

than to restore the personalized style of governance, the traditional method of *amiras*.

The victory of the *amiras* did not provide unambiguous proof of their power, however. It demonstrated the power of a tiny elite, its ability to employ its financial strength and court-connections to doom to failure the projects or institutions of others, such as the *esnafs*, who were its contenders for the leadership of the *millet*. Yet, if the once all-powerful *amiras* still retained what was, in effect, veto power in 1842, they could no longer manage the affairs of the *millet* without the support of the *esnafs*. Not even the temporary reinstitution of the *iltizam* tax-farming system was sufficient to restore their previous total dominance, though it doubtless increased the *amiras*' wealth once again.

By 1842, Erganian *Amira* had concentrated more power in his person than any other *amira*, as the chairman of the National Assembly, director of finances at the Patriarchate and as the head of the two divisions of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Kumpanyasi*, the *sarraf* organization. He took the initiative in bringing the *esnafs* and the *amiras* together, and was also instrumental in the election of a popular candidate, Madteos Tchukhadjian, to the patriarchal office on 17 July 1844. The new Patriarch, hoping to take advantage of the unique opportunity, organized a Mixed Council, composed of sixteen *amiras* and fourteen *esnafs*. This new Council assumed total responsibility for the administration of the Patriarchate.

In consenting to participate in the Mixed Council, the *amiras*, especially the *sarrafs*, had made a major concession, by expressing their willingness to share power with the *esnafs*. Until then they had consistently refused to cooperate and work with the *esnafs* in decision-making bodies for any length of time. The *esnafs*, who had attempted to administer the *millet* by themselves and had failed, willingly accepted the compromise measure. The result of this acceptance was communal peace in the *millet*, and the Ottoman government agreed to reopen the Armenian College on 1 October 1846, as an indication of its approval of the new administration.

While a relatively cooperative and harmonious relationship prevailed between the *amiras* and the *esnafs*, the former now clashed with the Patriarch, who reserved for himself the right to administer "spiritual matters,