

Two Ottoman documents on Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan's seeking asylum in the Ottoman consulate at Tabriz

MORTAZA FIRUZI
UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

Abstract

This paper gives a detailed overview of the two documents from the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives (BOA), originally written in the Ottoman language, on Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan's seeking asylum in the Ottoman consulate at Tabriz. In order to understand the documents better, the article begins by reviewing the Ottomans' policy toward the Iranian constitutional revolution, notably toward Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan as the leaders of the movement in Iran's Azerbaijan.

Keywords: Iran constitutional movement, Ottoman Empire, Sattar Khan, Baqir Khan

The Iranian constitutional revolution started in 1905. After nearly one year, by proclamation of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1896–1907) on 5 August 1906, the first *Majles* (national consultative assembly) was assembled.¹ After Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar passed away, his son Mohammad Ali-Shah Qajar (1907–09) ascended the Qajar's throne. Mohammad-Ali Shah was against the Iranian constitutional revolution.² Hence, after being as Shah, he converted the constitutional monarchy to despotism and bombarded the *Majles* by cossack forces under the commander of Vladimir Liakhov on 23 June 1908. After that, the deputies who did not flee, were arrested, and some of them were executed; consequently, the despotism for one year ruled Iran, which is called *estebdad-e saghir* (the lesser despotism).³ Then, the resistance against the *estebdad-e saghir* begun. The main resistance occurred in Tabriz under the leadership of Sattar Khan (1868–1914) and Baqir Khan (1870–1916).⁴ After Tabriz, other cities joined the resistance. Finally, by Tehran triumph by pro-

¹ Said Amir Arjomand, "Constitutional Revolution," 15 December 1992, accessed 10 October 2020, <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitutional-revolution-iii>.

² Ehsan Yarshater, "Iran ii. Iranian History (2) Islamic period (page 5)". accessed 10 October 2020, 29 March 2012, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/iran-ii2-islamic-period-page-5>.

³ Laurence Lockhart, "The Constitutional Laws of Persia: An Outline of Their Origin and Development," *Middle East Journal* (1959), 385.

⁴ Anja Pistor-Hatam, "Sattār Khan," 20 July 2009. accessed 10 October 2020, <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sattar-khan-one-of-the-most-popular-heroes-from-tabriz-who-defended-the-town-during-the-lesser-autocracy-in-1908-09>; Abbas Amanat, "Bāqer Khan Sālār Melli," 15 December 1988, accessed 10 October 2020, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/baqer-khan-salar-melli>

constitutionalism, Mohammad-Ali Shah, who had the support of the minister's plenipotentiaries of the Britain and the Russian government by seeking asylum in the Russian embassy, the despotism was ended.⁵

Besides the significant impact of the Ottoman Empire on the beginning process of the constitutional revolution specialty among Iranian Azerbaijani Turks, also the Ottoman Empire played an important role in the intellectual and political development of the constitutional revolution.⁶ The word of *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy) in the meaning of the rule of law also was entered into modern Persian language from the Ottoman Turkish language.⁷ In the process of occurrence, the policy of the Ottomans towards the constitutional revolution in Iran is divided into two-stage: before the second constitution of the Ottoman Empire and after the second constitution of the Ottoman Empire.

Before the Second Constitution of the Ottoman Empire in 1908, the Ottomans accepted the religious constitutionalist groups which were seeking asylum in the Ottoman consulate in Iran by mediating *Shaikh al-Islam* of the empire. However, Abdul Hamid II did not involve in that as seriously because he had a stance against the constitutional movement.⁸

The policy after the second constitutional of the Ottoman Empire with the influence of *Jön Türkler* (Young Turks) gained full support.⁹ In the case of Iran's Azerbaijan, the situation roughly was the same. From the Ottoman viewpoint, Azerbaijani Turks were the *Ajam* (non-Arabic people specialty Persians). In other words, the Ottomans considered Azerbaijani Turks as the main part or equal of Iran which had Shia identity under the rule of Shah. However, after the *Jön Türkler* everything changed, they called the Azerbaijani ethnic group as *Türk qardaşlar* (Turks brothers). *Anjoman-e Saadet* (The Association of Felicity) also had a role in this view change of the Ottomans toward Azerbaijani Turks.¹⁰ Hence, besides some other factors like rivalry with other powers, the Ottomans supported the movement in Azerbaijan especially the movement's leaders Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan.

⁵ "Russian and British support of Mohammad-Ali Shah on the eve of bombardment of the *Majles*," 2 September 2013, Documents, accessed 2020 October 10, <https://psri.ir/?id=60dn0hjo>; Yarshater, "Iranian History."

⁶ Abdulreza Shahriyari and Nabiullah Zarei, "The role of the Ottoman Empire in the formation of the Iranian constitutional movement [نقش امپراتوری عثمانی بر تدوین جنبش مشروطه ایران]," *Parse* 24 (2015): 97–119.; Tohid Malekzadeh Dilmaghani, "The relations of the Committee of Union and Progress which was active in the triangle of Baku, Tabriz and Istanbul with the constitutional revolution in Azerbaijan (1905–1909) [باکی، تبریز، ایستانبول اوچ گنینه فعالییت اندن عثمانلی ایتحاد ترقی جمعیتی و آذربایجان مشروطیت اینقلابی [1905–1909] علاقه لری *Aydin Galajak* (2017): 6–13.; Maghsoud Ranjbar, "The Constitutional Revolution of Iran and the Role of the Ottoman Empire," *Tarikh-e Eslam* (2008): 7–44.

⁷ Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda, *Dehkhoda Dictionary [معننامه دهخدا]*, Vol. XII, Tehran: University of Tehran Press (UTP): 1994, XVI vols, 18500.

⁸ Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, 135.; Mostafa Taghavi, *The Ups and Downs of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution [اُپراز و فرود مشروطه]*, Tehran: Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies, 2005, 330.; Mortaza Firuzi, "The Ottomans' approach and policy towards the leaders of the Constitutional Revolution (Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan) [ستارخان و باقرخان] مشروطه (انقلاب مشروطه) شرایط نسبت به سرداران انقلاب مشروطه (ستارخان و باقرخان)," *Aydin Galajak* (2017): 34–41.

⁹ Firuzi, "The Ottomans' approach"; Tohid Malekzadeh Dilmaghani, "The relations of the Committee of Union and Progress with the constitutional revolution in Azerbaijan (1905–1909)," 8.

¹⁰ Dilmaghani, "The relations of the Committee of Union and Progress," 8.

In the *estebdad-e saghir* as above-mentioned which happened after the bombardment of *Majles*, the resistance begun from Tabriz, the capital city of Azerbaijan, by the leadership of Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan. For suppressing the resistance, Mohammad-Ali Shah along with local *Khavanin* (noble rank), deployed 35–40 thousand troops to Tabriz.¹¹ Despite having fewer troops of the pro-constitutionalist, Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan resisted. During the eleven resistance, the state's troops even prevented from entering provisions to the city; however, the pro-constitutionalist ate alfalfa and grass and did not give up resistance.¹² During the siege of Tabriz, *Anjoman-e Tabriz* (the provincial council of Tabriz), which was formed during the early phase of the constitutional revolution and had a crucial role in the intellectual, political process and then in reviving of the Iranian constitutional revolution, provided the provisions. The *Anjoman* was forcedly closed due to the entrance of the Russian troops in Tabriz on 25 December 1911.¹³

Mohammad-Ali Shah finally issued an order to put an end to the siege in April 1909, however, Russian troops entered Tabriz.¹⁴ By entering Russia troops to Tabriz, as Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan called them as a new guest in a telegraph to Khorasan on 16 June 1909, along with others sought asylum at the Ottoman Consulate.¹⁵

The Ottoman Consulate to protect Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan issued a card that showed they were under the Ottoman Empire's protection.¹⁶ Hence, they sent a letter to Iran's government and Russian as follows: "*Real and personal property of Sattar Khan, Baqir Khan, and other people is secured. They are under the protection of the Ottoman flag. Any claims and demands against these people should be submitted directly to the Ottoman consulate and resolved by the Ottoman Consulate.*"¹⁷

Russians argued that they consider Sattar Khan, Baqir Khan, and other people who took asylum from the Ottoman consulate as Iranian citizenship and they rejected the Ottoman's demand.¹⁸ Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan were under the protection of the Ottoman consulate in Tabriz. Because of Russia and Britain's pressure, the Ottoman informed them that the Ottoman could not ensure their safety if they leave the Ottoman consulate. The Ottoman consulate asked in order to continue to protect them, they should not leave the consulate or

¹¹ Ahmad Kasravi, *History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution* [تاریخ مشروطه ایران], Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1984, 824.

¹² Pistor-Hatam, "Sattār Khan"; Esmail Amir Khizi, *Azerbaijan Revolution and Sattar Khan* [قیام قیام آذربایجان و ستار خان], Tehran: Negah, 2000, 301.

¹³ Mansoureh Etehadieh, "Anjoman-e eyālāti-e Tabriz," 20 July 2002, accessed 2020 October 10, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/anjoman-e-eyalati-e-tabriz>; Mohammad Azizi, *Provincial Council of Azerbaijan in the constitutional period* [انجمن ایالتی آذربایجان در دوره مشروطیت], Tabriz: Akhtar, 2006.

¹⁴ Pistor-Hatam, "Sattār Khan."

¹⁵ Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan, "Sattar Khan," 16 June 1909. Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies, Sattar Khan and Bagher Khan's telegraph to Khorasan State Association, accessed 10 October 2020, <http://www.iichs.ir/s/3331>; Pistor-Hatam, "Sattār Khan."

¹⁶ Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh, *Reports of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution* [گزارش هایی از انقلاب ایران مشروطیت ایران], Trans. Rahim Reisnia, Tehran: Shiraze, 1998, 148.

¹⁷ Idem, 153.

¹⁸ Idem.

they should go to Istanbul.¹⁹ They stayed in the Ottoman consulate until the Shah's abdication on 16 July 1909. Then, the pro-constitutionalists felt secure enough to leave the consulate.²⁰

Documents

Although, the documents a little differ from each other in terms of content, the viewpoint is the same. The first document, is the copy of *zabıtnâme* (record) with *Âmedi Divân-ı Hümayun* (the office in direct contact with the private bureau of the Sultan and the Porte²¹)'s seal in the end of the document. The second document is a *müsvedde* (draft) of *Sadâret-i Uzmâ Mektûbî Kalemî* (the clerical office of the grand vezirate). Both of the document is kept in the following address:

Archive: *Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi* (Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives):

Fond: BEO (Bâb-ı Âli Evrak Odası – Office of the Sublime Porte/Ottoman government)

Box: 3562

Folder: 267081

Sequence: -

Date: H-11-05-1327

The summary of the documents

Both documents mention that the Ottomans accepts Sattar Khan and Baqir Khans' seeking asylum. Therefore, the Ottomans kept Tarhan Paşa, the Ottoman ambassador in Petersburg, informed about Sattar Khan and Bagher Khans' agreement. Then, the *Âmedi Divân-ı Hümayun* confirmed that they would send a regiment to Iran's border for a suitable location in case of uprising in Iran.

Document I Transcription

Bâb-ı 'Âli

Meclis-i Maḥsûs

11 Cemadi'el Evvel sene 1327 tarihli zabıtnâme sûretidir

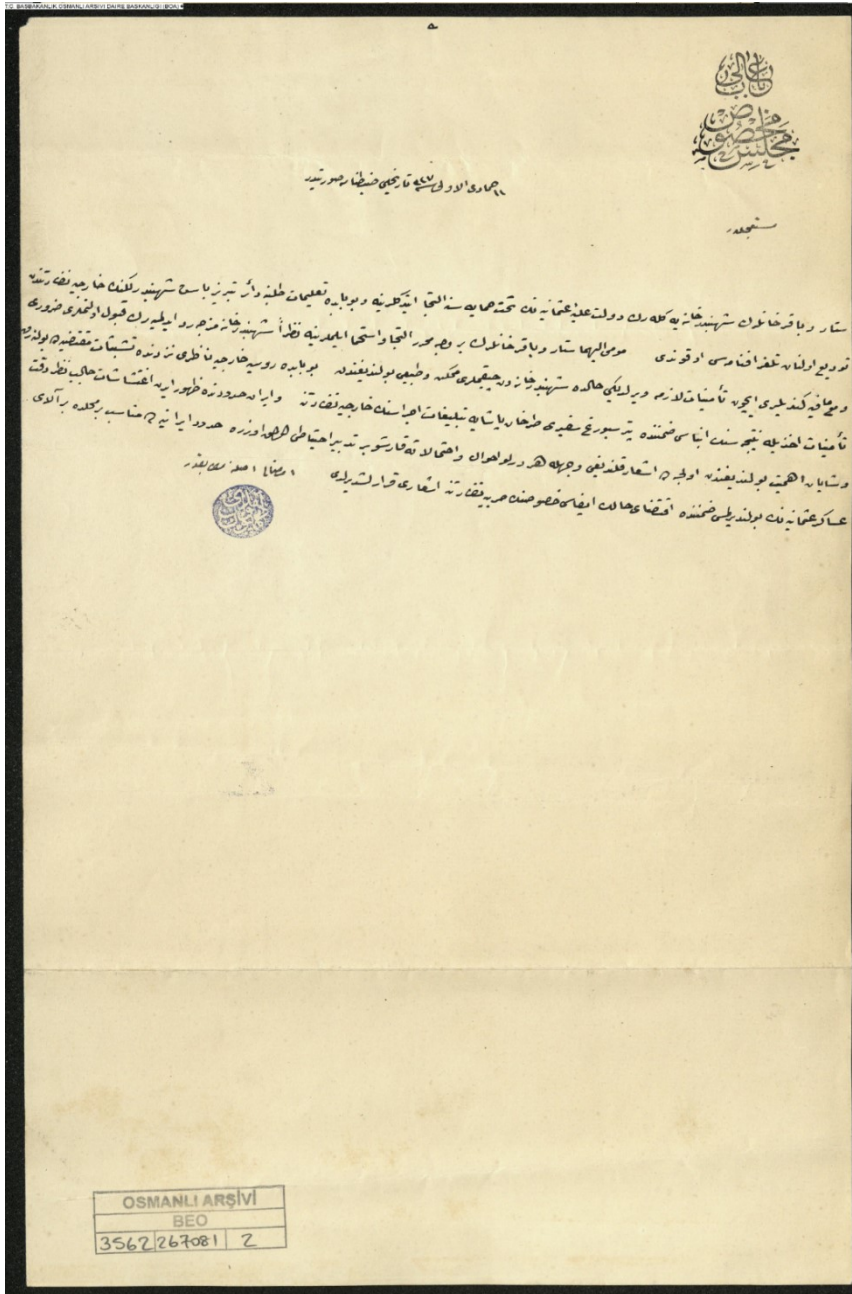
Müsta'celdir

1. Settâr ve Bâkir ḥanlerin şebenderhâneye gelerek Devlet-i 'Âliye-i 'Osmâniyenin taht-i ḥimâyesine iltica ettiklerine ve bu bâbda ta'limât talebine dâir Tebriz başşebenderliğinin ḥâriciye nezâreti'nden

¹⁹ Gökhan Bolat, "Turkish leaders of the Iranian constitution: Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan [İran Meşrutiyet Hareketinin Türk Liderleri: Sattar ve Bâger Hanlar]," *Journal of World of Turks / Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken* (2013): 47–64.

²⁰ Pistor-Hatam, "Sattâr Khan."

²¹ Ármin Vámbéry, *Scenes from the East, Through the Eyes of a European Traveller in the 1860s*, Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1979, 249.



BEO.003562.267081.002

Document I

2. tevdi' olunan telgrafnâmesi okundu mûmâ-ileyhâ Sattâr ve Bâkir hanlerin ber vech-i muharrer iltica ve istihmâ eylemelerine nâzaren şehbenderimizce red eylemeyerek kabul olunmaları zâruri
3. ve mâmafih kendileri için te'minât-i lâzime verildiği hâlde Şehbenderhânedan çıkmaları mümkün ve tabi'i bulunduğundan bu bâbde Rusiya hâriciye nâzırı nezdinden teşebbûsât-ı müktezide bulunarak
4. te'minât ahzinin neticesinin inbasi zîmninde Petersburg sefiri Tarhân Paşa'ya tebligât icrasını hâriciye nezâreti'ne ve İran hudûdunda zuhûr eden iğtişâsât celb-i nazâr-ı diğğat
5. ve şâyân-i ehemmiyet bulunduğundan evvelce kılındığı vechile her türlü ahval ve ihtimâlâte qarşu bir tedbir ihtiyati olmak üzere hudud-i İraniye münasib bir maħallide bir âlây
6. 'asakir-i 'Osmâniyenin bulundurması zîmninde iktizâ-yi hâlin ifâsı husûsunda bir hârbiye nizaretine işâri kararlaşdırıldı.
7. İmza aslına muṭabığdır
8. Mühür: Âmedî-i Divân-ı Hümâyun

Translation

The Sublime Porte
Special Council

It is the copy of *zabıtname* (official report signed and submitted by a committee or group) which was written in 11 Jamadi Al-Awal, 1327 (31 May 1909)

Urgent

1. The sent telegraph from Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan's seeking asylum in the Sublime Ottoman State consulate and requesting instructions in consulate general of Tabriz has been read.
2. Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan's seeking protection and asylum [from the Ottomans], who has been pointed out. From our consul's viewpoint, it is necessary not to be rejected and hence to be accepted.
3. At the same time, in case of exiting as naturally and possibly from the consulate have been provided. In this raged, along with the required actions for receiving guarantee in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
4. Informing the result of guarantee obtaining, enforcing of notifications to the ambassador of Petersburg Tarhan Paşa, and because of the importance and paying attention to the emergence of turmoil in Iran's border, the [Ottoman] Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be informed.
5. Like as previously informed, for taking precautionary measures against every situation and probabilities in a suitable position in Iran's border, along with deploying a regiment
6. Of Ottoman soldiers and taking requirement actions in the necessity of the situation and informing [them to] Ministry of War had been decided.
7. The signature conforms to the original.
8. Seal: *Âmedî-i Divân-ı Hümâyun*

Document II
Transcription

Hû

Sadâret-i Uzmâ Mektûbî Kalemi

Li-ecli't-tebyiz Vürüdi:	'Adil	Muhammed Efendi	...	Allah Müsta'celdir Hâriciye ve Hârbiye Nezaret-i Celile ve 'Âliyelerine	Târih-i tesvidi: 11 Cemadi'el Evvel (1)327, 18 Mayıs (1)325	Tarih-i vürudu	Numara
Târih-i tebyizi: 11[Cemadi'el Evvel (1)327], 18 [Mayıs (1)325]	...	18	18		Müsevvîdi: Muhammedzâde	Mübeyyizi	Mukabele eden
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Settâr ve Bâkir hanlerin Şebenderhânaye gelerek Devlet-i 'Âliye-i 'Osmâniyenin taht-i himâyesine iltica ettiklerine 2. ve bu bâbda ta'limât talebine dâir Tebriz başşebenderliğinin hâriciye nezâreti celilesinde taraf-i devletlerinden tevdi' olunan 3. telgrafnâmesi okundu meclis-i maḥsus-i vükelâde ledâ elkura mûmâ-ileyhâ Settâr ve Bâkir hanlerin ber vech-i muharrer 4. iltica ve istiḥmâ eylemelerine nâzaren Şebenderim-ze red eylemeyerek qâbul olunmaları zâruri ve mâmafih 5. kendileri için te'minât-i lâzime verildiği hâlde Şebenderhânedan çıkmaları mümkün ve tabi'i bulunduğundan 6. bu bâbde Rusiya hâriciye nâzırı nezdinden teşebbüsât-i müktezide bulunarak te'minât ahzının neticesinin 7. inbasi zimninde Petersburg sefiri Tarhân Paşa'ya tebliğât icrasını nezaretine celilerine 8. ve İran hudûdunda zuhûr eden iğtişâsât celb-i nazar-ı dikkat ve şâyân-i ehemmiyet bulunduğundan evvelce işâri qılındığı vechile her türlü aḥval ve ihtimâlâte qarşu bir tedbir ihtiyati olmak üzere hudud-u İraniyede 10. münasib bir maḥallide bir âlây 'asakir-i 'Osmâniyenin bulundurması zimninde iktizâ-yi hâlin ifâsı ḥusûsunda 11. hârbiye nezaret'ine 'aliesine izbâr bil tezekkür nezaret-i müşârün-ileyh tebliğât-i ifâsı kılınmağla 12. nezaret-i celilerince icabını icra ve inbat-i himmet 							

Translation

Huwa

the Clerical Office of the Grand Vezirate

Entry's reason for drafting	'Adil	Muhammed Efendi	...	Allah Urgent To the honorable and exalted Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of War	The draft date: 11 Cemadi'el Evvel (1)327, 18 Mayıs (1)325	Entry date	No.
Drafting date	...	18	18		Draftsman: Muhammedzade	Copyist	Collator
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coming Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan to the Sublime Ottoman State consulate for seeking asylum 2. and requesting for the instruction of consulate general of Tabriz about them and the telegraph letter which was sent on behalf of their state <u>the honorable Ministry of Foreign Affairs</u>²² 3. In the Council of Minister have been read. seeking asylum and support of Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan, who has been pointed out, as written, 4. From our consul viewpoint, it is necessary not to be rejected and hence to be accepted. Along with that 5. For exiting them as naturally and possibly from the [Ottoman] consulate 6. and informing the result of required actions for obtaining a guarantee from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7. enforcing of notifications to the ambassador of Petersburg Tarhan Paşa, 8. and because of the importance and paying attention to the emergence of turmoil in Iran's border, their honorable Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be informed 9. Like as previously informed, for taking precautionary measures against every situation and probabilities in Iran's border, along with deploying a regiment 10. Of Ottoman soldiers in a suitable position and taking requirement actions in the necessity of the situation 11. Along with writing [that] for the exalted Ministry of War, as a reminding the above-mentioned Ministry for taking the notifications into account 12. Try to perform and inform of the necessity of their honorable Ministries 							

²² "The honorable Ministry of Foreign Affairs" is written between to line above "their state".

Acknowledgement

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