month after the issuance of the manifesto, Mahmud Nedim was replaced with Mehmed Rüşdi Paşa and Midhat Paşa was again added to the ministry, though without portfolio. He thought that he should have been appointed as grand vizier. The outcomes of the demonstrations and the overthrow of Mahmud Nedim were crucial in the sense that they strengthened the patriotic and especially anti-Russian sentiment. As a solution to internal and external problems, it revealed two possible alternatives, either a constitutional regime, or the deposition of the sultan or both. Until the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz on 30 May, 1876, Midhat Paşa attempted to use all his energy to carry out both through either a military coup, although he had strong reservation about its efficacy, or popular demonstrations.

After the deposition of the sultan, Midhat Paşa was nominated the presidency of the Council of State. The early June also witnessed the publication of the manifesto of the Muslim patriots in Istanbul. While Midhat Paşa was trying to make his voice heard by the public, he tried to get his revised constitutional draft accepted by the grand council of notables, which was convened at the Sublime Porte on 15 July, 1876. The basic principles of his draft were approved in this meeting.

The process of drafting the 1876 Constitution was by no means easy for Midhat Paşa. During the process of writing the articles of the constitution disputes among ministers continued. He fell out with Cevdet Paşa, the famous historian, jurist and author of the

¹¹⁶ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought. A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, (Syracuse, 2000), pp. 81-106.

Ottoman Civil Code and among the conservative men of *tanzimat*. Their political arguments turned into a mutual accusation and finally Cevdet Paşa withdrew his support from the Constitutional draft totally. Actually, Midhat Paşa was different from the first generation of *tanzimat* reformers because he was committed to the regime of constitutional monarchy. In other words, according to Midhat Paşa, the issue was not only to establish a lawful and fair administration but also to constitute the legislative mechanisms through which people can participate to their own government.¹¹⁷ Also, chief palace secretary Küçük Said Paşa, on the last minute, proposed an additional clause to the article 13, which allow the Sultan to exile supposedly dangerous persons. In order to promulgate the constitution Midhat Paşa had to accept this clause.¹¹⁸ After the Sultan Abdülhamid consented to the promulgation of the constitution, Midhat Paşa was appointed as grand vizier on December 19, 1876. Abdülhamid

wanted Midhat at the helm as a symbol of reform and to use Midhat's international reputation as a weapon against the coming diplomatic conference. The appointment was a blow to Ignatyev, who had called Midhat a brigand, a filibuster and a madman. Abdülhamid was undoubtedly wary of Midhat too, but he could hardly overlook him in the circumstances, and might use him.¹¹⁹

The Constantinople (or Admiralty) Conference coincided with the official date of the promulgation of the constitution on December, 23 1876. This was more than a coincidence in the sense that it provided the Ottoman delegates a strong reason not to accept the proposals of the European powers on the Balkan issue. While the Ottoman delegates left the conference, negotiations continued under the leadership of Ignatiev. The grand vizier Midhat Paşa declared that he opposed to the conference proposals and later on the Council of Ministers officially refused to accept the decisions taken at the Constantinople Conference.

¹¹⁷ Ortaylı, 1986: 227.

¹¹⁸ Davison, 1973: 379.

¹¹⁹ Davison, 1973: 381.

Midhat was dismissed from the grand vizierate on February 5, 1877 and sent into European exile. The reasons of his dismissal rooted in the Sultan's perception of Midhat Paşa. In the course of Midhat Paşa's grand vizierate, the Sultan never felt at ease and for his peace of mind he sent him far away from the center. In Europe, instead of spreading propaganda against the Ottoman government, Midhat Paşa used his influence to help the Ottoman cause against Russia, principally through personal contacts and by interviews. His article, entitled "The Past, Present and the Future of Turkey" and published in *The Nineteenth Century* in June, 1878, was written when he was in exile. This article appeared immediately in a French journal and in pamphlet form as well.¹²⁰ In this article he set forth his views quite clearly. He attributed the Balkan separatist movements to Russian influence and bad government. As a solution he offered a fusion of the peoples of the empire and a constitutional regime.¹²¹

About the same time, Leouzon Le Duc, a professional French writer, wrote a book of over 200 pages entitled 'Midhat Pacha' and published it in Paris in early 1877. This book was the first book-length biography of an Ottoman grand vizier. His book was entirely pro-Ottoman and pro-Midhat and anti-Russian. He depicted Midhat as a superhero, who endeavored to find the right solutions to the problems of the Ottoman Empire, a written constitution and a parliament. He sought to make use of the public interest in the Eastern Question, as well as to praise an Ottoman Constitutionalism.¹²² The publication process of the book suggests that the biography originated somewhere in Midhat's own circle of supporters in Istanbul. The aim of such a campaign biography was clearly "to help the push for a constitution, to

¹²⁰ Davison states that the publisher of the pamphlet in Paris was the same man who published the Leouzon's biography of Midhat the year before. The article also consisted of some of the views of Midhat, which were already mentioned in Leouzon's book. Roderic Davison, 'The Beginning of Published Biographies of Ottoman Statesmen: The Case of Midhat Pasha', in *Türkische Wirtschafts und Sozialgeschichte von 1071 bis 1920*, ed. by Hans Georg Majer and Raoul Motika, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 1995, p. 63.

¹²¹ Midhat Paşa, "Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali", Mütercimi Ahmed Refik, Tab-ı Naşiri Kitabhane-i İslam ve Askeri, Artin Asaduryan Matbaası, Dersaadet 1326 (1908-1909). This article was published in English in 1878 and in Ottoman Turkish in 1879.

¹²² Davison, 1995: 61.

counter the anti-Ottoman sentiment aroused by the Bulgarian massacres, to influence European opinion against any great power and particularly any Russian intervention, and perhaps, to further Midhat's own career".¹²³ Despite this campaign biography, the controversy between him and Abdülhamid intensified when Midhat Paşa was back in Istanbul in late 1878, and this tension disqualified Midhat Paşa from state offices in the end.

¹²³ Davison, 1995: 62-63.

CONCLUSION

The crisis entailed a considerable loss of the central provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The subsequent outburst of social and economic crises led to the men of the *tanzimat* to start and apply intensive reforms in place of the moderate actions, which were taken previously. However, the first generation of the *tanzimat*, like the traditionalist Ottoman reformers did not propose social changes in order to fight against imminent emergence of nationalism in the Balkans. They focused on military and administrative reforms. But, the technical and institutional reforms they strove to introduce for the benefit of autocratic ruling class would eventually require urgent social and political reform. Moreover, the effect of nationalism on the *millet* system was disregarded. The political demands of the Balkan people such as securing autonomy or independence were taken as slanders of groups, who were against the reforms of the *tanzimat*. Also, for them Balkan nationalism was no more than the treason of rebellious peasants. The reformists of the second generation, including Midhat Paşa the Young Ottoman intellectuals and their political successors and allies in the third generation, the Young Turks, lodged a claim for the political and social equality among the subjects of the sultan and constitutional limitations on the ruling class. They followed the policy of centralization in administration as one of the prominent legacies of the *tanzimat*. Reconciliation of the minorities and Balkan provinces in favor of centralization gave rise to the ideology of Ottomanism, a common citizenship for all subjects of the sultan regardless of religion, race and class in society. In other words, it meant an end to the *millet* system.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman View of the Balkans", *The Balkans In Transition*, ed. by Charles and Barbara Jelavich, (Archon Book, USA), 1974, pp. 56-80.

For the reformist men of the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean War was a pyrrhic victory since it caused the accumulation of the Ottoman debt and the re-organization of the *millet* system. The decomposition of the *millet* system disquieted the Muslims due to the fact that they started to share their political and social primacy with the non-Muslims. At the same time, for the pioneers of the reform periods, namely the *Hatt-ı Şerif* of 1839 and the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856, the Christians' exploitation of their new social status to strengthen irredentist claims were not acceptable. They were all of one mind that the only possible way of allaying Muslim suspicions and assuring Christian aspirations was to foster the development of Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*). The identification with the *millet* or religious community would be replaced with a new concept of modern citizenship providing individual rights, duties and loyalty.¹²⁵ Ottomanism emerged as a new ideological contour of the state. Midhat Paşa's appointment as a provincial administrator by the center to the Danube Province in 1864 included the hope for Ottomanism. This ideology was also the most determinant driving force behind the projects and reforms of Midhat Paşa. However the ultimate aim of the reform period, to dissolve national difference through Ottomanism, was not realized.

Ottoman modernism was put into practice in the Danube Province with the assurance that the *tanzimat* reforms would brought in the benefactions of modernity to all their subjects. The same discourse was used for a modernist transformation of the Arab periphery of the empire, as Makdisi called it "Ottoman Orientalism."¹²⁶ And in this regard, Makdisi claims that Midhat Paşa's Ottoman Orientalism was represented the promise of an imperial project of "fusion". However, Ottoman modernism in the Danube Province differed from the Ottoman Orientalism due to the fact that the former lacked the ethnic claim of superiority of

¹²⁵ Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999*, (Granta Books, London), 2000, p. 92. See also, Karpat, 1982: 141-169, Davison, 1982: 319-337.

¹²⁶ Usama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *American Historical Review*, 107(2002), p. 768-796.

one group over another. On the contrary, with its majority non-Muslim population in the Balkans, the Ottoman modernism had to defend its existence vis-à-vis the European Orientalist and Bulgarian nationalist claims, which asserted that the Ottoman rule had prevented the development of Balkan society. The men of *tanzimat* retorted such claims by comparing the relative order and prosperity of the late *tanzimat* period with the anarchical age of the *ayans* that had preceded it.¹²⁷

Nationalist Bulgarian intellectuals were divided into two groups in evaluating Midhat Paşa and his governorship in the Danube Province. There was a debate dominating the writings of Bulgarians on the Paşa's policies, whether these policies were anti-Bulgarian, or not. It originated in the difficulties nationalist Bulgarians faced in accepting Midhat Paşa's policies. They were unable to decide whether they had a problem with the *tanzimat* principle of Ottomanism in general or Midhat's efforts to implement it. Especially, Midhat's response to the rebellions of Bulgarian brigands in 1867 and 1868 strengthened their ideological arguments. They argued that his dealings with these rebellious groups were the primary proof of his anti-Bulgarian bias and a rejection of confessional equality and the rule of law.¹²⁸ The Bulgarian narrative of the victorious years after 1878 portrayed Midhat Paşa as a skillful administrator, "but someone, whose efforts to strengthen the empire never stood a chance against the inexorable forces of national resurgence."¹²⁹ The years after the establishment of the Bulgarian nation state amounted to the apogee of Bulgarian criticism of Midhat Paşa and his policies.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Petrov, 2006: 320.

¹²⁸ Petrov, 2006:19-20.

¹²⁹ Petrov, 2006: 17.

¹³⁰ Petur Karapetrov wrote in *Bulgarska Sbirka* in 1899 that "Midhat Paşa regarded all Bulgarians as Pan-Slavists and Russian pawns; he considered them the most implacable enemies of the state; ...he was seeing everywhere [nationalist] *committees*; he could not stand the Bulgarian Exarchate- it was like a thorn in his eye and he sought to damage it in anyway he could. " (Petrov, 2006: 21)

As objects of political conflict, the church issues of the Balkans greatly mattered, especially in the case of Bulgarians and Greeks. Ignatiev was instrumental in accomplishing the separation of the Bulgarian church from the patriarchate of Constantinople. Ignatiev was sensitive enough not to oppose the interests of the Greeks and the Patriarchate, this complicated the dispute. Furthermore, he claimed that in case the Russians could establish an 'eastern union' (similar to the North German Confederation formed by Bismarck) with its natural capital in Constantinople, the ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople should serve not only as Greek, but truly ecumenical patriarch. Ignatiev staked his claims during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78. He sought alone to realize such a huge imperialistic purpose.

When he was a governor in the Danube Province, Midhat Paşa was found himself in the middle of this conflict. As Ignatiev, Midhat Paşa's efforts on the church dispute were to strive for a balanced politics between the Greeks and Bulgarians. Petrov states that

“as governor he largely succeeded in creating a public image of himself as a disinterested and even-handed arbiter of the issue, yet privately managed to give key players on both sides of the conflict vague or cryptic indications of his support. As a result of such skillful diplomatic maneuvering, the Paşa was able to remain on excellent terms with the lay and clerical elites of both communities engaged in struggle”.¹³¹

As Ottomanism began to undermine the *millet* system in the second half of the 19th century, the reformist minded Paşas, including Midhat, supported the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. The idea was that an independent Bulgarian Church from the Patriarchate would slowly weaken the *millet* system in favor of Ottomanism. Ignatiev was also used his influence at the Porte to come up with a solution in favor of the Bulgarians that would also allow the government to divide and rule the Christians. However, Midhat Paşa's

¹³¹ Petrov, 2006: 9.

outlook and motivation to find a solution to the church dispute, as it happened in many other issues, was very different from Ignatiev. As it would undermine the influence of the Orthodox hierarchy on both the Greek and Bulgarian populations, Midhat Paşa thought that it would strengthen the influence of the administration. But the Greek-Bulgarian Church issue in general increased the tension between the Christian communities and left an open space to find an answer the question- what if the Ottoman Empire actually did collapse? ¹³²

Midhat Paşa faced three major problems of the Ottoman Empire and its foreign relations.

1) The empire was a non-national, or multi-national state in an age of growing nationalism among many of its subjects. How could it be saved? Would equality, justice, and good government be sufficient? 2) The great powers of Europe, sometimes for humanitarian reasons but more often for selfish reasons, intervened in Ottoman affairs. How could such intervention be avoided and the independence and sovereignty of the empire maintained? 3) The major opponent and the greatest military danger was Russia. How could the danger be avoided? Could disagreements among the powers stop the threat? ¹³³

From the beginning, Midhat Paşa strove for finding solutions to these questions, but he failed. He wrongly believed that Ottomanism would be the solution of these problems. The worsening situation in Herzegovina, which was the prologue to the Great Eastern crisis, and the general tension among different confessional groups were entangled in nationalistic struggles, and unsurprisingly paved the way for Pan-Islamism. Basically, Pan-Islamism was a reprisal to the non-Muslim groups of the empire, which were unsatisfied and unruly in the regards of quite a number of prestigious Ottoman elites. This ideology grew out of the period 1868-1873 as a reaction to the nationalist uprising movements in the Balkans. Although Ottoman reforms in 1839 and 1856 tried to constitute an empire including and protecting non-Muslims, the separatist movements caused a conservative reaction in public

¹³² Glenny, 2000: 115, 124.

¹³³ Roderic Davison, "Midhat Paşa and Otoman Foreign Relations" *The Journal of Otoman Studies* V., İstanbul, 1986, p. 173.

opinion. The opponents of Europe, hereby the conservative men, who approached prudently to the reforms, and in dealing with this, the supporters of Pan-Islamism started to make their voices heard. During the 1870s, the increasing effects of Pan-Slavism (and Pan-Germanism) led to a turn to Pan-Islamism, as in the discourses of Namık Kemal. Namık Kemal had been a supporter of the other Ottoman concept, but he turned to a fervent patriotic struggle for liberty and equality within the Ottoman nation, at least among Muslim subjects.¹³⁴

In addition, the feeling of negligence dominated the Muslims in Rumelia, who also thought that superfluous concessions were given to the non-Muslims, was the reason of basic notion and discontentment behind the uneasiness of internal affairs. In this regard, it was thought that the revival of Islam could be saved by the Islamic unity.¹³⁵ One of the main characters, which distinguished Midhat Paşa from the Sultan Abdülhamid was his devotion to the idea of Ottomanism. The adherence of Abdülhamid to the ideology of Pan-Islamism disrupted his relation with Midhat Paşa in the long run. This was one of the fundamental reasons of Midhat Paşa's failure during the reign of Abdülhamid.¹³⁶

The strife between Midhat Paşa and the Sultan also brought Midhat Paşa's life to a tragic end. From the beginning of 1877 he was in exile in Europe. He was allowed to return to the empire in late 1878. Even though he was old and reluctant to be assigned as a governor, he was made governor of the province of Syria between 1878 and 1880, then replaced the governor of the province of Izmir in 1880 and stayed there until 1881. In 1881, he was arrested. He was charged with complicity in the alleged murder of the deposed Sultan

¹³⁴ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Cilt1, (İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul), 2001, pp. 88-116.

¹³⁵ Mümtazer Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, (İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul), 1991, p.204, 219. Some authors claimed that the most influential way against Russian Pan-Slavism was not Pan-Islamism, but Pan-Ottomanism. (Türköne, 1991:211)

¹³⁶ İslam Ansiklopedisi, Cilt: 30, (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul), 2005, p. 10.

Abdülaziz in 1876. He was tried, convicted and sent to harsh exile in a fortress at Taif in Arabia. On May 8, 1884 he was strangled by the soldiers of Sultan Abdülhamid.

Russian foreign policy was motivated particularly by the need to keep the empire's hard-won status as a European Great Power during the 19th century. The final century of Tsarist rule characterized essentially conservative diplomacy, despite a reputation for aggression and adventurism.¹³⁷ However, the internal crisis of Russia during the 1860s and 1870s disrupted the pursuit of the moderate foreign policy. Faced by the internal weakness and unrest, international display of power would satisfy the nationalist aspirations of Russians. A successful foreign policy was needed urgently in order to meet the challenge of nationalists, establish internal stability and create a new consensus. The autocracy may not have followed a conscious policy to overcome the crisis. In the moment of crisis, the foreign affairs followed an unforeseen path to release the tension.¹³⁸

One of the manifestations of this foreign policy was to advance Russian interests in Asia. Also, as a reaction to the suspicious approach of the Western powers toward the rising national feelings in Russia, the foreign policy aimed at wrapping Russian interests in Asia in Eurasian images. A growing belief in Russia's benefits in Asia reinforced this image. Due to the Russian defeat in the Crimean War (1853-56) and its harsh political outcomes, the Russian Empire sought to re-examine Russia's foreign policy and found a solution in their hopes and interests in Asia.¹³⁹ This does not mean that the Russians abandoned the idea of

¹³⁷ David Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oye, "Russian Foreign Policy: 1815-1917", *The Cambridge History of Russia, Volume II, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 554.

¹³⁸ Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy 1860-1914*, (Berg Publishers Ltd. NY), 1987, p. 64.

¹³⁹ "The first official document signaling a reorientation of Russia's policies was a memorandum prepared in 1856 by the Foreign Minister of A.M. Gorchakov. While there is a list of consequence that Russia can do in Europe, argued Gorchakov, there is a vast field of activities open to her in Asia; it is there that Russia's future lies." Ladis K. D. Kristof, "The Geopolitical Image of the Fatherland: The Case of Russia", *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.4, (Dec., 1967), p. 946.

the primacy of their Slav mission in the Eastern Europe. After Crimean defeat, Russian alienation from the West caused Russia's adventurous turning to Asia, even though it was not a first preference. Those who stressed Russia's separateness and spiritual autonomy still assigned to it a mission in Europe.¹⁴⁰

Ignatiev was entrusted with a mission to Bukhara and Khiva in 1858 before his appointment to the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Ministry. In his dispatches from the region, Ignatiev urged the necessity of military operations in order to protect the Russia's commercial interests there.¹⁴¹ Ignatiev pursued the policy of enthusiastic imperialism. The signs of this policy revealed in the Treaties of Aigun and Peking, signed on 1858 and 1860, respectively. Ignatiev was quite convinced that Russia's forward policy in Asia would contribute to the resurgence of the empire. It is significant that men like Ignatiev and Chernyaev, who were the influential figures in Russian expansion into Central Asia, also participated in the 1870s in the Pan-Slav movement. As a member of St. Petersburg section of the Moscow Slavonic Benevolent Committee, Ignatiev thought that Pan-Slavism was a coherent and well-targeted ideology. But still he avoided precipitous actions for the sake of this ideology.¹⁴² Russian colonial expansion was supported by Pan-Slavic and imperial Russian ideologies because a powerful Russian empire would also guarantee the Russian demands in Eastern and Southern Europe.¹⁴³ As having an imperial vision, Ignatiev devoted himself to the Russian course in both Europe and Asia.

Ignatiev, "the Tsar's Machiavellian envoy to the Porte" as Geyer named him, was decisive to take an active role in the Balkans for the benefit of Russia in consultation with the Pan-

¹⁴⁰ Kristof, 1967: 947.

¹⁴¹ Geyer, 1987: 91-92.

¹⁴² Geyer, 1987: 72-73.

¹⁴³ Geyer, 1987: 94.

Slavic movement by cooperating with Prince A. I. Bariatinskii, Viceroy of Caucasus since the beginning of his post in Istanbul.¹⁴⁴ Revision of Treaty of Paris was on the agenda of Ignatiev, as it was one of the main concerns of St. Petersburg. The anti-Ottoman insurrection in Crete in 1867-9 might have sparked a general revolt in the Balkans against the Porte and to Ignatiev, this would provide grounds for denouncing the Treaty for Russia. However, Gorchakov declared the principle of non-interference at the end of October 1867. In 1871, Russia gained some modest acquisitions, such as the renouncement of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty with the support of the Bismarck. Contrary to expectations of Russian government, the defeat of French did not give Russia an opportunity to unite all Slavs.

Ignatiev was a strong supporter of political freedom of the Balkan Slavs from the Ottoman rule. He also proposed the establishment of a confederation containing of Rumelian provinces of the Ottoman Empire under the protection of Russia.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, his semi-independent course in 1870s caused a perplexing duality in the policy of Russian foreign affairs.¹⁴⁶ The lack of cooperation and coordination between the Foreign Ministry and its nominal subordinate Asiatic Department was one of the main reasons behind the Russia's failure in the Balkans. His isolation from the actual politics of the empire in the course of last several decades of his life rooted in a profound disjuncture between his imperial vision and the supporters of the status quo within the Foreign Ministry.

Ignatiev expected to be sent to Berlin for the negotiations of the peace treaty, but it did not happen. He was informed about the Congress when he was with his family in Kiev. Gorchakov and Shuvalov were the Russian delegates in the Congress. Shuvalov was well

¹⁴⁴ Geyer, 1987: 66.

¹⁴⁵ HR. SYS. Dosya No:183, Gömlek No:2.

¹⁴⁶ David Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oye, "Russian Foreign Policy: 1815-1917", *The Cambridge History of Russia, Volume II, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, Cambridge University Press, 2006: 573; MecKenzie, 1994: 59-60, 68.

known for his reaction to nationalist and centralist forces directing against the Baltic provinces and Poland, and as well as his resistance to Pan-Slav pressures.¹⁴⁷ What he said to Andrassy, who was the Austria-Hungarian Foreign Minister (1871-1879) and the great opponent of Ignatiev, proves Shuvalov's opposition to Ignatiev's mission.

The San Stefano pact was a misfortune for us, not for you. It was the greatest stupidity that we could have made. The end of the story is that we are compelled to tear it up under the eyes of all Europe. The Bulgaria which Ignatiev wished to create is an absurdity. Europe is not, as Gorchakov thinks, inflamed with anger, it is merely amused.¹⁴⁸

Ignatiev's attachment to the creation of Bulgarian and Balkan states won him a reputation for liberalism in Russia.¹⁴⁹ Yet, he was known as both liberal and conservative by various people. However, it was his reputation for liberalism which caused Ignatiev's dismissal from his post as the Minister of Interior. Ignatiev replaced M.T. Loris-Melikov as the Minister of Interior after the assassination of Alexander II. The statesman behind the appointment of Ignatiev was Pobedonostsev who was an opponent of Loris-Melikov. Pobedonostsev supported Ignatiev's appointment by sending a dispatch to Alexander III:

Ignatiev still has healthy Russian instincts and a Russian soul, and his name enjoys a good reputation among the healthy elements of the Russian population-the ordinary people.¹⁵⁰

In 1882, when Ignatiev as the Minister of Interior, presented a plan to Alexander III to call for a national assembly of the *zemsky sobors*, the Tsar under the influence of Pobedonostev refuted his proposal as the recurrence of Slavophile nationalism and as dangerously revolutionary. For Pobedonostev, Ignatiev's plan amounted to the equivalent of Pan-Slavism

¹⁴⁷ Richard G. Weeks, Jr., "Peter Shuvalov and the Congress of Berlin: A reinterpretation", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 51, No.1, (March, 1979), p. D1058.

¹⁴⁸ Weeks, 1979:D1062.

¹⁴⁹ For the points of resemblance between Ignatiev and Gladstone, see Stead's chapter in *Truth About Russia*, entitled "the Russian Mr. Gladstone". pp.259-269.

¹⁵⁰ Heilbronner, 1961: 388.

in foreign affairs. This was the end of Ignatiev's career as a minister.¹⁵¹ After his one year ministerial work, he remained as a member of the state council but lived in retirement until his death in 1908. Two names inscribed in his epitaph were the very good summary of his diplomatic career: "Peking and San Stefano".¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Stead, 1888:298.

¹⁵² Ignatieff, 1987: 83.

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