

# **TOWN AND TRIBE: THE CONFLICT BETWEEN *AŞİRET* (TRIBE) AND *EŞRAF* (NOBILITY) IN OTTOMAN DİYARBEKİR (1891-1909)**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **THE OTTOMAN TOWN BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Why start the introductory section of this article with a discussion of the very broad title, “Town and Tribe”, when this title is limited as regards time and place through the continuation “The Conflict Between Tribe and Nobility in Ottoman Diyarbekir (1891-1909)” The reason will become clear when our analysis of a rather specific area is considered within the context of general theories about this topic.

Right from the start I should indicate that this article is part of a series of urban history studies that approaches critically the classical historiography on towns in Turkey. Therefore it contains in itself a hidden criticism of this historiography. This criticism targets “uniform” or “centralist” approaches to the concept of “Islamic Town” and its corollary “Ottoman Town”, which result in rigid categorisations. Scholarship about the developments that led to the disintegration of the Ottoman State and the foundation of the Republic has been dominated by approaches that often put the centre in the foreground and neglect the provinces. In this context many features characteristic of the provinces were either missed or linked back to the centre and thus deprived of their provincial element. The disintegration of the Ottoman State itself happened right after a period that had substituted extremely centralist methods for much less centralist methods of long standing. The Republic that was then founded was built on a paradigm that linked everything back to the centre and sought to make it uniform. For the nationalism of the Republic, which rested on homogeneity, retreat from the centre as well as increase in diversity posed a vital risk. Perception of this risk necessarily led to contempt of all that was related to the provinces, despite all populist talk, and to the notion that history was predominantly made from the administrative core. This situation determined for a long time the basic starting point for historical study: “the centre”.

Indeed, even the discovery of the provinces and the development of academic sub-disciplines such as local history and urban history did not lead to great changes in the approach that put the centre in the foreground. The provinces were an “object” that did (could) not transcend the boundaries that the core had determined. Consequently two different researchers studying two different Ottoman cities that were considered provincial in terms of history, culture, ethnicity, religion and geography would arrive at the same conclusions even if they focused on different centuries, because the provinces were something that the centre “created” and were definitely to be read from a centralist point of view. The Ottoman provinces that are thus imagined are a theoretical construct and reflect not the provinces themselves but rather the image that the centre had formed of them. Consequently the interpretative frameworks that had their roots in Ottoman centralism were generally even more rigid than the methods applied by the Ottomans themselves.

Once one goes beyond this rigid centralist approach, one can speak of a reality of each Ottoman town that is specific to it and stands in a close relationship to the town’s pre-Ottoman phase. Benevolo’s dictum about European towns, namely that “the history of the

organism town is by definition a history of singular examples, which need to be looked at separately” (2006: 4), must be applied to Islamic-Ottoman, or more generally, to Eastern towns, if we wish to do justice to these towns.

This article will attempt to formulate a criticism of the above-mentioned approach on a “micro” level through the categories “town/location”, “parties/classes” and “individual/persons”. Before, however, it needs to be pointed out that this study does not endeavour to prove the opposite of the approach that it criticises. Therefore it will not invalidate claims that the provinces are predominant. It will not employ conceptualisations that do not reflect the perceptions of the period on which we work nor make references to perceptions with very clear/deep boundaries that the modern mind has imposed by employing the categories of centre-hinterland-provincial-local. Instead the study will have the following boundaries: the setting is the town of Diyarbekir (whose Ottoman name was Amid), the time is the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the clashing and co-existing sides are tribe and nobility, the persons are Milli Ibrahim and Ziya Gökalp. The study will on the one hand reconstruct the web of events and on the other hand engage with the classical approach that has been briefly mentioned above. A gradually narrowing and deepening approach will shed light on the relationship between the town centre of Diyarbekir and the countryside, the relationship between townsmen (nobility) and tribe and in parallel to these developments the behaviour of the chief of the Milli tribe İbrahim Pasha and of Ziya Gökalp.

## 1. OTTOMAN RULE IN DİYARBEKİR

Diyarbekir came under Ottoman rule in September 1515 after the Battle of Çaldıran through the efforts of Bıyıklı Mehmed Pasha, whom Sultan Selim I had appointed *serdar* (commander) for the conquest of the region, of Mevlana İdris-i Bitlisi and of the Kurdish emirs. The region that was taken from the Safavids was organised as a province with Amid as its centre. Although its boundaries changed over time the province continued to exist until the disintegration of the Ottoman State. During this period it changed its name only once, between 1848 and 1868, to “Province of Kurdistan” (SDAO, def’a 3-def’a 22).

Diyarbekir had been ruled by big centralist states as an administrative unit that included roughly the upper Tigris basin and that had “Amid” as its centre. This process led to the formation of local elites, which had learnt through experience that they could continue their activities in the Diyarbekir area despite the centralist powers. These elites, which can be characterised as “local powers”, were fundamentally composed of the Kurdish emirates and the tribes on which the emirates were based on the one hand and of the nobility in the town centres on the other.

A superficial evaluation of Diyarbekir based on theories privileging the centre results in the definition of a province where the centre alone shaped the administrative structure and where sharp historical breaks were experienced. However, more serious readings show that the province carried an important share of its specific features through historical continuity into the Ottoman period. One of the clearest reflections of these specific features is without doubt the elites that we have earlier characterised as local powers and the relationships of these elites with each other.

On the eve of the Ottoman domination, during meetings between the Kurdish emirs of the region and the representative of the Ottoman State, an administrative system was

envisaged that allowed the local emirates to continue in their existence (Feridun Bey, 1859: 419-420; Sevgen, 1982: 30; Epiözdemir, 2005: 19). Moreover, during the first administrative structuring after the Ottoman take-over arrangements were made that would perpetuate the existence of these emirates within the Ottoman administrative system. According to these arrangements there existed not only administrative units, which were directly dependent on the Ottoman State, but also units named *yurdluk-ocaklık* and *hükümet sancak* where the emirs preserved to a great extent their own traditional rights of government. The most important reason for the continuation of the emirates in the region where the Ottoman State had just established its dominance was the need for the support of the local powers especially against the Iranian danger. The fact that the Kurdish emirates in the region continued to exist within the framework of the *yurdluk-ocaklık* and *hükümet* systems can be regarded as the most important indicator that the characteristics specific to the region were not completely annihilated in Ottoman theory (Ayn-ı Ali Efendi, 1280: 29; Akgündüz, 1992: 463). One of the most important advantages of the *yurdluk-ocaklık* and *hükümet* systems from the point of view of the state was that the emirates controlled the semi-nomadic Kurdish tribes with their wide areas of movement. The classical approach emphasises that the tribes were in constant conflict with the centre because they shirked their military and financial responsibilities and engaged in plunder and other disruptive activities. What exacerbated the conflict further was the wish of the central administration that the nomadic tribes take up settled life. Yet the existence of the *yurdluk-ocaklık* and *hükümet* systems gave the relations between state and tribe in the province of Diyarbekir a different dimension. The emirates that continued to exist within this system until the second half of the nineteenth century played a mitigating role in these confrontations and conflicts through their function as mediators between state and tribe.

Although the emirates largely brought the tribes under their control and played an important role in the wars between the Ottoman State and Iran, the Ottoman government considered them as structures that diluted centralism. When the necessary conditions were fulfilled or rather when the Ottoman government found this strength within itself it did not shrink from putting an end to the traditional governments of the emirates. In the eighteenth century struggles with one another and even more so the decrease in the level of conflict between Iran and the Ottoman state set in train the process by which the Ottoman State would put an end to the privileges of the emirates and absorb them into the central government. By the second half of the nineteenth century the emirates had been almost completely abolished. This abolishment led to an increase in the tendency of Kurdish tribes to move independently and thus ushered in a period in the region that has been characterised as “the time of the tribes” (Epiözdemir, 2005: 123). After publication of the Tanzimat Edict the attempts of the Ottoman State to increase centralism and the efforts of the tribes to preserve their independence resulted in a situation where the tribes and the centralist powers - as well as the nobility as representatives of the centre - faced each other as adversaries.

Whereas in the hinterland emirates and tribes were the dominant features, in the case of the town of Amid, the centre of the province, it was the nobility. The nobility consisted of families that had access to political channels which gave them permanent influence in the city. Since they were given the task of controlling a wide area (the so-called *paşa sancak*, or administrative centre of the province) they had close relations with the centre. In the efforts of the town and the townspeople to entrench themselves against the central government and the tribes the most important role was played by those families, which saw the town as the

mainstay of their existence. The nobility, which produced strategies in order to protect their historical status as leading families of the town, generally harnessed the power of the centre and in this context found itself in a patronage relationship with the centre. Nevertheless the nobility did not hesitate to go against the central power when their own interests required it (Özcoşar, 2009: 113).

While the administration of the city was in theory in the hands of the centralist state, in practice one can speak of a balance of power between the three components of tribe, nobility and state. Spengler's evaluation that the relationship between town and hinterland is a basic opposition in the order of human existence (see Martindale, 2000: 113) can give us a better understanding of the triad of tribe, nobility and state. The following equations arise: the state as the real centre, the province as its hinterland, the *paşa sancak* and the nobility as the centre of the province, and the countryside and the tribes as the hinterland of the province.

In practice centres and hinterlands are doubtlessly much less clearly bounded. There were areas and periods where town and hinterland merged. However, these did not remove the "deep opposition" (Simmel, 2008: 6) between town and life in the hinterland. Besides "dense settled population, institutionalisation, hierarchy, political centralism, dominance of written over oral culture, specialisation and cultural variety" (Tuğal, 2002: 58) the clearest indicator of this opposition is the form of the relationship with the central power.

There were periods when the general strategies within the triangle of nobility, tribe and state changed. However, it cannot be said that these changes were long-term and deep. Only the period of Abdulhamid II presents an important exception. Abdulhamid II pursued a policy of deeper alliance with the tribes - at least with the Kurdish tribes - in a form that had until then not been attempted. The impact of this policy on Diyarbekir was a reversal of the abovementioned classical positions. In the period of Abdulhamid II the tribes in Diyarbekir became the allies of the centre whereas the nobility found itself in the opposition. This new policy changed the shape and form of the classical relationship between tribe and town/nobility. The most important vehicle for this new form of relationship was the Hamidiye Regiments. Before the foundation of the Hamidiye Regiments the tribes had tried to gain influence in the towns because of their importance as administrative centres and as markets. However, these efforts could only be effective in the short term in towns of a second and third order from the point of view of the administration like Mardin, Cizre and Midyat. They could rarely be effective in important towns and centres of provinces of the first order such as Diyarbekir. Even the area close to the city had been cleansed of tribes through a conscious policy of the nobility and had been turned into a "safe area". The change in the balance of power that was brought about by the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments gave the tribes, which had the support of the centre, an opportunity to gain influence over the town centre of Diyarbekir. The group that availed itself of this opportunity most successfully were the Milli tribe and the leader of this tribe, Ibrahim Pasha. In this process the efforts of the Milli tribe to gain influence over the town led to a renewed flaring up of the conflict between the Milli tribe and the nobility of Diyarbekir, which by that time already had a historical dimension.

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE NOBILITY OF DİYARBEKİR AND THE MİLLİ TRIBE**

There is no doubt that in the first half of the nineteenth century the nobility, and in particular the Şeyhzade family, were highly influential in the administration of the city.

Şeyhzade Ibrahim, the grandson of Şeyh Yusuf Veli and the son of Şeyh Yusuf oğlu İsmail, was twice, in 1800 and in 1809-1813, provincial governor. Before he became governor he had served at various intervals during the years between 1788 and 1792 as *mütesellim* (tax collector) and as *voyvoda* (district chief). When Şeyhzade Ibrahim was *mütesellim* a complaint was made by the mufti of the Şafites that he had raided the house of the mufti of the Hanefites and oppressed the people. As a result he was removed from office. The fact that his successor, Şey Yusuf oğlu İsmail, belonged to the same family shows the high degree of influence that the Şeyzade family had on the town in this period (Yılmazçelik, 1995: 194-195). Şeyhzade Ibrahim Pasha's first stint as provincial governor in 1800 lasted less than a year, then he was deposed and appointed provincial governor of Abyssinia. In his place Çorumlu Hüseyin Pasha was appointed (Bulduk 2007: 140). Hüseyin Pasha's most important helper and at the same time his tax collector was Ibrahim Bey, the *kethüda* (steward) of Şeyzade Ibrahim Pasha (Yılmazçelik, 1995: 254). What one can see is that the Şeyzade family, despite Ibrahim Pasha's appointment as provincial governor of Abyssinia, remained influential in the administration of the city through another Ibrahim. Mehmed Şerif Pasha, who was appointed provincial governor in 1808, clashed with the alliance between the Şeyzade family and the mufti probably because he tried to break the power of the nobility (Bulduk, 2007: 144-145). When Ibrahim Pasha again became provincial governor in 1809 his tenure lasted four years, which is quite a long stretch when compared with the tenures of other provincial governors of the period.

What happened in the administration of the town during the first half of the century shows that the nobility fought for control and exploitation of the city both with one another and with the administrators appointed by the centre. In 1819 a party entered the fray that cannot be considered new but that had for a long time not participated in the conflicts: the tribe. The most important advantage of the town's being a *paşa sancak* was that it provided a powerful base against powers from outside town and that over time it allowed the cleansing of the neighbouring areas from tribes. With the appointment in 1819 of Deli Behram Pasha who was a member of the Milli tribe the town lost this advantage for a period. The appointment of a member of the Milli tribe, which experienced difficulties with some of the nobility of the town and especially with the Şeyhzade up to the point of blood feuds, shows that the central government intended to discipline the nobility by means of the tribes.

The bad blood between the Milli tribe and the Şeyhzade family stemmed from a radically different appointment that took place approximately 27 years earlier. In 1792 the task of punishing the Milli tribe was given to the officials in Diyarbekir and Şeyhzade Ibrahim, the *mütesellim* of Diyarbekir, was entrusted with the punishment of Timur, the chief of the Milli tribe. While performing this duty Şeyhzade Ibrahim had recourse to force and was even sent into exile because he had exceeded what was considered the permissible amount of violence (Beysanoğlu, 1957: 241). However, Şeyhzade Ibrahim was later pardoned and again appointed tax collector, this time of Rakka, with the task, again, of punishing Timur, the chief of the Milli tribe. Şeyhzade Ibrahim performed this task so successfully that Timur was forced to flee to the provincial governor of Baghdad (Beysanoğlu, 1994: 684-685).

These events, which took place shortly before Behram Pasha was appointed provincial governor, were probably still fresh in the memory of the tribe. The attitude that Behram Pasha assumed as soon as he came into the town shows that he was intent on revenge. According to oral accounts, which were preserved by the nobility, Behram Pasha frightened the people by saying: "The state has charged me with correcting you, I will kill you, I will

cut you down, I will plunder your possessions and burn down your houses” (Bulduk, 2007: 151). Ahmed Cevdet Pasha analysed the official documents regarding this event, which are preserved in the centre, that is, the documents that the governor Behram Pasha and his entourage sent. He states that “*since the people of Diyarbekir had not been punished for what they had repeatedly done they have become puffed up and have again created such a problem*” (1994: 2554-2655).

The strategy that Behram Pasha pursued after he had come to Diyarbekir was to gain the support of some members of the nobility. It cannot be said that he had difficulties with this strategy. In 1817 and 1823 a natural alliance was forged between Behram Pasha and the Güranzade family whose representatives of the town administration had been executed probably due to the pressure of the Şeyhzade family (Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, 1994: 2508; Beysanoğlu, 1957: 283; Yılmazçelik, 1995: 194). In response Şeyhzade Hafid Mehmed, together with his allies, especially the mufti, gained the support of the people of Diyarbekir and staged a rebellion against the provincial governor. According to Ahmed Cevdet Pasha the rebels, with the support of some robbers, forced the governor to take refuge in the citadel of Diyarbekir. In response the governor who was also a tribal chief called the Milli tribe and suppressed the rebellion with the help of Eyüb Bey, the *iskanbaşı* (leader) of the Milli tribe, and of Telli Ibrahim and Hüseyin Bey from the Diyarbekir tribes. After this success Eyüb Bey, Telli Ibrahim and Hüseyin Bey received honours whereas Şeyhzade Hafidi Mehmed and his supporters had property confiscated and were exiled (Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, 1994: 2655). However, since the events in the town made it impossible for Behram Pasha to discharge his duties he, too, was deposed (Bulduk, 2007: 151). After this event the power of the nobility was broken to a large extent, yet the conflict between the Güranzade and Şeyhzade families continued until the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict.

The Tanzimat Edict brought with it modernisation and centralisation in the administrative sphere in the province of Diyarbekir, as it did everywhere in the empire. According to the words of Ş. Mardin (1992: 52) the Tanzimat resulted in the state’s “going deeper into the periphery”. Even though the province of Diyarbekir was not included in the stipulations of the Tanzimat Edict the effect of the growing efforts to centralise could be seen almost immediately. The most important development in this respect was the termination of the Kurdish emirates in the name of centralisation. The province of Kurdistan, which was founded after the emirate of the emir of Cizre, Bedirhan Bey, had been abolished (1847-1868), was an attempt completely to neutralise the regional powers. It was thought that after the abolition of the emirates the tribes would fragment and thus be more easily controlled. However, the reality turned out to be very different. When the emirates, which had for a long time functioned as a superstructure for the tribal confederations, were abolished the tribes began to move as they liked and increased their activities in the region and particularly in the countryside. The solution that the state found for this problem was to break the regional powers by creating a new provincial structure. Through this strategy the province of Diyarbekir was turned, with some minor changes, into the province of Kurdistan. In order to neutralise the regional powers the administrative boundaries were changed and there was an attempt to set up new administrative centres. In 1848 the governor of Kurdistan wanted to move the centre of the province to Ahlat. However, in the end Amid was again made *paşa sancak* (Özcoşar, 2009: 81). This shows that the Ottoman State did not have the power to create a centre in the region by disregarding historical developments.

In 1868 the province of Kurdistan received back its old name, province of Diyarbekir. At the same time more rigidly centralising policies were pursued in keeping with the general policy of the post-Tanzimat period. The nobility was included in the administrative structure by means of councils in the town centres whereas the tribes in the countryside were meant to be taken under control by militia units. However, all these centralising policies were turned upside down with the new policies that Abdulhamid II pursued in the region, the school for tribes (Rogan, 1996: 83-107) and the foundation of the Hamidiye Regiments. The most important representative of these policies of Abdulhamid II in the region was the Milli tribe and its leader, Ibrahim Pasha.

### **3. TRIBE: MİLLİ İBRAHİM AND THE HAMİDİYE REGIMENT**

Ibrahim Pasha was born in 1845. His father Mahmud held the post of chief of the Milli tribe, which by this time had become considerably weakened. The tribe had received harsh blows in the previous ten years. Firstly, during the Egyptian troubles they had been found at the side of Ibrahim Pasha, the spiritual son of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha. The then chief of the tribe, Temavi (or Timur the Younger), the grandson of Timur Pasha, had helped the Egyptian forces by attacking the Ottoman forces in Mardin and was later apprehended and killed (Muhammad Ali Beg, 2009: 55). Secondly, during the uprising of Bedirhan, Millizade Ali Bey provided support for İmadiyeli Ismail Bey, one of the allies of Bedirhan Bey. Later he was apprehended and sent into exile in Ruschuk together with his brother Sadun (BOA, MKT.MVL. 45/43; 50/73). Beside these factors the attitude of the centre towards the Kurdish tribes in the region after the termination of the emirate of Cizre also played an important role and broke the power of the tribe to a great extent. According to Bruinessen (2008: 95) the linking of the power of the Kurdish tribes to smaller tribes, which joined them when “things went well”, can be regarded as an explanation for the weakening of the Milli tribe in this process.

An important indicator of the decrease in the power of the tribe is the shrinking of its field of action. The tribe that had previously been active in the region between the provinces of Diyarbekir, Aleppo and Mosul, was in this period wedged between Viranşehir and Mardin. Whereas at the beginning of the century the governor of Bagdad was forced to join forces with the governors of Rakka and Aleppo in order to be able to contend with the Milli tribe, now the deputy of the kaymakam (district chief) of Mardin was sufficient for the task. Ibrahim’s father Mahmud, about whom frequent complaints were lodged concerning unlawful activities in the region, was arrested by Hacı Ömer, the deputy of the *kaymakam* of Mardin and deprived of all his possessions (Muhammed Ali Beg, 2009: 56).

The arrest of his father started the process that conferred on Ibrahim the post of tribal chief. In the stories of the tribe it is said that after the arrest of his father Ibrahim went to Egypt and took refuge with the Khedive Ismail. According to these stories the Khedive interceded for the Milli tribe with Sultan Abdulaziz and obtained for Ibrahim an audience with the sultan. After this audience Mahmud Bey was set free and his possessions were returned to him (Sykes, 1915: 320; Muhammed Ali Beg, 2009: 55). If this story, of which we have found no trace in the Ottoman sources, is true, Ibrahim’s going to Egypt and his reception there by the khedive not as a refugee but as an “emir” shows two things about the Milli tribe. Firstly, the structure that we regard as a tribe from our contemporary point of view was seen at the time at least in some circles as an “emirate”. In the biography written

by Ibrahim Pasha's grandson one finds important emphases in this respect (see: Muhammed Ali Beg, 2009). Secondly, the support that the Milli tribe gave the Egyptian forces was greater than recorded in the sources and this co-operation led to an alliance between them and the Egyptians.

Even after Mahmud Bey had been set free, Ibrahim Bey continued to be the chief of the tribe and attempted to bring together the tribe and to increase its power. From this one can gather that, outside periods of serious crisis, such a bringing together was not difficult. At the same time the radius of activity of the tribe was broadened. In this period when the Milli tribe began to recover its strength a new conflict arose. When the state undertook a census in order to register the tribes for the purposes of taxation and military recruitment the tribes fled and refused to be registered. During this conflict in which the Milli tribe was one of the most important actors the tribes clashed frequently both with each other and with the official forces (BOA, MKT.MHM., 1594/99; 1631/16; 1643/11). During this entire conflict the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments changed the flow of the process. Through the Hamidiye Regiments Abdulhamid II created in a sense an alliance with the tribes. This idea did not originate with Abdulhamid. It was first floated by Şakir Pasha who had been ambassador in Petersburg (Tepeyan, 1998:440). His source of inspiration was the Cossack Regiments for which the Russians had enlisted Cossacks. This idea was then further developed and proposed to the sultan by Müşir Zeki Pasha who prepared a report about reform activities (Karaca, 1993: 174; Karal, ty:364). Müşir Zeki Pasha's effort to persuade the sultan bore fruit relatively quickly, and with astonishing speed steps were taken to found the Hamidiye Regiments. According to Abdurrahman Bedirhan the formation of the Regiments took place so quickly that "even the *serasker* (army chief), who had not been properly informed about the essence of the matter, was astonished" (Bedirhan Paşaoğlu Abdurrahman, 1317: 12).

In the first statute for the Hamidiye Regiments the reason for the formation of the regiments is given as "its organization was necessary for the protection of the homeland against transgressions and aggressions by foreign powers" (Kodaman, 1987: 33-34) and it is stressed that they were exclusively created to ward off attacks from the outside. Even if it is not openly stated, what was meant by "foreign powers" was first of all Russia. Nevertheless, however low the probability of actual conflict might be, the region had also become a sphere of interest for England. The fact that in the war of 1877-1878 the Armenians had shown that if necessary they could take an active role in the conflicts and the formation of Armenian armed organizations makes one also think that the Hamidiye Regiments were a precaution not only against "foreign powers" but also against the Armenians (Bedirhan Paşaoğlu Abdurrahman, 1317: 12).

In the same statute the reason for choosing the Kurdish tribes is given as "by the members of the tribes who until now have not done military service through an effective military organization and who are nomads despite being famous and used to fighting" (Kodaman, 1987: 34). By means of the regiments the state planned to control the tribes with whom it had until then experienced problems. However, this was not only about controlling the tribes. The Kurds had now begun to be an element in the balance of power in the region. England, which realised that by solely relying on the Armenians it could not achieve much in the region, extended its sphere of interest to the Kurds as well. Even if rumours about English support during the uprising of Şeyh Ubeydullah and claims that Kurdish nationalism was a factor in the uprising cannot be proved, England was certainly moving in this



direction. Even if it was just a rumour, there is no doubt that a suspicious character like Abdulhamid II would make strong efforts after such a rumour in order to tie the Kurdish tribes to himself. Abdulhamid II's approach to the Kurdish tribes who had for years been the target of settlement policies would show its effect very soon and the Kurdish tribes, which referred to him as "Bavê Kurdan" (Father of the Kurds) (Kıran, 2003: 169), were to become one of the sultans most loyal allies within the empire.

The Hamidiye Regiments, while opening the way for the formation of a legitimate armed force, also presented important advantages through the conferral of tax immunity. These advantages raised the interest of the tribes in the regiments even more. Many chiefs of tribes went to Istanbul to pledge their loyalty to the sultan and participate in the Hamidiye Regiments. The tribes that could not go to Istanbul conferred with Müşir Zeki Pasha in Erzinçan, which was the centre of the IV. Army, and made their requests to join the regiments there. Through the Hamidiye Regiments the Ottomans strengthened their influence in the region while chiefs of tribes also protected their positions and rights (Muhammed Emin Zeki Beg, 2010: 235). When they are assessed from the angle of the relationship between centre and periphery, however, it can be said that "the sultan at the same time inculcated into the Muslim Ottoman periphery the feeling that they were one and the same thing as the centre" (Mardin, 1992: 49).

Among the chiefs of tribes who went to Istanbul in 1891 was the chief of the Milli tribe, Ibrahim Bey (Kıran, 2003:171). In a ceremony that took place on the first day of the Ramadan feast in Diyarbakır a standard was given by the Miralay Vehbi Bey to the first regiment that Ibrahim Bey had formed. Information about the ceremony and the regiment is found in a telegraph that Zeki Pasha sent to the Yıldız palace, which Abdulhamid used as administrative centre. According to it the discipline of the regiment, which took part in the ceremony in uniforms that Ibrahim Pasha had specifically prepared, was such that one would not look for better in the regiments of the regular army, and two days later two more regiments were formed by the same tribe (BOA, Y.PRK. ASK., 81/34). Due to his role in the regiments the chief of the Milli tribe Ibrahim whom Abdulhamid II addressed as "my son" (Kıran, 2003: 175) and who was known in the Milli tribe as "son of Sultan Abdulhamid" (Muhammad Ali Beg, 2009: 59) became in a short time one of the most influential names in the region.

In 1893 Ibrahim Bey, who took the title of pasha as *mirliva* (brigadier general) of the Hamidiye Regiments dependent on the *liva* (brigade) of Mardin, received the rank of "ferik" as general commander of the Hamidiye Regiments and thus became responsible not only for the brigade of Mardin but for all regiments (Karaca, 1993: 177). In 1895 there were four regiments, the 41., 42., 43. and 44. regiments, made up of members of the Milli tribe. At the head of the 41. and 44. regiments was Ibrahim Pasha himself as *kaymakam* (district chief) whereas at the head of the 42. regiment was his son Ismail with the rank of *binbaşı* (major), and at the head of the 43. regiment was his son Mahmud Bey with the rank of district chief (BOA, İrade-i Askeri Vesika No: 14). Besides, the major Yusuf Abdullah, one of the leading figures of the Milli tribe, commanded the 46. regiment, which was made up of the Dekori and Milli tribes (Karaca, 1993: 177).

The Hamidiye Regiments gave the Milli tribe an important advantage over their enemies. This advantage, which is reflected in Milli Ibrahim's ambitious titles such as "emir of emirs of Kurdistan" (Muhammed Ali Beg, 2009: 59), created at the same time a many-sided environment of conflict. In this period the tribe clashed with three powers: the Şammar

tribe, the Karakeçi tribe and the nobility of Diyarbekir.

#### **4. NOBILITY: ZİYA GÖKALP, ITC AND THE ARMENIAN EVENTS**

In the period of Abdulhamid II the relationship between the three elements tribe, nobility and state was, at least as regards the province of Diyarbekir, almost completely reversed. Whereas a few years earlier the tribes and especially the Milli tribe, which was not a “reformed tribe”, and its chief Ibrahim Pasha, had been the target of plans for “deportation and correction” (Ali Emiri, 2005: 35), the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments all of a sudden revived the threat of the tribes, which had decreased after the abolition of the emirates and the Tanzimat Edict. In the words of C. Asena who belonged to the nobility (1980: 297), while the tribe “had faced extinction and misery ... with the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments it was revived in a more extensive manner and greatly broadened its sphere of influence in all directions”. This sudden change worried the nobility, which did not want to lose their influence in the town. Jongerden (2012: 66) links this worry (or even fear) to three factors: (1) Milli Ibrahim Pasha might have a negative influence over trade in Diyarbekir by changing the trade roads. (2) He might put pressure on the villages and agricultural lands in the vicinity of Diyarbekir, which were mostly in the hands of the nobility. (3) He might deprive Diyarbekir of its status as centre in the region by promoting Viranşehir.

The fear of the nobility, which was based on experience in the recent history of the town, was not misplaced. Even earlier the Milli tribe had taken steps to turn the direction of markets from Diyarbekir to Aleppo because they wished to counter the strategy of the merchants in the town to buy cheaply the products of the tribes. Later on Ibrahim Pasha employed the same strategy against the nobility that was opposed to him (Kıran, 2003:142-149). Many villages right next to the town were in the hands of the nobility. These villages, which due to tax immunities were quite profitable, were one of the bases of the economic power of the nobility (BOA, BEO, 1517/113739). Thus it is not surprising that Milli Ibrahim’s first target were these villages (Tüten, 1958: 319). As regards the promotion of Viranşehir as an alternative for Diyarbekir, the most important difference between Milli Ibrahim and classic chiefs of tribes was his effort to found a city. Despite his efforts to boost the status of Viranşehir, which he called “Qızamin” (my daughter) (Kıran, 2003: 159) it was for various historical and geographical reasons not quite possible to turn it into an alternative for Diyarbekir. Nevertheless the importance that the chief of the Milli tribe accorded to Viranşehir caused anxiety among the nobility of Diyarbekir.

One reason for the anxiety that the Hamidiye Regiments caused in the town was doubtlessly the classic opposition/conflict between tribe and nobility. However, the anxiety did not just stem from this classic conflict. The nobility had a not negligible experience, which they had gained through long years of conflict. This experience had taught the nobility ways in which they could meet the attacks of the tribes. However, the tribes had through the Hamidiye Regiments gained a power that went beyond the traditional tribal structure. Through the formation of the regiments the tribes had for the first time become officials of the state with a wide range of authority. The nobility, on the other hand, had for the first time lost the support of the state against the tribes. Confronted with this system a small minority of the nobility, out of conservative reflexes, came to regard the tribes as representatives of the central state and were prepared to work with them. The majority, however, preferred to remain in opposition against this policy.

The oppositional stance of the nobility during this period was different from what it had been in the past. In such situations the opposition of the nobility had previously been of a strictly local nature. The period in which the tribes increased their influence in the town through the Hamidiye Regiments was at the same time a period when the first organised modern opposition came into existence in the Ottoman State. While the classic dimensions of the conflict between tribe and nobility continued, this development opened the way for the nobility of Diyarbekir to join the general opposition in the country and to adopt new formulae. The ideological substructure that spread among the nobility was fuelled by the conflict between tribe and nobility and in turn fuelled the conflict by giving it an ideological dimension and taking it beyond the classic forms. The ideological dimension of the conflict was added through the influence of the general opposition in the empire, the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, ITC), on the opposition in the town. The name that in this context gained the greatest prominence was Ziya Gökalp who later came to be regarded as one of the most important theoreticians of the Republic.

The family of Ziya Gökalp, who was born in Diyarbekir in 1876, had migrated from Çermik to Diyarbekir at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first representatives of the family were peasants and merchants. However, two generations later some members of the family attended madrasas and acted as kadıs and muftıs. This changed the profile of the family and permitted the third generation to gain high status in the town and become influential. The family's surname Müftüzade (BOA, DH.MKT., 2098/26), which is reflected in official Ottoman documents, was used after this period. The Müftüzade family, which in the town were relative newcomers, thereafter continued to play a role in the life of the city through middle-ranking posts. Ziya's father Mehmed Tevfik Efendi served as director of the *vilayet evrak odası* (archive of the province) and of the printing press (DVS, Def'a 5-Def'a 12: 1290-1302) and as *nüfus naziri* (director of the census), and also played an active role in the publication of the *Diyarbekir Gazetesi* and the *salnâme* (yearbooks). Tevfik Efendi who owned a large library was known as a connoisseur of Oriental literature (Beysanoğlu, 1956:2). Ziya's mother was the daughter of Pirinçzade Salih Ağa from the Diyarbekir nobility. The Pirinçzade family was an influential family in the life of the town, which even laid claim to the office of mayor. When Ziya showed the typical reflexes of the nobility this was largely due to the influence of his uncle Pirinçzade Arif Bey and his cousin Feyzi Bey.

Ziya Gökalp who first became acquainted with the modern opposition in the Ottoman State by reading the works of Namık Kemal at the prompting of his father (Şapolyon, 1943:18-20) is known as the founder of the Committee of Union and Progress in Diyarbekir. In both oral accounts about when the Committee of Union and Progress was founded in Diyarbekir Ziya Gökalp is at the centre. The first oral account states that it was founded secretly by young men among whom Ziya Gökalp found himself or whom he even led, due to the influence of Dr. Abdullah Cevdet who had been given a post in the city because of the cholera epidemic of 1894-1895. According to the second oral account it was founded by Ziya Gökalp right after the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy (Hanioğlu, 1986: 29; Şapolyon, 1943: 50). The two accounts may refer to the secret and to the official founding of the society. Regardless of when it was actually founded young men belonging to the nobility were generally known to be involved in groups opposed to Abdulhamid right after the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments. These groups in which Ziya Gökalp was active and in which children of the nobility participated was several times taken under observation by the state (B.O.A, DH.MKT., 2098/26; 2183/63, and İ.HUS. 73/1316/L-05;

BEO, 1267/94981). Even if there were no organic links with the society, their opposition to the Hamidiye Regiments and Abdulhamid must have made these young men sympathetic to Union and Progress.

Of great significance for the relationship between the nobility and the Milli tribe were the Armenian incidents that took place in the town and its hinterland. Due to these incidents, which happened in 1895, the nobility had a much firmer grip on the town and could develop new strategies. The nobility, which was anxious about the claims that the city would be handed over to the Armenians (BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 636/21), tried to mobilise the central government while on the other hand organising itself. The leader of the nobility that organised itself against the Armenians was Ziya Gökalp's uncle Piriñzade Arif Efendi who owned thirty villages in the hinterland of Diyarbekir (Kırziođlu, 1956: 174-175).

In this context the attitude of the Milli tribe toward the Armenians is of interest. Although many tribes belonging to the Hamidiye Regiments clashed with the Armenians, the chief of the Milli tribe, Ibrahim Pasha, pursued the exact opposite strategy (Özcoşar, 2009: 173-177). Tütenk (1958: 316) characterises this strategy from the perspective and in the style of the nobility: "The Armenians ingratiated themselves with the chiefs of the tribes. Consequently the latter used to save them from all manner of evils and to give them all manner of benefits. Viranşehir, which was the winter quarters of the Milli tribe, turned into an Armenian colony. Shops and houses were built, Armenian schools and churches were also not neglected. The Armenians gained the warm protection of the chiefs of the tribes." The positive attitude of the Milli tribe towards the Armenians reinforced the nobility's negative perception of the Milli tribe.

Due to all these developments the classic conflict between tribe and nobility took on a new form during the reign of Abdulhamid.

## **5. TRIBE, NOBILITY AND CONFLICT**

Immediately after the formation of the Hamidiye Regiments the nobility had recourse to methods that it had used in the past and endeavoured to win the support of the centre by blackening the reputation of the tribes. Only three months after the formation of the regiments they complained in petitions sent to Istanbul that Milli Ibrahim oppressed the people (BOA, DH.MKT. 1844/68; 1851/102). The fact that the nobility continued to use this method although the tribes had, through the Hamidiye Regiments, become officials of the centre, shows that at the beginning they did not entirely understand the nature of the regiments. Confronted with this behaviour of the nobility the central government took by and large the side of the regiments. Conversely, the nobility made common cause with the provincial governor who in Diyarbekir was the highest-ranking representative of the centre. What facilitated this alliance was the fact that the governors were unfavourably disposed towards the regiments, which they considered to be a danger to their own authority. The governor of Diyarbekir, Halid Bey, whose relationship with the nobility is known to have been not very good, made common cause with the nobility when the regiments were concerned and acted as mediator for the complaints about the regiments (Kırmızı, 2008: 267). This went so far that the war ministry accused the governor of wishing to destroy the regiments (BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 154/84).

Since the tribes realised that the support they received from the state did by itself not sufficiently increase their influence in the town, they looked for allies within the nobility.

The fact that the nobility were not a uniform group and that its members were at odds with each other facilitated the work of the tribes and helped them find opportunistic allies. The ally that the Milli tribe found in Diyarbekir after the formation of the regiments was Hacı Niyazi Bey. We know that Niyazi Bey gave valuable support to the Milli tribe in its struggle with the Şammar tribe. In official documents Niyazi Bey is accused of setting the two tribes against one another (BOA, DH. TMIK. M. 140/56). Moreover, Niyazi Bey's support for the Milli tribe was also noticed by the then governor of Mosul. In the memoirs of Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran (1998: 446) who in 1901 was governor of Mosul it is mentioned that Niyazi Bey brought together a force of two thousand people from the villages of Diyarbekir in support of the Milli tribe when it fought with the Şammar tribe. Niyazi Bey who was a supporter of the policies of Abdulhamid and who remained in opposition even after the Second Constitutional Monarchy was established probably gave support to the regiments because of his relationship with the central government. However, this support was not permanent. After a while, probably because of measures that the Milli tribe took against the city and especially against the very villages whose inhabitants had previously supported Milli Ibrahim, Niyazi Bey changed his mind and joined the ranks of the complainants (BOA, BEO, 2703/202696).

Despite the frequent complaints of the nobility about him, Milli Ibrahim did not until 1903 openly attack the city and its environs. The main reason for his restraint were the clashes with the Şammar and Karakeçi tribes in the countryside. In this lengthy conflict Milli Ibrahim gained the support of the centre, overcame the Şammar tribe and gained control of the road to Aleppo in the South. However, he wished to establish a similar control also over the long roads stretching to Siverek, which he considered his own region. When the Karakeçi tribe and its supporters, the nobility of Diyarbekir, sought to obstruct this plan, the Milli tribe began to attack the villages in the vicinity of Diyarbekir in order to break the power of the nobility. The first measure that he applied against the attacks of the nobility was again to complain to the centre. Milli Ibrahim Pasha, who because of the more frequent and more urgent complaints was no longer receiving the support in Istanbul that he once had, tried to defend himself by saying that "this kind of actions and initiatives were without basis" and that those who made them were "old enemies of the Milli tribe" (BOA, BEO, 2772/207852).

Despite these measures the reactions against the Milli tribe and Milli Ibrahim increased in the town in August 1905 and the nobility began to put pressure on Istanbul in a more organised and systematic fashion. A telegraph containing a complaint was sent to Istanbul, which bore the signature of members of the administrative council of the province (governor, mufti, kadi and others) and of a part of the nobility. Two days later a new telegraph was sent, this time by the mufti Subhi and twenty-five of his friends. Although it largely had the same content as the previous telegraph it differed from other complaints in one important respect. This time the telegraph office itself was occupied. The nobility, which did not get the desired response, tried to force matters with this step and made it known that the telegraph office was to remain occupied until they received a convincing response in regard of the Milli tribe (Günay, 1995: 122; Beysanoğlu, 1990: 741-742). This method makes one think that Union and Progress had a hand in this affair and that the organization was active among the nobility (Cf. Kars, 1997).

The occupation of the telegraph office of Diyarbekir gained an international dimension because it not only had an effect within the Ottoman borders but also changed the

relations of the European states with the East (Kars, 1997: 26). Milli Ibrahim, who at the time found himself between Diyarbekir and Siverek, received the order to return to his own region (this probably referred to Viranşehir). When Ibrahim Pasha did not follow the command and claimed he had business to conclude, the deputy of the governor of Diyarbekir, Mina Efendi, was given the task of “performing an investigation”. Mina Efendi, who conferred with Ibrahim Pasha, presented a report according to which Ibrahim Pasha had displayed the attitude of a rebel. This report also makes mention of the story that Milli Ibrahim wore a ring of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha’s son Ibrahim Pasha and that this ring was the sign of revolt (Günay, 1995:123; Ünal, 2007:10).

Yet these initiatives only succeeded in limiting the previously unconditional support for Milli Ibrahim Pasha, they did not succeed in removing him from the region and depriving him of his influence. The fact that the occupation of the telegraph office did not yield definite results for the nobility made the Milli tribe an even more dangerous foe for them. The probability that Milli Ibrahim would use the first opportunity for revenge made the nobility even more anxious. To prevent such an act the ever-watchful nobility decided in 1907 to use the same method in a more decisive manner. The telegraph office was again occupied. According to some sources this event took place after the people who were led by Ziya Gökalp had spoken with the governor Hasan Fehmi Bey (Beysanoğlu, 1990: 742; Heyd, 1980: 23). Even though it appeared that the people made the raid the planning of it was entirely in the hands of the nobility. Among those who gathered in the house of the *nakibüleşraf kaymakamı* (archivist of the nobility) Hacı Mesud Efendi in order to plan the raid were the leading figures of the nobility such as Cemilpaşazade Mustafa Bey, Faik Bey and Pirinçzade Arif Efendi (Kansu, 2009: 92).

The second raid was more organised than the first one. A militia force of four hundred people was prepared in order to prevent interventions and to make sure that the raid could continue until it had reached its purpose. The raid, which lasted eleven days, forced Istanbul to take serious steps. It was ordered that a committee would be founded in order to investigate the issue if the people would disperse and return to work and it was announced that an investigation about Ibrahim Pasha would be commenced and that the governor would be deposed. In place of the deposed Hasan Fehmi, the governor of Mosul, Mustafa Bey, was appointed. Moreover, a committee was formed in order to investigate what the Milli tribe and Milli Ibrahim Pasha had done (Kansu, 2009: 92). However, more than this committee it was the determination of the nobility, which did not let the matter rest, that led to sanctions against Milli Ibrahim Pasha. In order for the investigation to be performed more properly Milli Ibrahim and the tribal forces were exiled to Aleppo. As a result of the investigation it was decided that the 41. Hamidiye Regiment be sent to the Ma’an region of Damascus in order to defend the Hedjaz railway (Günay, 1995: 12).

## IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

The turning point in the conflict between tribe and nobility was the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy. Immediately after this proclamation it was announced by Ziya Gökalp that the Diyarbekir branch of the Society for Union and Progress had been officially founded (Beysanoğlu, 1990: 755). In this manner a part of the nobility, which was quickly organised under the roof of Union and Progress, became after a long interruption again the ally of the central power. This sudden change spelt the end for the common op-

ponents of the new regime and the nobility.

When the Constitutional Monarchy was proclaimed a rapid decision was made concerning Milli Ibrahim who was preparing to go from Damaskus to Medina. According to this decision the 41. regiment was to lay down its weapons, the members of the regiment were to return to their homes, and Milli Ibrahim was to come to Istanbul for negotiations. However, Milli Ibrahim disregarded the order to come to Istanbul and together with his soldiers marched towards Viranşehir. This was regarded as rebellion by the Istanbul government, which tried to decrease the power of Milli Ibrahim by stripping him of all his official titles and by making military preparations. Here one gets the impression that all these developments were instigated not by Istanbul but by the Diyarbekir branch of Union and Progress. The nobility, which after a long time again had the strength to guide the centre, orchestrated the operation to eliminate their greatest rival from Diyarbekir. Military manoeuvres against Milli Ibrahim were led by the commander of the regular army in Diyarbekir, Emin Pasha. According to the stories of the nobility a volunteer force was formed by the people of Diyarbekir when it was realised that Emin Pasha was not very keen on his task. The nobility put pressure on Emin Pasha until he distributed weapons to these volunteers. Even Ziya Gökalp wanted to join the volunteers but he was dissuaded by his friends (Göksel, 1956: 128).

In the end Milli Ibrahim, who after a few minor skirmishes had retreated towards Mosul, died of illness in a place called Safiye in the hills of Kevkeb near Nusaybin (Günay, 1995: 130). Thus the last tribal threat to the town, Diyarbekir, was removed without much contribution by the volunteers that had gathered in the town.

This conflict, which took place between tribe and nobility at the beginning of the twentieth century, can be considered the last one in which classic forms were at work and the first one in which modern forms were at work. The Republic, which was founded soon afterwards, was to pursue an extremely centralist policy and was to make common cause with the nobility, which were the local representatives of this policy. In particular during the one-party period the tribes found themselves again in conflict with the central government due to a strategy by which the nobility was protected and privileged. Only with the move to a multi-party system were the tribes again to find a place for themselves within political life.

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