

The persecution of the Ottoman Shī'ites according to the *mühimme defterleri*, 1565—1585

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Ahmet Refik long ago published a collection of documents¹⁾ from the *mühimme defterleri*²⁾ on the persecution of heretics in the Ottoman Empire, which Dr. Hanna Sohrweide used in one section of her excellent study of the *kızılbaş* sect³⁾. The purpose of this article is to supplement Dr. Sohrweide's far more extensive work by using documents from the *mühimme defterleri*⁴⁾ which Ahmet Refik did not publish.

Most of the *fermāns* in the *mühimme defterleri* relating to heretics concern the suppression of the *kızılbaş* sect. Others never label heretics, but accuse them merely of cursing the Orthodox Caliphs or of some other act of *shī'ite* defiance, and it is unclear whether these refer to *kızılbaş* proper. From the Ottoman government's point of view, this was probably unimportant. To curse the Orthodox Caliphs in itself amounted to a defiance of the *sunnite* Ottoman Sultan, and suggested sympathies with Safavid Persia. In the eyes of the Ottoman authorities, Ebū's-su'ūd's distinction between the *shī'a* and the *kızılbaş*⁵⁾ would be academic and, in any case, it is virtually impossible to distinguish the various strands of Ottoman *shī'ism*.⁶⁾ I have not attempted to do so. The article is about the persecution of the pro-Safavid elements in the Ottoman state, in particular the *kızılbaş*. The *mühimme defterleri* contain records of the persecution of other heretical sects,

¹⁾ Ahmet Refik, *On altıncı asırda rāfızılık ve bektāşılık*, 1932. Hereafter referred to as AR.

²⁾ In the Başbakanlık Archives, Istanbul. Hereafter referred to as MD. The numbers following represent the volume, page and series numbers.

³⁾ H. Sohrweide, *Der Sieg der Safaviden in Persien und seine Rückwirkung auf die Schiiten Anatoliens im 16. Jahrhundert*, *Der Islam* 41 (1965), 95—223.

⁴⁾ I originally intended to collect a wider variety of documentary material, but restrictions on access to Turkish Archives and restrictions on photocopying made this impossible.

⁵⁾ M.E. Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislām Ebussu'ūd efendi fetvaları*, 110.

⁶⁾ For a discussion of the problem, historical and contemporary, see Irène Melikoff, *Le problème kızılbaş*, *Turcica* 6 (1975), 49—67.

notably the *melāmī*, but I have not discussed these sects here, since they showed no ultra-*shī'ite* leanings nor Safavid sympathies.

The extent of the persecutions

Ottoman rule in lowland Iraq between Basra and Mosul, and in the adjoining province of Şehrizol, had always seemed vulnerable. In the marshlands to the south, the Arab Ibn 'Ulayyān had successfully resisted submitting to the Ottomans for thirty years after the occupation of Basra in 1538. All three provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Şehrizol bordered on Iran and had previously been Safavid provinces. There was such a strong *shī'ite*, and presumably pro-Safavid element in the population that the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad was able to report in 1577 that there was 'no end to the heretics and misbelievers') in the province. The *beylerbeyilik* of Baghdad, moreover, contained the shrines, particularly sacred to the *shī'a*, of 'Alī at Najaf and of Husayn and 'Abbās at Karbalā.

Shāh Tahmāsh's patronage of these shrines led the Ottoman authorities to the view, probably correct, that he was using them to focus popular discontent against the rule of the *sunnite* Sultan. In 1571, the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad organised the exchange, for Anatolian carpets, of the Persian carpets in the mausolea, since these were woven with 'names'⁸), presumably of the Twelve Imāms, with the exclusion of the first three Caliphs. In 1573, a report reached the Imperial *Divān* in Istanbul that fifty men received a salary from Persia 'to recite continuously, day and night, Noble Suras on behalf of the evil-doing Shāh'. The practice of *shī'ite* burials at the tomb of 'Abbās also continued. The fifty Safavid appointees went with standards from 'Abbās' shrine to meet the processions from Persia carrying corpses, which they then paraded around the Holy Places. These practices continued 'with the knowledge of the *seyyids*, *nakibs* and *mütevelli*', for which the Imperial *Divān* deemed them 'worthy of capital punishment' (*siyāset*). The issue was not an easy one. The Ottoman government wished to suppress *shī'ite*-Safavid influence in Iraq, while remaining on good terms with Persia so long as hostilities continued in the west. The *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad accordingly received an extremely difficult set of instructions. 'Numerous warnings' had already been issued against the ceremonial parading of corpses. Burial at the shrine of 'Abbās could, however, continue, so long as the corpses were not laid

⁷) MD 31.56.142 (20. vii. 1577)

⁸) AR no. 36

'in the direction of their *kibla*', that is Ardabil⁹). He was to arrest the reciters at the shrines separately and execute them separately, each on a trumped-up charge. He was, however, 'to be extremely careful to avoid anything which may give offence to Persia'¹⁰). Whatever measures he took were not successful. In 1577 there were still people in the two shrines who received stipends from Persia. The *Divān* again ordered the *beylerbeyi* to execute them after accusing them of some other crime.¹¹)

The Ottoman government did not confine its surveillance to the shrines, but recognised all Iraq as an area dissent. The *fermān* to the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad in 1573 re-iterated previous orders 'not to bestow fiefs (*dirlik*) on natives', a practice which had continued despite 'numerous warnings'¹²), and the authorities kept a check on fief-holders and notables for signs of heresy. In 1574 '*āṣūrā* ceremonies led to investigations in Mosul. Some time previously, the government had exiled five *seyyids* called Mehmed, Murtezā, Kāsim, Cemāl and Gālib, to Filibe (Plovdiv), presumably selecting these men because their claim to be *seyyids* would give them a strong influence in the town. However, by feigning repentance, they received the *Divān*'s permission to reside in Hısnıkeyf, on condition that they repented of heresy and no longer celebrated '*āṣūrā*. From Hısnıkeyf, they all returned to Mosul and continued their old practices. In 1574, the decree of the *Divān* again exiled them to Hısnıkeyf'¹³), at the same time re-imposing a general ban on the celebration of '*āṣūrā* in Mosul'¹⁴). A year later Mehmed received permission to return to Mosul, as investigations by the *beylerbeyi* of Diyarbekir had concluded that he was, in fact, 'a Muslim of the *sunnite* congregation'¹⁵). In November, 1575, one of the *kādī'askers* drew the *Divān*'s attention to the case of nine *sipāhīs* in Mosul who had 'spoken words contrary to the *sharī'a*'. On receiving summonses to appear before the *beylerbeyi* of Şehrizol, all but three disappeared. Investigations 'according to the procedures of the *sharī'a*' proved that these were heretics who had 'cursed and execrated their Lords Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān'. The three men, being of the military class, were to be bound and sent to Istanbul for the execution of their sentences, while

⁹) Elke Eberhardt, *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Safawiden*, 101—104

¹⁰) MD 21.278.659 (26. iv. 1573)

¹¹) MD 31.56.142 (20. vii. 1577)

¹²) MD 21.278.659 (26. iv. 73)

¹³) MD 26.221.627 (18. ix. 1574)

¹⁴) MD 26.221.628 (18. ix. 1574)

¹⁵) MD 27.119.283 (29. xi. 1575)

sunrites received their fiefs¹⁶). Although these commands make it clear that the accused were *shī'ites*, they do not necessarily imply that they adhered to the *kızılbaş* sect. The term *kızılbaş* first appears in 1577.

Fear of Persian infiltration becomes more evident in this year, when the Ottoman government conducted a search for *kızılbaş* and other *shī'ite* elements within its realms in anticipation of the war with Persia planned to begin in the following spring. The *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad's investigations in the spring and early summer of 1577 revealed that heretics in the Province were 'countless', and his report suggests that they found their leadership among fief-holders and other notables, in particular the *bey* of the frontier *sancak* of Darna, a certain Kubādgün, son of Mir 'Ömer. He had prevented the passage of merchants between Persia and Baghdad, several times terrified the settled *re'āyā*, making them abandon the fields by announcing 'The Persians have come' (*kızılbaş geldi*); he had led astray the Kalhūr tribe and kept in touch with Persia through his agents. The *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad was to imprison him while awaiting further instructions and, in the meantime, to appoint a *sunrite* to the post, if necessary a suitable Slave of the Porte (*südde-yi se'ādetim kullarından münāsib olan*).¹⁷ In the city of Baghdad itself, two of the notables (*a'yān*) and *za'ims* of the city, H'vāce Selmān Ata and Dede Sāfī, proved to be *kızılbaş* who 'spread their influence throughout the Province of Baghdad' and were 'in league' with the bedouin (*a'rāb*) and Ulus turcomans¹⁸). As in Anatolia, *kızılbaş*-ism in Iraq appears to have been widespread among the turcoman tribes, but the reference to the Arabs is more unusual. Presumably any malcontents were willing recruits to the sect. Further to the north, the *kādī* of Kerkūk reported the activities of a group of *kızılbaş* in Dākūk considerably more humble than H'vāce Selmān Ata or Dede Sāfī. His evidence that they were *kızılbaş* was typical of many cases of suspected heresy. 'They have', he reported, 'held mixed gatherings of men, women and girls, ever since Shāh Ismā'īl became Shāh in Persia, and they have clearly displayed the marks of heresy'. The reference to Shāh Ismā'īl is interesting. It may be that the simple and ill-informed *kızılbaş* within the Ottoman realms associated Ismā'īl II, who succeeded to the Safavid throne in 1577, with the great Ismā'īl I, and drew hope from his accession. The name of the new Shāh may also have prompted the mission of the false Ismā'īl among the turcoman

¹⁶ MD 27.108.259 (24. xi. 1575)

¹⁷ MD 31.55.141 (20. vii. 1577)

¹⁸ MD 31.56.142 (20. vii. 1577)

tribes of south-east and central Anatolia¹⁹). The names of the suspects in Dākūk, although the readings are not absolutely certain, also appear to indicate their faith. Ferah and Receb b. Şihāb are unexceptional, but Nasr ed-Dīn b. 'Abd el-Hüseyn, 'Alī b. 'Abd el-'Alī and Hüseyn point to *shī'ite* leanings. The *beylerbeyi* of Şehrizol was to investigate²⁰).

After 1577, the *mühimme defterleri* carry few records of the persecution of *shī'ites* in Iraq, but there are clear indications that they continued. In September, 1578, the *sancak beyi* of Zakiyya reported that a *gönüllü* in Basra was a *kızılbaş*²¹). More indicative, however, is a crime prevalent in 1582. Certain 'intriguers', it seemed, broke into innocent Muslims' houses leaving a *kızılbaş* crown (*tāc*) there as evidence that the householders were heretics. They imprisoned the victims without reference to a *kādī* and appropriated their money and property. That one citizen could summarily imprison another on suspicion of heresy shows the severity of the persecutions at this time. The *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad received a command to prevent this happening, but he could not have been very successful²²). Two months later, the *kādī* of Şehribān received an order to investigate an identical incident perpetrated against a *sipāhī*, Rizā ed-Dīn, which the *kādī* of Baghdad had reported to Istanbul.²³) A general persecution of the *kızılbaş* would undoubtedly encourage these incidents.

The evidence from Iraq suggests that the *kızılbaş* sect had many adherents in the region, although documents identify *shī'ites* definitely as *kızılbaş* only from 1577. The sect included members of the provincial 'nobility' — fief-holders, *a'yān* in the cities and even a *sancak beyi*. These presumably provided the leadership of the pro-Safavid sectarians. This is in contrast to the *kızılbaş* of Anatolia. These were villagers and tribesmen, with only a few lesser *sipāhīs* among their numbers. The only other case of a heretical *sancak beyi* comes from Yemen. In 1579, the *kādīs* of Salā, Ma'dān and 'Ammā sent the *Divān* a register noting that Muhammad Beg, the former *sancak beyi* of Dhāmār, had 'cursed the Noble Companions and the Four Chosen Friends' (*çihār yār-i gūzin*). This expression, although not strictly accurate, was standard in describing *shī'ites* who cursed the first three Orthodox Caliphs. Muhammad Beg had furthermore confessed that 'this was the

¹⁹) See below

²⁰) MD 33.91.188 (25. xi. 1577)

²¹) MD 35.269.680 (29. ix. 1578)

²²) MD 46.348.801 (27. ii. 1582)

²³) MD 47.44.112 (4. iv. 1582)

Way of his ancestors'.²⁴⁾ There was no suggestion that he was a *kızılbaş*. If he was a native of Yemen, he is more likely to have followed the Zaydī sect.

Outside Iraq the *kızılbaş* sect flourished mainly in south-east and central Anatolia. There are no reports from Teke in the south-west, the starting point of Sāh Kulī's revolt of 1511—12, and a former hotbed of heresy. Selim I's eradication of heretics in the area must have been successful.

In south-east Anatolia in early 1570, the *sancak beyi* and *kādī* of 'Ayntāb arrested a certain Mehmed from a village in that *kazā*, who had 'cursed their Lords 'Umar and 'Uthmān', but not, apparently, Abū Bakr. The *Divān* received the report via one of the *kādī*'askers and ordered the heretic's execution.²⁵⁾ There is no statement that he was specifically a *kızılbaş*. However, a report from Ruhā (Urfa) of 1574 definitely refers to a *kızılbaş* group. The *kādī* of Ruhā reported that a certain Şāhvirdi son of Baba Hoş and his son Hoş were 'heretics in contact with Persia'. They collected offerings (*nezir*) and sacrifices (*kurbān*) from the villages of Ruhā and Siverek and took them to Persia. Furthermore, Şāhvirdi's father had been executed as a *halīfe* of Shāh Ismā'īl. The 'former beylerbeyi of Diyārbekir, Hüseyin, had investigated this type of heretic in accordance with the Noble Command' and, during the course of his investigations, ordered that the *alay beyi* of Āmid, Piyāle, escort these two to exile on Cyprus. However, they escaped and continued their 'evil and seditious practices'. The *beylerbeyi* of Diyārbekir and *kādī* of Ruhā were to investigate the case and imprison the two men, sending a report to the *Divān*.²⁶⁾

Further to the west, the general investigations of 1577 revealed a group of *kızılbaş* in the *kazā* of Kusun near Tarsus. In September of that year, the *Divān* received the *kādī*'s report on the activities of a certain Kōr Tatar, who 'for a long time' had been a *kızılbaş halīfe*. He and his companions had revealed themselves by 'gathering for their false rites with women outside the permitted degrees'. The *kādī* was to investigate whether this was true, and whether Kōr Tatar was in contact with Persia. If so, he was to be arrested, accused of some other crime and executed.²⁷⁾ It must have been the *kādī*'s report which reached the *Divān* by January, 1578. The command, addressed to the

²⁴⁾ MD 40.301.693 (16. xi. 1579)

²⁵⁾ MD 9.30.83 (2. iii. 1570)

²⁶⁾ MD 26.175.474 (24. ix. 1574)

²⁷⁾ MD 30.306.707 (21. ix. 1577)

sancak beyi of Tarsus and *kādī* of Kusun, refers to the *kādī*'s having sent a copy of a register reporting on a certain Nūr Baba. This is most likely Kōr Tatar. The same command later refers to him as the 'aforenamed Tatar', and clerical error or 'correction' could easily change نور بابا to كور تاتار. This man, a member of the Tokuz tribe (*cemā'at*) in the *kazā* of Kusun, was a *kızılbaş* who had begun to practise publicly 'the false rite' previously held in secret. Further investigation proved him, 'on the evidence of many unprejudiced Muslims' to have about a thousand followers in the area. The *Divān* issued the same instructions for sentencing as previously.²⁸) The reference to the Tokuz tribe suggests a turcoman following.²⁹)

It was among the *kızılbaş* turcomans of south-east Anatolia that the only insurrection of these years began; and this was a minor incident in comparison with the revolts of Şāh Kulī, Celālī or the other rebellions of the first decades of the century. In June-July, 1578, the *Divān* received a report from the *kādī* of Elbistan that a man claiming to be Shāh Ismā'īl had appeared among the Şam Bayadi federation of tribes. He had, the *kādī* reported, come from the lowlands of Syria ('Arabistān), collected about two hundred horsemen and begun to practise highway robbery. He travelled westwards, killing beasts for sacrifice at Eshāb el-kehf,³⁰) then in Bozok where he had a *halīfe*, and at Hacı Bektaş. The *beylerbeyi* of Zulkadr had further confirmed that the turcomans were robbing travellers and stripping them naked,³¹) adding that the departure of the *sipāhīs* on the Persian campaign had left the province defenceless. The *Divān* therefore commanded the *sancak beyi* of the Turcomans (*Türkmān sancak beyi*) to remain in the province with the *sipāhīs* and *il eris*³²) and, on the same date, despatched orders to the *sancak beyis* of 'Ayntāb, Bozok and Kırşehir to capture and execute the false Ismā'īl, or anyone claiming to be his *halīfe*. They could act independently or in co-operation.³³)

²⁸) MD 33.221.452 (17. i. 1578)

²⁹) The appropriate *tahrir* register should yield further information on this question. Restrictions on access and micro-filming prevented my using this or any other *tahrir* register.

³⁰) See Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, IX, 328—333. While discussing Eshāb el-kehf near Tarsus, Evliyā remarks that a place in Elbistan is wrongly called by this name. The Eshāb el-kehf referred to here is presumably the one in Elbistan. For this site in Elbistan, and others associated with the seven sleepers see F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 310f

³¹) Cf. incidents in Yaşar Kemal's novel, *Ince Memet*.

³²) MD 32.206/7.392

³³) MD 32.207.393

Both commands bear the date 2 Cemāziyelevvel 986/7 July 1578. The report must have taken about a week to reach Istanbul from Elbistan and must therefore date from the end of June. By this time, the false Ismā'il had already reached Hacci Bektaş and so presumably had arrived in Elbistan in May. A command to the *sancak beyi* of Bozok, dated 20 Cemāziyelevvel 986/25 July 1578 includes a letter from that *sancak beyi* with the information that the false Ismā'il had travelled with the spring migration of the Kemerlü and كمرلو tribes from Syria to Elbistan.³⁴) This must have been in April-May.

By the middle of July he had a large following among the tribes of Bozok. A *halife* called Yūnus had collected a band of followers in one of the summer pastures of Yeni İl, intending to lead a revolt on his behalf. However, the *kādī* of Yeni İl heard of the assembly, and a surprise attack dispersed the rebels. The *Divān* then ordered the *sancak beyi* of Bozok, the *kādī* of the Turcomans and the *kādī* of Yeni İl to summon the tribal chiefs (*cemā'at başı*) and *kethüdās* and demand the deliverance of the false Ismā'il.³⁵) The command was an impossible one. The only success which the authorities had so far scored against the recalcitrant tribesmen was the capture of one of Ismā'il's *halifes*, a certain Hurşidoğlu Hüseyin, and then only after fierce fighting. The *Divān* decreed his execution,³⁶) but this did nothing to quell the rebellion which continued during August and September. By 4 September, 1578, the *Divān* had heard that the İzlü, Rişvān, Eşkānlu, Solaklu, Şeyh Hüseyinlü, Soydanlu, Egerböklü, Adaklu, Kalaçaklu, Bezki, Çakalu, Mihrimān, Karasāz and Kömrürlü tribes in the sancak of Malatya were sending offerings to the false Ismā'il. A captive called Mehmed had been despatched to Istanbul and claimed to the *Divān* that he knew the individuals responsible for sending offerings. The *Divān* returned him bound and fettered to the *sancak beyi* of Malatya, who was to use him as an informant in the pursuit of heretics. Anyone whom the *sancak beyi* arrested and proved, with the assistance of the *kādīs* of the appropriate region, to have sent offerings to the false Ismā'il, was to be executed.³⁷) There is, however, no evidence to show whether or not he was successful in his pursuit.

The false Ismā'il himself continued to evade capture. The *Divān* heard that he had disappeared in Bozok where 'he had led many people

³⁴) MD 35.174.445

³⁵) MD 35.174. 444—445

³⁶) MD 35.169.433 (25. vii. 1578)

³⁷) MD 35.188.473 (4. ix. 1578)

astray' and, on 18 September, re-iterated its command to the *sancak beyi* to arrest him and those known to be his *halife*.³⁸⁾ Two months later he was still at large, despite fresh information which the authorities had acquired. The *sancak beyi* of Bozok had eventually succeeded in capturing Yūnus *halife*, who described the false Ismā'il as being tall, blue-eyed, with a thick blonde beard and long locks. He spoke Persian. He had spent the previous winter with the اسكلو tribe in its winter pastures and stayed, presumably after the spring migration, on the سوكلو summer-pasture, probably in Yeni İl. He lived with the household of a certain Mehmed, know as Mar'aşoğlu, a dweller on the Plain of 'Amik, a probable reference to the winter quarters of his tribe. He had a number of companions from the Tatar 'Alilü turcomans. In the autumn he had travelled with the seasonal migrations from Malatya to the lowlands of Aleppo. Here the authorities missed their chance. He fell into the captivity of a certain Yalavaçoğlu, before this man's uncle had him released, when he disappeared across the Euphrates. This time the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad received the command to arrest him³⁹⁾ and was as unsuccessful as the others who had tried. In December 1578-January 1579, he was 'sowing sedition' among the Kurd Beglū tribe of the Boz Ulus federation. The *kādī* of Ulus reported that he had gathered many of the tribesmen in readiness to flee to Persia through the province of Baghdad. The *sancak beyi* of Ulus' men had been unable to disperse the gathering. He was hardly in a position, therefore, to carry out the *Divān*'s command to seize the ringleaders and make them deliver the false Ismā'il for execution.⁴⁰⁾ In fact, three week's later, the *Divān* despatched another command, almost identical with the one which the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad had received, to the *beylerbeyi* of Diyārbekir to arrest the troublemaker.⁴¹⁾ Thereafter the false Ismā'il disappears from the records.

Yūnus *halife*'s statement is the only clue to the false Ismā'il's identity. Since he appears to have spoken Persian, he may well have come from Iran, perhaps originally as a Safavid agent. His aim may have been to divert the Ottoman war effort by fomenting trouble in Anatolia. Furthermore, the *kādī* of Ulus' report that many of his followers had 'gathered to go to Persia' (*kızılbaşa* . . .)⁴²⁾ suggests, if it is correct,

³⁸⁾ MD 35.233.583 (18. ix. 1578)

³⁹⁾ MD 35.391.997 (8. xii. 1579)

⁴⁰⁾ MD 36.14.41 (5. i. 1579)

⁴¹⁾ MD 36.42.148 (26. i. 1579)

⁴²⁾ MD 36.14.41

that he may have intended to gather tribesmen for the Safavid armies. However, if this is so, his outright declaration of 'I am the Shāh⁴³) or his followers' claim of 'This is Shāh Ismā'īl⁴⁴) was a betrayal of Safavid interests. He may have come as an agent, but acted from the beginning in his own interests, whatever they may have been. Without further evidence the question of his origins and motives must remain unsolved. The episode of the false Ismā'īl revealed the weakness of the *kızılbaş* sect in Anatolia as an effective opposition to Ottoman rule and as an effective Safavid fifth-column. While the *kızılbaş* may have proclaimed infinite allegiance to the Shāh,⁴⁵) they had little idea of who or where the Shāh actually was, and some at least were able to accept an imposter apparently without question. Moreover, the rebellion had no obvious objective beyond plunder and eventually petered out for these reasons, rather than through the effective action of the Ottoman authorities. In this it had much in common with the more serious uprisings earlier in the century.

The false Ismā'īl gathered many followers in central Anatolia. This area, comprising the province of Rūm and adjoining areas in the provinces of Erzurum, Karaman and Anadolu had always had a large concentration of *kızılbaş*. It had been the scene of insurrections earlier in the century, and the fact that there had been no major disturbances in it since Kalenderoğlu's uprising in 1527 suggests that, thereafter, the Ottoman government kept as close a check as possible on the region. There are spasmodic records of the persecution of the *kızılbaş* population in the 1560's and 1570's leading to the expected general investigation in 1577.

In 1565, the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm received orders to banish a group of *kızılbaş* to Hungary, but to execute any who travelled to Persia with offerings.⁴⁶) The next group of records dates from 1568, the year before the unsuccessful Don-Volga expedition. Since one obvious goal of this project was to make possible a sea and river-borne attack on Persia, bypassing the barely penetrable uplands of Armenia and Azerbaijān, it seems likely that the Ottoman authorities would have investigated *kızılbaş* groups in preparation for war with Persia. From the *kazā* of Hüseynabad in Bozok came the report that certain persons refused to attend the Friday prayer in order to avoid hearing the *hutbe* in the

⁴³) MD 36.14.41 et al.

⁴⁴) MD 36.42.128 et al.

⁴⁵) See, for examples, the poems of Pīr Sultan Abdal.

⁴⁶) Hanna Sohrweide, *op.cit.*, 192

Sultan's name or the names of the first three Caliphs. Among them was a *sipāhī* who had also refused to secure 'provisions for Caffa', that is for the Don-Volga campaign. The *sancak beyi* of Bozok was to investigate and imprison the non-attenders at the Friday prayer and give the *sipāhī's* *timar* to someone else.⁴⁷⁾ In the same year, the *sancak beyi* of Amasya received orders secretly to execute, by drowning or any other method, a *kızılbaş halīfe* called Süleymān *fakih* and his followers, attributing to them another crime, such as brigandry or robbery.⁴⁸⁾ The title *fakih*, here and in later documents, suggests a tribal or village imam.⁴⁹⁾ In November of the same year, the *sancak beyi's* report from Kangırı (Çankırı) described the activities of a certain Küçük 'Alī who 'went back and forth from Persia and led many astray'. He had admitted his connection with Persia before the *sharī'a* court, but refused to repent. Furthermore, 'Muslims' had reported mixed gatherings of men and women who 'led one another astray', an obvious reference to *kızılbaş* ceremonies. The *Divān* ordered the *sancak beyi* to execute Küçük 'Alī and investigate the others.⁵⁰⁾

There are no further records until August, 1571, when the *Divān* issued a command, apparently one of a series, to the *kādīs* of Budaközi, Yüzdepare, and Hüseyinabad, to arrest twelve *kızılbaş* who had remained at large 'plundering Muslims' goods and molesting their families.⁵¹⁾ Early in the following year the *kādī* of Koyluhisar reported the case of a *sipāhī* and others in the same village who were *kızılbaş*. These had 'cursed the Four Friends' in the presence of a certain Eşref *halīfe* of the *tat* community (*tat cemā'ati*). The meaning of *tat* in this context is not clear. It is just possible that it could refer to a Persian settled in a Turkish community⁵²⁾ and, if this is so, Eşref could have been a Safavid missionary. The *kādī* reported further that these heretics had sent their wives' silver rings and bracelets as offerings to Persia. 'Disinterested Muslims' had testified to the truth of the report, despite the heretics' denials, and they were to be sent bound to Istanbul.⁵³⁾ 1572 also saw the investigation of a *zāviye* in the Niksar region,

⁴⁷⁾ AR no. 33.

⁴⁸⁾ AR no. 29.

⁴⁹⁾ Evliyā Celebi, *op.cit.* III, 172, in a note on the language of the turcomans (*der beyān lisān-i türkmānī*) gives *fakı* (a corruption of *fakih* ?) as the turcoman word for imam. The title also appears in village names in *tahrir* registers.

⁵⁰⁾ MD 7.896.2454 (5. xi. 1568)

⁵¹⁾ MD 12.457.880 (19. viii. 1571)

⁵²⁾ See *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (first edition), 'Tat' (V. Minorsky).

⁵³⁾ MD 10.189.279 (21. iii. 1572)

whose *şeyh* and his associates were reported to be *kızılbaş*. They had, however, disappeared when summoned to the *sharī'a* court, which is hardly surprising, since the *beylerbeyi* (of Rūm or Erzurum?) had 'killed their brother Erzmān because he was on the *kızılbaş* register'. It is not certain whether this register (*sūrhser defteri*) was a list of suspects belonging to the Ottoman authorities, such as undoubtedly existed, or a register which a *halīfe* had made of the sect's adherents in the district and which had subsequently come to the notice of the *beylerbeyi*. The *kādī* was to find and arrest them and send them to the galleys.⁵⁴)

The *mühimme defterleri* do not record further persecutions until 1576, when the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm was to seize heretical books from Persia in the possession of *ḡakīhs* of the Haman (?) tribe (*tā'ife*). There were originally forty in the possession of Velī *ḡakīh*. Four were seized, but Velī had subsequently died and the remaining books were in trust with his nephew, Nesīm *ḡakīh*. The *beylerbeyi* was to seize the books and send them and the person in whose possession they were found, to Istanbul.⁵⁵) This is the only case of books as a medium of *kızılbaş* propaganda at this period, and it is unlikely that such works were in wide circulation. Only the presumably literate tribal and village *ḡakīhs* could relay their contents to the illiterate followers of the movement. In the autumn of 1576, the *Divān* smelt 'the possibility of sedition', when it received a report that a Seyfī son of Seyyid Sitām was a heretic. His claim to be a *seyyid* would no doubt enhance his esteem in the eyes of his followers. He had built a *tekke* 'on the site of the houses of Celālī who had previously instigated a revolt from the village of یر in the *kazā* of Bozok'. The reference is probably to the Celālī who had proclaimed himself *mahdī* and led a revolt in 1519–20. The *Divān* ordered the *sancak beyi* of Bozok and the *kādīs* of Akdağ and Hüseyinabad to investigate the *tekke* and its visitors.⁵⁶)

The records in the *mühimme defterleri* of persecution between 1565 and 1576 appear to be incomplete, as some of the entries contain references to decrees⁵⁷) which ought to, but do not appear in the volumes.

⁵⁴) MD 19.176.370; AR no. 39.

⁵⁵) MD 27.399.958; for further details of the case see AR no. 47 (10. xii. 1576)

⁵⁶) MD 28.308.772 (29. x. 1576)

⁵⁷) e.g. MD 12.457.880 contains the phrase *haklarından gelinmesine ahkām verilmeşin*. . . . ('since commands have been issued for their punishment/execution. . . .') Many others have similar phrases, but the decrees referred to are not in the *mühimme defterleri*.

Nor, of course, do they record the local initiatives of *sancak beyis*, *kādīs* or others, but only such business as came before the *Divān*. They do, however, leave the impression of a continuing, if sporadic investigation of the *kızılbaş*. They also make it clear that the search for heretics became intensive in 1577, the year before the attack on Persia, culminating with the despatch early in 1578, of a spy called Kara Ya'kūb to Rūm 'for the effective arrest of those people in the region known as *kızılbaş*'.⁵⁸) The same Kara Ya'kūb had been pursuing *kızılbaş* in the area a year previously.⁵⁹)

The pre-war persecution began in Bozok. At the beginning of 1577, the *sancak beyi* of Bozok received a decree to 'examine and report on certain corrupters who practise the *kızılbaş* rite, rebel against and curse the Chosen Companions, receive offerings and travel to Persia'. The ensuing investigation revealed, on the testimony of 'Muslims of orthodox piety', that twenty-six villagers were *kızılbaş* of several generations standing. The government was determined to be rid of them, decreeing that they should be executed, but that those whose crimes could not be 'proven according to the *shari'a*', should suffer exile to Cyprus.⁶⁰) In June, the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm investigated and reported on two men from Sivas called Veled-i Babayi⁶¹) and Pīr civān, who not only collected alms and offerings and took them to Persia but were said to provide the Persians with information.⁶²) It seems most likely that the Persians would seek military and political information from their adherents in Anatolia, but it is questionable whether these men, usually peasants or nomads, would have been suitably informed. In October, the *Divān* received a report from the *bey* of the frontier *sancak* of İspir, revealing that the Persians were sending emissaries, to Çorum in particular, who were making a register of *kızılbaş* adherents. This was a signal for the *Divān* to re-iterate its general command to arrest and execute all heretics who were in contact with Persia, 'attributing to them some other crime'. The order went out to the *beylerbeyis* of Rūm, Karamān and Mar'aş.⁶³) Further reports reached the *Divān* towards the end of the year. In November, the Viziers heard from the *ağa* of the fortress of Hınıs, near the frontier, that twenty of the Çepni

⁵⁸) MD 33.221.451 (17. i. 1578)

⁵⁹) AR no. 47 (10. xii. 1576)

⁶⁰) MD 30.207.488 (30. iv. 1577)

⁶¹) Is the name Babayi an indication of the survival of the Baba'i sect in the region and its absorption by the *kızılbaş*?

⁶²) MD 31.13.32 (14. vi. 1577)

⁶³) MD 31.360.799 (16. x. 1577)

tribe⁶⁴) had infiltrated the garrison and were 'leading astray' the fortress guards. Some of these had 'come from the east' and all had relatives in Persia (? *kızılbaş 'ammisi ve tayısı*). The *beylerbeyi* of Erzurum was to send a detailed report and await a *fermān* giving further instructions.⁶⁵)

The infiltration of Çepni may have been an initiative of the Persian government, despite its difficulties following the death of Shāh Tahmāsb. The Persians certainly did despatch missionaries to Anatolia. In 1577, one of these came from Kazvin to the town of Kastamonu, in an area with a large *kızılbaş* population,⁶⁶) and 'led many from the true faith' before his capture and execution. According to the *sancak beyi*, however, he still had many followers, whose execution 'the people of the province' were requesting. In September, the *Divān* ordered the *sancak beyi* to imprison and send a detailed register on 'those infidels whose execution the *sharī'a* does not require'.⁶⁷)

In December, the *sancak beyi* of Karahisar-i şarkī's report reached Istanbul, that many of the Kurds in the region had embraced the *kızılbaş* creed, held their assemblies in the villages, and practised theft and brigandry. Most of the villages in question were on free (*serbest*) lands, so that the *sancak beyi*'s men could not enter. He was therefore to seek the permission of the holders of free-land (*serbest sāhibleri*) to enter their domains and arrest the miscreants, whom he was to 'punish according to the *sharī'a*'. The unusual feature of this report is that it was Kurds rather than turcoman tribesmen who had adopted the *kızılbaş* creed. In the reign of Selīm I, the co-operation of the *sunni* Kurdish *emīrs* had facilitated the expulsion of the Safavids from eastern Anatolia. However, if the *sancak beyi*'s report is accurate, the practical consequences of the doctrine were the same as in the case of the turcomans: a signal to practise 'theft and brigandry', and to plunder the settled populations, leaving the '*re'āyā* and *berāyā* helpless and powerless'.⁶⁸)

The campaign against Persia opened in 1578 and, although there are fewer records from this year than from the previous one, it is perfectly clear that the general persecution of the *kızılbaş* in Rūm continued. In January, the spy Kara Ya'kūb arrived to investigate *kızılbaş* adherents. At the same time, the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm received instructions

⁶⁴) See *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), *Çepni* (F. Sümer)

⁶⁵) MD 30.222.514 (24. xi. 1577)

⁶⁶) See AR nos. 32, 35

⁶⁷) MD 30.306.707 (8. xii. 1577)

⁶⁸) MD 33.128.258 (8. xii. 1577)

to arrest those on Kara Ya'kūb's list and imprison them on some other pretext.⁶⁹) The *beylerbeyi* of Rūm provided further evidence of the extent of the investigations when he enquired of the *Divān* how to punish arrested *kızılbaş*. The answer was that he was to execute 'those called *halīfes*' and exile the others to Cyprus 'cutting off all contact with their homes and families'.⁷⁰) In November, 1579, he again acknowledged the receipt of a command to 'search out and execute heretics, especially those in contact with Persia'. He had, in the meantime, arrested four suspects from Havza who, apart from their heresy, had co-operated with the rebel *sukhtas*⁷¹) in brigandry 'plundering Muslims' money and property'. They had, however, escaped from prison and, on recapture, claimed that they were subject to victimisation with a view to the confiscation of their property. Furthermore, he reported that the campaign in the east had rendered further investigation of the *kızılbaş* impossible, and forwarded a copy of the register about the four suspects from Havza. The *Divān* simply decreed that they and other such heretics should receive punishment 'according to the *sharī'a*'.⁷²)

The authorities made a bigger haul in 1579. In February, the *Divān* received the *kādī* of Kurşunlu's report that 'ulemā and pious men' in the district had reported the activities of four men in the village of Bahaeddin who were heretics in contact with Persia, and sent offerings to the Shāh. They 'cursed the Four Friends' and 'in the silence of the night, assembled their women and made them play the *çeşte*'.⁷³) On the same day, 14 February, 1579, the *Divān* dealt with another report, this time from the *kādī* of Sivas, that the Ustaclu tribe were sheltering one of their number, a certain Mahmūd *halīfe*, whom the *kādī* was to arrest and imprison. The Ustaclu was one of the tribes which had supported the Safavid rise to power. The *kādī* at the same time reported the imprisonment of six other heretics.⁷⁴) There also appear, as in Iraq, to have been cases of wrongful arrest which came to the notice of the central government, since in 1579, the *sancak beyi* of Bozok received orders to release prisoners who, on investigation, had proved to be *sunnites*.⁷⁵)

⁶⁹) MD 33.221.451 (17. i. 1578)

⁷⁰) MD 33.204.413 (17. i. 1578)

⁷¹) For an account of the *sukhta* rebellions, see M. Akdağ, *Celdāh isyanları*.

⁷²) MD 35.366.931 (17. xi. 1578)

⁷³) This instrument was used in the ceremonies of the *abdals* at Seyyid Gazi. See AR no. 42

⁷⁴) MD 36.61.185 (14. ii. 1579)

⁷⁵) MD 36.164.450 (5. iv. 1579)

Shortly after the report on Mahmūd *halīfe* reached the capital, he was captured, but soon escaped along with two others from Hüseyinabad whom 'unprejudiced Muslims' had testified to be evil men. On receiving this report from the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm, the *Divān* despatched a decree, dated 24th May, to the *sancak bayi* of Bozok for the re-arrest and imprisonment of Mahmūd and the two others. He was to make and send a register of their case.⁷⁶) A decree of the same date orders the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm to execute four persons imprisoned at Artıkabad for being *kızılbaş* in contact with Persia.⁷⁷)

The spy, Kara Ya'küb; meanwhile continued his activities. A letter from the *defter kethüdāsi* (of Rūm ?) to the *Divān* acknowledged the receipt, via Kara Ya'küb, of a command to 'capture evil-doers who are in contact with Persia', and reported the capture and imprisonment of some of these. He had forwarded separate information about others. Kara Ya'küb had informed the *defter kethüdāsi* and the *kādī* of Artıkabad of the case of a *sipāhī* called Ibrāhīm who was 'sheltering some of the miscreants in his house'. Despite his denial, a search in his house had led to the capture and imprisonment of several. Ibrāhīm, however, persisted in aiding 'those who are in contact with Persia', by hiding them and giving them money. The *defter kethüdāsi* and the *kādī* of Artıkabad were to arrest and execute him if any charge could be proven.⁷⁸) In October, 1579, the *kādī* of Artıkabad acknowledged a *fermān* 'publicly and secretly to investigate heretics in contact with Persia'. At the same time he was able to reveal the details of a *kızılbaş* organisation. He had succeeded in arresting a *kızılbaş halīfe*, called Mansūr son of Emīr 'Alī, and in summoning others from the same village to the *sharī'a* court. According to Mansūr, four men called Mak-sūd, Ismā'il, Hasan and Hasan *halīfe* gathered in his house, where they delivered 1,500 *filoris* — a large sum for a village — to a certain Şah Bende,⁷⁹) the agent of Emīr 'Alī *halīfe* who was in Persia. They also gave him a name-register of 3,000 *kızılbaş* in Bozok and the *kazās* of Tokat and Artıkabad. Şah Bende had taken these and gone to Persia in disguise. Swords and kaftans would come from Persia to all *halīfes* who were to gather at Akdağ. Two of the villagers, called Mehmed and Şah 'Alī, while denying their own complicity, witnessed that the people of the village were related to Emīr 'Alī who was in Persia,

⁷⁶) MD 36.280.736 (24. v. 1579)

⁷⁷) MD 36.280.735 (24. v. 1579)

⁷⁸) MD 36.285.750 (24. v. 1579)

⁷⁹) Cf. the name Şah Kuli

and were 'heretics in contact with Persia'. The *kādīs* of Artıkabad and Zile were to investigate further and execute proven heretics, sending a report when this had been done.⁸⁰⁾

After 1579, the number of *fermāns* concerned with the persecution of the *kızılbaş* decreases. In fact there are fewer than in the pre-war period, but they are sufficient to suggest considerable activity both among the *kızılbaş* and among government spies. The first concerns an individual case. The *kādī* of Sivas' deputy and the *kādī* of Divriği acknowledged the receipt of a command to investigate a Çepni Mehmed who was a '*kızılbaş* in contact with Persia'. They reported that he had disappeared. The *beylerbeyi* of Rūm and *kādī* of Sivas were to arrest and examine him and send a register with the details.⁸¹⁾

A second command of August, 1581, to the *sancak beyi* and *kādī* of Amasya and a number of *kādīs* in Rūm is more sweeping. It orders a general investigation of *kızılbaş* in the towns and villages of the region and lists ways of identifying the heretics. Firstly, 'they curse and revile the Four Chosen Friends'. This in itself was enough to identify a *shī'ite* and could carry the death penalty,⁸²⁾ but *shī'ite* tendencies were not a monopoly of the *kızılbaş*. Secondly, 'they openly address Muslims with the words "Yezīd geldi"', Again, the identification of the *sunrites*, especially the *sunrite* authorities with Yazīd was common to all *shī'ite* groups. Thirdly, 'they assemble at night, bringing wives and daughters to their assemblies, where they have disposal of one another's wives and daughters'. This accusation of sexual immorality appears to be a caricature of *kızılbaş* ceremonies in which both sexes participated.⁸³⁾ The same accusations occur in contemporary reports of the secret activities of the *melāmīs* in Bosnia.⁸⁴⁾ Fourthly, 'they know neither prayer nor fasting'. This rejection of orthodox incumencies was, again, not peculiar to the *kızılbaş*. Similar accusations occur, for example, in the records of the trial of Oğlan Şeyh in 1528,⁸⁵⁾ and in Vāhidī's account of the beliefs of the *abdals* of Rūm.⁸⁶⁾ Fifthly, 'they never call their sons Abū Bakr, 'Umar or 'Uthmān and, since

⁸⁰⁾ MD 40.212.479 (19. x. 1579), AR no. 52, H. Sohrweide, *op.cit.*, 191—192

⁸¹⁾ MD 43.33.70 (29. iv. 1580)

⁸²⁾ MD 9.80.83 (see above); MD 52.99.239 (see below)

⁸³⁾ See *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, *Kızılbaş* (A. Gölpınarlı)

⁸⁴⁾ MD 47.185.453 (27. vi. 1582), MD 48.151.419 (4. xi. 1582)

⁸⁵⁾ Summarised in M. Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin iktisadî ve ictimai tarihi*, 2, p. 48—49

⁸⁶⁾ Vāhidī, *H'ace-yi cihān* (ed. T. Yazıcı, in introduction to *Menākib-i Cemāl ed-Din Sāvī*.)

none of them bears these names, it is clear that they are heretics'. Government spies in Denizli in 1567 had reported that the dervishes in the *zāviye* of Saru Baba did not allow bearers of these names to enter the *zāviye*.⁸⁷⁾ All these 'marks of misbelief' the *kızılbaş* had in common with various other heretical groups. What distinguished them was their association with Persia and allegiance to the Shāh. The list of 'marks' goes on to say that 'those known as *halife* bring boots and clothes from Persia, from the Shāh!'. Another feature, peculiar to the *kızılbaş*, which the *fermān* does not mention, was the possession of the *kızılbaş* crown. The decree mentions further two *halifes*, Celāl and Re-sūl, who 'held assemblies and were beginning to sow sedition and rebellion'. The *Divān* despatched a certain Ahmed *çavuş* to conduct the investigations. Heretics were to be imprisoned and the facts reported. The *Divān* would then issue a command with further instructions.⁸⁸⁾

The final two records are from the Çorum area. The first, dated September, 1584, commands the *kādīs* of Çorum and Göl to investigate six *kızılbaş* suspects from the *kazā* of Çorum, to imprison them and send a report if the charges were proven.⁸⁹⁾ The second suggests a more serious possibility of insurrection. In the late summer of 1585, the *defterdār* of Rūm (*hizāne-yi 'āmiremin Rūm cānibi defterdārı*) sent a report to the *Divān* about a certain Şeyh Hayder in a village near Amasya. Apparently, the 'people of Amasya' had sent an agent to inform on Şeyh Hayder who, after a long absence, had re-appeared and was holding assemblies in the *kızılbaş* villages in the area. Here he had announced 'I was with the Shāh. I have undertaken to raise 40,000 men from this region. Be ready at once! The Shāh shall come to this region!' and was apparently on the point of revolt. However, Ahmed *çavuş*, a *çavuş* of the Porte employed in the Treasury of Rūm (*hizāne-yi Rūm*),⁹⁰⁾ with the *alay beyi* of Amasya and a force of thirty men captured Şeyh Hayder in his village. They fought off an armed attack by his followers from the surrounding villages and imprisoned him in the fortress of Çorum. After his capture, a large group of 'unprejudiced Muslims' witnessed that Şeyh Hayder was the *halife* of the *kızılbaş* in Çorum and Bozok who each year took his followers' offerings to the Shāh. It was rumoured that this year he planned to instigate an armed rebellion of 40,000 men. His father, Şeyh Tuzi, had also been

⁸⁷⁾ AR no. 19; H. Sohrweide, *op.cit.*, 189

⁸⁸⁾ MD 42.123.420 (28. viii. 1581); AR no. 53

⁸⁹⁾ MD 53.145.419 (1. ix. 1584)

⁹⁰⁾ Probably the same Ahmed *çavuş* as the one who had arrived in Rūm four years previously to investigate *kızılbaş* activities in the province.

a *kızılbaş* whose heresy had led to his execution. The *Divân* ordered Şeyh Hayder's execution.⁹¹⁾

The *kızılbaş* sect seems hardly to have affected western Anatolia. In 1579, the *Divân* issued a command to the *kādīs* of Alaşehir and Kestel⁹²⁾ and to the *sancak beyi* of Aydın for the arrest and examination of two brothers and their cousin in the *kazā* of Kestel who had 'cursed the Four Friends' and 'insulted Muslims'. It does not specify that they were *kızılbaş*.⁹³⁾ A decree of 1583 orders the *beylerbeyi* of Anadolu, the *müfti* of Karahisar — presumably Karahisar-i sāhib (Afyon), — and the *kādīs* of Karahisar and Bolvadin to arrest two escaped criminals, condemned to the galleys for brigandry and denouncing innocent Muslims to the *ehl-i 'örf* in order to seize their money. Furthermore, one of them, called Ümür ıřık, was a '*kızılbaş* who committed foul acts contrary to the *sharī'a*'.⁹⁴⁾ In this case, the term *kızılbaş*, like the term *ıřık*, may refer to a heretic in general, rather than to a true *kızılbaş*.

The methods of persecution

The *fermāns* registered in the *mühimme defterleri* are obviously a poor source for following the arrests, trials and punishment of heretics. Although they often contain summaries of *kādīs'* registers or letters from various provincial authorities, they are essentially commands for future actions rather than accounts of what action has in fact been taken. Furthermore, the stereotyped language of the commands suggests that the *Divân* did not concern itself too closely with the procedures of persecution. It wanted the suppression of heresy by whatever means.

The authorities had, in the first place, to procure information about the heretics and, to do this, they obviously employed a network of spies and informers. The *bey*s and *kādīs* who received instructions to search out *kızılbaş* suspects could not have done this personally, and the use in some commands of such formulae as 'I have commanded that their circumstances be secretly investigated'⁹⁵⁾ or '... my Imperial Command concerning secret and public investigations'⁹⁶⁾ suggests

⁹¹⁾ MD 58.268.683 (8. ix. 1585)

⁹²⁾ In the *sancak* of Aydın, not present-day Gürsü, also called Kestel.

⁹³⁾ MD 47.257.594 (3. xi. 1579)

⁹⁴⁾ MD 52.126.317 (14. xi. 1583)

⁹⁵⁾ MD 31.13.32

⁹⁶⁾ MD 40.212.479

the use of spies. The *Divân*, in fact, openly described Kara Ya'kûb who conducted investigations in Rûm as a spy (*câsûs*).⁹⁷ However, the scale of persecution, in Rûm in particular, indicates that there must have been others, probably locally rather than centrally employed.

Voluntary testimony of *sunni* Muslims supplemented spies' reports and, indeed, informers must have flourished in the increasingly tense atmosphere of the persecutions. In 1568, 'Muslims brought information' to the *sancak beyi* of Kangırı about *kızılbaş* gatherings.⁹⁸ The *kādî* of Ruhâ claimed in 1574 that 'the people of Ruhâ were complaining bitterly' about a group of *kızılbaş*.⁹⁹ According to the *sancak beyi* of Kastamonu, it was the people of Kastamonu who demanded an investigation of the executed Persian missionary's followers.¹⁰⁰ In Kurşunlu in 1579, a group of 'ulemâ and pious men' came, apparently voluntarily, to the *sharî'a* court to denounce *kızılbaş* in the *kazâ*.¹⁰¹ and similarly, in 1585, it was the 'people of Amasya' who sent an agent to report on the activities of Şeyh Hayder.¹⁰² A case occurred in 1575 where a *kādî's* register forwarded to the *Divân* records the case of *kızılbaş sipâhîs* whom a certain Hâccî Kâsim had denounced before the *beylerbeyi* of Şehrîzol 'in accordance with the command and noble *fetvâ* (?)' (...*nâm kimesneler nâmeşrû' kelimât ederler deyü Hâccî Kâsim nâm emrile ve fetvâ-yi şerîf mücebince sâbikâ Şehrîzol beğler-beğîsinin önünde da'vâ ettiğinde*).¹⁰³ Were the 'command and *fetvâ*' sanctions for informers? The occurrence of false accusations of innocent people¹⁰⁴ is another indication that the authorities made use of informers.

Information on *kızılbaş* activities normally reached the *Divân* through letters from *beylerbeyis*, *sancak beyis* or *kādîs*, or through copies of *kādîs*' registers (*sûret-i sicil*), which these forwarded to the *kādî'askers*.¹⁰⁵ There were occasionally other informants, such as the *ağa* of the fortress of Hınıs.¹⁰⁶ In many of its decrees the *Divân* does not disclose its source of information, but merely concludes the *narratio* forming the first section of the decree with formulae such as 'since it has

⁹⁷) MD 36.285.750

⁹⁸) MD 7.896.2454

⁹⁹) MD 26.175.474

¹⁰⁰) MD 30.283.658

¹⁰¹) MD 36.61.184

¹⁰²) MD 58.268.683

¹⁰³) MD 27.108.259

¹⁰⁴) MD 21.18.58; MD 46.348.801; MD 47.44.112

¹⁰⁵) MD 19.176.370

¹⁰⁶) MD 30.222.514

been heard. . . . ' (*istimā' olunmağın*) or 'since it has been announced . . . ' (*i'lām olunmağın*).

Occasionally the government despatched commissioners (*müfettiş*, *mübāşir*) to conduct the persecution of *kızılbaş* communities. In 1572, a certain Mehmed *çavuş* travelled to Koyluhisar as a *müfettiş* to summon a group of *kızılbaş* in the *kazā*.¹⁰⁷ In 1581, a *çavuş* of the Porte, called Ahmed *çavuş* went to Amasya, where the *kādīs* of the area were to examine heretics in their *kazās* 'under his supervision' (*mübāşeretiyile*).¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in 1583, the *kādī* of Harsova received orders to re-arrest and execute, under the supervision (*mübāşeretiyile*) of a *çavuş* of the Porte called Bilāl, an escaped heretic or, if he could not be found, his protector.¹⁰⁹ In most cases, however, the investigations remained in the hands of the *kādīs*, *sancak beyis* and *beylerbeyis* of the areas concerned, and it was to these that the *Divān* almost invariably addressed its decrees.

However, the respective roles of these authorities are not very clear. It is difficult to say whether the part which the *kādīs* played in the persecutions was different from the parts of the *beyis*, or whether the role of *beylerbeyis* was different from that of *sancak beyis*.

Beylerbeyis, as might be expected, received the orders to set in motion the investigation of *kızılbaş* throughout their provinces. There are commands of this kind to the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm in June, 1577,¹¹⁰ and to the *beylerbeyis* of Rūm, Karamān and Mar'aş in October of the same year.¹¹¹ In these three cases the *beylerbeyis* were to conduct the investigations with the 'co-operation of the *kādīs* of the revelant areas (*toprak kādīleri ma'rifetiyile*). Orders for a general investigation also went to the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad in July, 1577¹¹² and again to the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm in November, 1578, despite his complaint that the 'Imperial Campaign to the East' had rendered the task impossible.¹¹³ *Beylerbeyis* could also deal with cases of wrongful accusations and punishment,¹¹⁴ and with cases involving the arrest of persons of high rank, such as the *sancak beyis* of Darna¹¹⁵ and Dhamār.¹¹⁶ However,

¹⁰⁷) MD 10.189.279

¹⁰⁸) MD 42.123.420; AR no. 53

¹⁰⁹) MD 52.99.239

¹¹⁰) MD 31.13.32

¹¹¹) MD 31.360.799

¹¹²) MD 31.56.142

¹¹³) MD 35.366.391

¹¹⁴) MD 21.18.58; MD 27.119.283; MD 46.348.801

¹¹⁵) MD 31.55.141

¹¹⁶) MD 40.301.693

the *Divān* sometimes involved *beylerbeyis* in cases involving individuals of humble status, such as the *beylerbeyi* of Şehrizol's investigations of a *kızılbaş* group whom the *kādī* of Kerkūk had reported to the *Divān*,¹¹⁷⁾ or the *beylerbeyi* of Basra's bringing a *gönüllü* to trial before the *kādī*.¹¹⁸⁾

The few commands addressed solely to *sancak beyis* suggest that these normally had the responsibility for the arrest and punishment of heretics, but that the enquiries into the guilt of suspects often required the co-operation of the *kādī*, while the passing of judgement and sentencing rested with the *kādī* or the *Divān*. In 1568, the *sancak beyi* of Kangırı forwarded the *sharī'a* court's verdict of guilty against the *kızılbaş* Küçük 'Alī to the *Divān* which pronounced the sentence of execution (*eşedd-i siyāset*). The *sancak beyi* had then to carry out the sentence. He was also to inform the *Divān* of other heretics whose 'guilt was proven according to the *sharī'a*'.¹¹⁹⁾ This much-encountered formula was probably intended merely to give a gloss of legality to the persecutions, but may imply that the *Divān* expected him to co-operate with the *kādī* in the investigations. This was certainly the case in two commands to the *sancak beyi* of Bozok. In 1577, on receiving orders from Istanbul, he made a search for *kızılbaş* in Bozok and sent a register to the *Divān*, which had a copy made. The *Divān* then commanded him to arrest suspects, examine them 'with the co-operation of the *kādī* of the relevant area' and execute them if their crimes were 'proven according to the *sharī'a*'.¹²⁰⁾ Similarly, in 1578, he was to 'show no mercy to those followers of the false Ismā'īl known as *halīfes* but, after proof, punish them as necessary with the *kādī*'s co-operation'.¹²¹⁾ Similar instructions went to the *sancak beyi* of Malatya.¹²²⁾ When the *sancak beyi* of Bozok finally did capture one of the false Ismā'īl's *halīfes*, called Hurşidoğlu, he awaited the sentence from the *Divān* before executing his captive.¹²³⁾

However, in July 1578, when the viziers instructed the *Türkmān sancak beyi*, Prince Murād, to arrest the false Ismā'īl and his 'followers and *halīfes*', they dropped all pretence of procedural niceties. Murād

¹¹⁷⁾ MD 33.91.188

¹¹⁸⁾ MD 35.269.680.

¹¹⁹⁾ MD 7.986.2454

¹²⁰⁾ MD 30.207.488

¹²¹⁾ MD 35.235.583

¹²²⁾ MD 35.188.473

¹²³⁾ MD 35.169.433

was simply to get the *'sipāhīs* and *il eris* assigned to guard the security of the region' to arrest the rebels 'and have them executed by whatever means as a warning and admonition to other brigands'.¹²⁴) Similar commands went out to the *sancak beyis* of Bozok, 'Ayntāb and Kırşehir. They were to use spies and informers (*tettebbü' ve tecessüs etdürüb*) to find out who the *halīfes* of the false Ismā'il were and have them executed by whatever means.¹²⁵)

Kādīs do not normally appear to have been in sole charge of measures against the *kızılbaş*. The *kādī* of Koyluhisar in 1572 examined the group of suspects whose activities he had confirmed, but it was the duty of Mehmed *çavuş* to summon them to court. It was the duty of the *kādī* to conduct the examination and, should the suspects disappear, 'to charge those whose duty it is to find and arrest them'.¹²⁶) If they were guilty, he was to send them 'tied and bound' to the capital.¹²⁷) The *Divān* in this case took the responsibility for punishment from the local *ehl-i 'örf*. It probably intended condemning them to the galleys, given the needs of the fleet in this year. In the same year, the *kādī* of Niksar had rather wider powers. It was apparently he who received the command to investigate the suspect *zāviye* of Matay and it appears that it was he, rather than the *sancak beyi* or a *çavuş*, who sent an agent to summon the suspects to court (*şer'-i şerīfe da'vet*). Since they escaped, he was to 'make those whose duty it was find them', and then examine them himself. If they proved to be guilty, he was to send them to the galleys.¹²⁸) In this, as in many other cases, the *Divān* determined the sentence. In 1584, the *kādīs* of Çorum and Göl received orders to summon a group of *kızılbaş* whose activities had 'come to the attention of' the *Divān* and, if guilty, to imprison them and forward a copy of the judicial register to Istanbul.¹²⁹) Since the authorities never regarded imprisonment in itself as a punishment for heretics, their incarceration would presumably have been pending the *Divān's* decision on a suitable sentence.

On rare occasions, the *kādīs* had the responsibility for the execution of the sentence. In 1574, the *kādī* of Mosul was responsible for sending

¹²⁴) MD 32.206—7.392

¹²⁵) MD 32.207.393

¹²⁶) See Uriel Heyd (ed. V. L. Ménage), *Studies in old Ottoman criminal law*, p. 235

¹²⁷) MD 10.189.279

¹²⁸) MD 19.176.370; AR no. 39

¹²⁹) MD 53.145.419

the heretic *seyyids* back to exile in Hısnıkeyf, although the decision to do so had come from the *Divân*.¹³⁰) In 1579, the *kādīs* of Artıkabad and Zile were to investigate a group of heretics and 'punish according to the *sharī'a*' those whose guilt was proven.¹³¹) It could be simply that the *Divân* took the role of the *ehl-i 'örf* in executing the sentence for granted, or else that their absence on campaign left the *kādīs* with the responsibility. In the previous year the *beylerbeyi* of Rûm had complained that the campaign had rendered investigation of heretics impossible.¹³²)

A case in 1583 indicates what was probably the *kādīs'* normal role. In this year, the *kādī* of Harsova reported to the *Divân* the case of a certain Şehsüvâr who had 'cursed the Four Friends'. The charge had been proven, presumably in the *sharī'a* court, and referred to the *Divân* which pronounced the death sentence. However, the *dîzdâr* of Harsova bribed the two *subaşı*s to let Şehsüvâr escape. On receiving the *kādī's* report of what had happened, the *Divân* ordered him to make the *dîzdâr* find the escaped Şehsüvâr. It was part of the *kādīs'* normal role in the pursuit of wanted men to make the accused's fellow townsmen or villagers conduct the search. However, the *Divân* also despatched a Bilâl *çavuş*, and it was under his supervision (*mübâşeretîyle*) that the *kādī* was to conduct the search through the *dîzdâr*. If the *dîzdâr* failed to find Şehsüvâr he was to be executed in his place.¹³³) It appears from this that the *kādī* had some executive powers, but was independent of the *ehl-i 'örf* or the *Divân* only in the trial.

The viziers, in fact, addressed most commands jointly to the *kādīs* and *sancak beyis* or *beylerbeyis*, but these decrees never delineate special roles for the *kādīs* or the *ehl-i 'örf*. Evidence from *fermâns* in general suggests that the *ehl-i 'örf* were normally responsible for the arrest of suspects, although *kādīs* could also organise the search for particular individuals. The *kādīs* or the *Divân* pronounced the sentence, whose execution lay with the *ehl-i 'örf* or the *Divân*. However, it seems likely that, as the persecution became more intense after 1576, the roles of the *kādīs* and *ehl-i 'örf* would have become increasingly blurred. Furthermore, the absence of some of the civil authorities on campaign after the spring of 1578, the rivalry between *kādīs* and *ehl-i 'örf*, and the growing anarchy in Anatolia would have confused the situation further.

¹³⁰) MD 26.221.627

¹³¹) MD 40.212.479; AR no. 52

¹³²) MD 35.366.931

¹³³) MD 52.99.239

Open trial for heretics was not the rule, particularly at the height of the persecution when war with Persia threatened or was already in progress. In certain cases, however, the *kādī* did hold a trial, taking statements from the accused. In 1568, Küçük 'Ali had been summoned to the *kādī's* court (*meclis-i şer'*) in Kangırı and there confessed his heresy.¹³⁴ In 1572, a group of suspects denied being *kızılbaş* when interrogated 'in the presence of the *kādī*' in Koyluhisar. The evidence of 'upright Muslims' (*'udül-i müslimîn*) overruled their denial.¹³⁵ In 1572, the *kādī* of Niksar summoned to his court (*şer'-i şerife da'vet edüb*) some heretics who did not, in fact, appear.¹³⁶ In 1578, *beylerbeyi* of Basra was to summon the heretical *gönüllü* and examine him 'in accordance with the *shari'a*... with the co-operation of the *kādī* of the relevant area'.¹³⁷ Whether trial before a *kādī* or *beylerbeyi* gave the heretics a chance to defend their case is doubtful. The testimony of orthodox Muslims over-rode the statements of suspects, and it seems that appearance in court came only after the authorities were already satisfied that the suspects were guilty. This appears clearly in the case of 1579, where the *kādī* of Kurşunlu reported to the *Divân* that 'ulemâ and pious men' had informed on four heretics. The *Divân* ordered the *sancak beyi* of Kangırı and *kādī* of Kurşunlu to summon them to the *shari'a* court, but only after becoming fully acquainted with their circumstances and certain of their heresy (*mezbûrun ahvâlin tettebbü' edüb dahi vech-i meşrû' üzre rıfz ü ilhâdları muhakkak olub vâkıf olduğunuzdan sonra*).¹³⁸ A probable motive in holding a trial before the *kādī* was the hope that the accused would provide further information about *kızılbaş* activities. Certainly the report of the *kādī* of Artıkabad in 1579 about the trial of a group of *kızılbaş* is most informative about the activities of the sect in the area.¹³⁹

There are a few more examples where the *fermâns* specifically require the authorities to summon the accused before the *shari'a* court¹⁴⁰) and many more demanding, in unspecific terms, 'a fair and just examination in accordance with the procedures of the *shari'a*'. However, this formula and its many variants does not necessarily imply an open trial. For example, the commands to the *beylerbeyis* of Karamân, Rûm

¹³⁴) MD 7.896.2454

¹³⁵) MD 10.189.279

¹³⁶) MD 19.176.370

¹³⁷) MD 35.269.680

¹³⁸) MD 36.61.184

¹³⁹) MD 40.212.279; AR no. 52

¹⁴⁰) MD 53.145.419 et al.

and Mar'aş in 1577 order these authorities to arrest heretics and 'examine their circumstances with the co-operation of the *kādīs* of the relevant districts in accordance with the upright *sharī'a*'. If their guilt was 'proven according to the *sharī'a*', they were to be executed 'on some other charge'.¹⁴¹) In other words, there was no trial and the accused were not informed of the real charges. There are many similar examples. It seems that the evidence of the government's own informers or the words of 'unprejudiced Muslims of orthodox piety' were sufficient to secure conviction.

There is, however, no information about the procurement of witnesses, except where it is obvious that they came forward voluntarily. The authorities were expected to establish the probity of witnesses before accepting their evidence against heretics. Witnesses should be 'upright Muslims' (*'udūl-i müslimîn*), 'competent' (*ehl-i vukūf*), 'unprejudiced' (*bîqaraz*), 'trusted' (*mu'temed 'aleyh*), 'of sound orthodoxy' (*sâlih et-tedeyyûn*), 'ulemā and pious men' (*'ulemā ve sulehā*) or 'notables of the region' (*a'yân-i vilāyet*). In one case, four men, imprisoned through 'the slander of rancorous persons' (*erbāb-i garaz iftirāsîyle*) regained their freedom after 'the people at large' (*umūmen halk*) had testified to their innocence.¹⁴²) Some of the decrees end with such formulae as 'At the time of the examination, you should adhere to the clear truth and beware of falsification, and distortion, false witness, rancour and bigotry and misrepresentation of the facts'¹⁴³) or 'You should beware of making this an excuse for misappropriation, interfering with innocent persons or protecting heretics'.¹⁴⁴) Despite this apparent concern with correct procedure, the government's reliance on spies, informers, secret evidence, and virtual conviction before trial or conviction without trial can only have resulted in widespread oppression of the innocent.

The actual wording of decrees often leaves doubt as to the punishments which the *Divân* envisaged for *kızılbaş* and other heretics. The authorities frequently received instructions simply to 'punish' (*hak-kından gelmek*) victims, but it appears that the phrase *hak-kından gelmek* without further qualification normally meant to execute. The question did puzzle the *beylerbeyi* of Rûm. In late 1577, he sent a letter enquiring 'If those known as *kızılbaş* are punished (*hak-larından gelinürse*), is it necessary to exterminate them completely?' The reply that

¹⁴¹) MD 31.360.499

¹⁴²) MD 21.18.58

¹⁴³) MD 26.175.474 et al.

¹⁴⁴) MD 30.283.685 et al.

he was to exile some, but to 'have those known as *halife* "punished"' (*halife nāmına olanların haklarından geldüresiz*)¹⁴⁵ leaves little doubt that the term means 'to execute'. Other orders provide confirmation. In 1568, the *sancak beyi* of Amasya was secretly to drown Süleymân *fakih* and his followers or else to 'punish' them (*haklarından gelesin*) on a trumped-up charge.¹⁴⁶ Here the punishment has to be the equivalent of drowning. In 1577, the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad was to 'punish seditious persons... whose removal is necessary'.¹⁴⁷ The wording again implies execution. In the order to the *kādî* of Harsova in 1583,¹⁴⁸ 'punishment' (*hakından gelmek*) is equated with *siyâset*,¹⁴⁹ that is execution or occasionally severe corporal punishment, but in this case almost certainly execution. The term *siyâset* also occurs in the command to the *sancak beyi* of Kangırı to 'execute Küçük 'Alî with the most severe form of *siyâset*' (*eşedd-i siyâset ile siyâset edüb*).¹⁵⁰ This can only mean death.

The frequent commands to 'act' or to 'punish in accordance with the *sharî'a*' (*muktezâ-yi ser'le 'âmîl olasız*;¹⁵¹ *ser'le hakından gelesiz*)¹⁵² seems also to mean the death penalty. A *fetvâ* of Ebû's-su'ûd dated 1548 had equated the *kızılbaş* with the apostates and *khawârij* during the caliphates of Abû Bakr and 'Alî.¹⁵³ The immediate purpose of the *fetvâ* was to justify the impending war with Persia, but its implications were more far-reaching. The charge of apostasy would apply to the *kızılbaş* on Ottoman territory as much as it did to the *kızılbaş* of Persia, and the *sharî'a* manuals state unequivocally that apostasy carries the death penalty.¹⁵⁴ Sometimes the *Divân's* instructions were more blunt. The *sancak beyi* of Amasya received orders to drown Süleymân *fakih* in the Kızıl Irmak.¹⁵⁵ The *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad in 1573 was simply to 'destroy' (*telef eyliyesin*) the fifty men who recited *sûras* for the Shâh.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁵) MD 33.204.413

¹⁴⁶) AR no. 29

¹⁴⁷) MD 31.56.142

¹⁴⁸) MD 52.99.230

¹⁴⁹) Uriel Heyd, *op.cit.*, 259—271. Cf. also the wording of *fermâns* condemning to the galleys men 'guilty of grievous crimes but not meriting execution' (*cürm-i galizi olub siyâsete mustahak olmıyan*)

¹⁵⁰) MD 7.896.2454

¹⁵¹) MD 36.61.184 et al.

¹⁵²) MD 30.207.488 et al.

¹⁵³) M. E. Düzdağ, *loc.cit.*

¹⁵⁴) Cf. al-Marghinānî, *al-Hidāya*, (trans. Hamilton), vol I, 176

¹⁵⁵) AR no. 29

¹⁵⁶) MD 21.278.659

The death penalty was not invariable, particularly in cases which involved large groups of heretics. The authorities were anxious, above all, to arrest and execute the leaders of *kızılbaş* groups, the *halīfes*. In 1578, the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm received instructions to execute *halīfes* and exile the rest.¹⁵⁷⁾ In 1577 the *sancak beyi* of Tarsus was to execute Kōr Tatar 'if he was in fact a *halīfe* as had been reported'.¹⁵⁸⁾ Similarly in 1578, the *sancak beyis* of Kırşehir, 'Ayntāb¹⁵⁹⁾ and Bozok¹⁶⁰⁾ and the *sancak beyi* of the Turcomans were to execute the followers of the false Ismā'īl 'as a warning to the other brigands'.¹⁶¹⁾ For heretics who were not *halīfes*, exile was, as it always had been, a common punishment. In 1565, *kızılbaş* from Rūm were exiled to Hungary, while their *halīfes* who had travelled to Persia were executed.¹⁶²⁾ In the 1570s, the newly conquered Cyprus was the most frequent place of exile. In 1574, heretics from the region of Ruhā suffered banishment to the island¹⁶³⁾ and, three years later, the *sancak beyi* of Bozok received a command to execute a group of *kızılbaş* if their guilt was 'proven according to the *sharī'a*.' If it was not proven, but there were still grounds for suspicion (*zīkr olunān tōhmetiyle müttehem idūği zāhīr olursa*), they were to go to Cyprus.¹⁶⁴⁾ In 1578, the *beylerbeyi* of Rūm was to exile *kızılbaş* who were not *halīfes* to Cyprus 'cutting off all connection with their homes and families'.¹⁶⁵⁾

A third punishment was the galleys, a penalty invoked whenever there was a shortage of oarsmen in the fleet.¹⁶⁶⁾ It is not, therefore, surprising to find heretics from Niksar condemned to the galleys in 1572,¹⁶⁷⁾ the year after Lepanto. In many cases, however, the *Divān* issued no instructions for punishment, but merely ordered the authorities to imprison the accused if proven guilty and to await orders for further action. There is often no obvious reason why these cases differ from those where the punishment is specified.

¹⁵⁷⁾ MD 33.204.413

¹⁵⁸⁾ MD 30.306.707

¹⁵⁹⁾ MD 32.207.393

¹⁶⁰⁾ MD 35.233.583

¹⁶¹⁾ MD 32.206—7.392

¹⁶²⁾ H. Schrweide, *op.cit.*, 192

¹⁶³⁾ MD 26.175.474

¹⁶⁴⁾ MD 30.207.488

¹⁶⁵⁾ MD 33.204.413

¹⁶⁶⁾ U. Heyd, *op.cit.*, 304—307; C. H. Imber, *The navy of Süleymān the Magnificent*, Archivum Ottomanicum, vi (in press).

¹⁶⁷⁾ MD 19.176.370

The *Divân* kept the responsibility for sentencing and sometimes for punishing members of the '*askerî*' class. In 1572, the *sipāhî* Ahmed and his heretical associates were to be sent 'tied and bound' from Koyluhisar to the capital.¹⁶⁸⁾ The *sipāhîs* of Mosul, found guilty of heresy in 1575, 'were not punished since they were *sipāhîs*, but imprisoned, and their case reported'. The *beylerbeyi* of Şehrizol then received the decree to send them escorted to the capital.¹⁶⁹⁾ In 1579, however, the *sipāhî* Ibrāhîm of Artıkabad was to be executed in the district if found guilty of heresy.¹⁷⁰⁾ In the cases of the heretical *sancak beyis* of Darna¹⁷¹⁾ and Yemen,¹⁷²⁾ the *beylerbeyis* of Baghdad and Yemen received orders simply to imprison them and send a report, no doubt pending further instructions.

¹⁶⁸⁾ MD 10.189.279

¹⁶⁹⁾ MD 27.108.259

¹⁷⁰⁾ MD 36.285.756

¹⁷¹⁾ MD 36.55.141

¹⁷²⁾ MD 40.301.693