

RODERIC H. DAVISON

Reform in
the Ottoman
Empire, 1856-1876



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REFORM IN THE OTTOMAN
EMPIRE, 1856-1876



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OTTOMAN EMPIRE
1856-1876

By RODERIC H. DAVISON



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*For Louise
and John and Richard*

❧ PREFACE ❧

The study of the Tanzimat period—that crucial time of attempted reform and westernization in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire—is still in its infancy. We are many years and scores of monographs away from a definitive history, which will be possible only after full exploitation of the Turkish archives and of other widely scattered materials in over a dozen languages. Much still remains to be known simply of what happened and how and when, not to speak of why. This, therefore, is a preliminary attempt to recount and assess the major reform developments and to put them in their historical context. The focal period is the climactic two decades of the Tanzimat which led up to the promulgation of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876.

Social scientists interested in the impact of the West on a nonwestern area may find points of useful comparison in this analysis of the later Tanzimat period. It deals in large measure with westernization, particularly in the political sphere, and may be considered to bear also on the even more slippery concept of modernization. Yet I am reluctant to call this a case study. I have attempted no comparisons with other areas where the political and cultural impact of the West has been strong. There are parallels to be drawn, but also sharp contrasts. And as will, I hope, be obvious to the reader, individual personalities and the pure concatenation of historical events exercised a major influence on efforts made in this period to reform and revitalize the Ottoman Empire. The genesis of the constitution of 1876, for example, is otherwise inexplicable. It can be asserted with more confidence that this essay in a key period of modern Turkish history will provide some of the background necessary to an understanding of later reform efforts and of aspects of the growth of the Turkish Republic. I have tried, however, not to focus only on those developments which adumbrate the emergence of the modern Turkish nation, but rather to look at the problems of the vast and heterogeneous Ottoman Empire as it then was.

My debt to the contemporaries who recorded events and currents of that time, and to modern scholars who have dug back into various aspects of the Tanzimat, will be evident on almost every page. I am further indebted to the many scholars who have given me suggestions

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on one point or another, or help in locating materials. Among them are William L. Langer, with whose encouragement this study was begun, Halil Inalcık, Lewis V. Thomas, Niyazi Berkes, George C. Miles, Aydın Sayili, Sevinç Dıblan Carlson, Stanford Shaw, and the late Michael Karpovich and Chester W. Clark. I am also grateful to four others, now gone from us, who many years ago read critically parts or all of the original dissertation from which this book took its start: Abdülhak Adnan-Adivar, J. Kingsley Birge, Walter L. Wright, Jr., and Daniel C. Dennett, Jr. Dankwart Rustow furnished very helpful criticism at a later stage. Three other friends—A. O. Sarkissian, Jakob Saper, and Elie Salem—have helped me to use materials in Armenian, Polish, and Arabic. My brother, W. Phillips Davison, assisted me in using materials in the Scandinavian languages, and also copied some documents in the Swedish archives. Howard A. Reed, Robert Devereux, and Albertine Jwaideh kindly allowed me to consult their unpublished dissertations.

The staffs of many libraries have been very helpful. Among them are the Harvard College Library, the Princeton University Library, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Centralbibliothek in Zürich, the George Washington University Library, the State Department Library, and the Middle East Institute Library. I have received many courtesies also from the staffs of the Public Record Office in London, the Archives des Affaires Etrangères in Paris, the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, and the National Archives in Washington. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions generously granted permission for use of their manuscript records.

In its initial stages the work was made possible by a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council. I am also much indebted to Sir Hamilton Gibb, Derwood Lockard, and others of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard who in the spring of 1960 provided a research fellowship that greatly helped to bring this study along toward completion. At the same time, a light teaching load was kindly arranged by Robert Lee Wolff and Myron P. Gilmore of Harvard's History Department. The Committee on Research of the George Washington University has also given assistance. On several occasions Nancy Hull Keiser, of the Keiser Foundation, and the Middle East Institute have provided a haven for research and writ-

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ing. Carolyn Cross, Brenda Sens, and Bonnie Pugh did meticulous typing. Miriam Brokaw and Mary Tozer have provided sound editorial advice. What I owe to my wife and sons for their tolerance for research cannot adequately be expressed. The book is dedicated to them.

Washington
August, 1962

R. H. D.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION, NAMES,
DATES, ABBREVIATIONS

Anyone who has read at all widely on the Near East will be familiar with the confusion among systems of transliteration from the Arabic alphabet, which was, in any case, unsuited to the Turkish language. When one writes Turkey's history the problem is complicated by the change made there in 1928 from Arabic to Latin characters. The modern spelling of Turkish words is not yet in all cases standardized. Yet it is phonetic, and seems to offer the most sensible base on which to build. There is, further, a rapidly increasing literature of historical scholarship in modern Turkish. I have, therefore, followed modern Turkish usage except for a preference for "b" and "d" rather than "p" and "t" where there is an option.

The Turkish alphabet includes only a few letters which present any problem to the reader of English. These are:

- c — pronounced like the "j" in "job"
- ç — pronounced like the "ch" in "child"
- ğ — a very soft and sometimes guttural "gh"
- ı — pronounced roughly like the "i" in "bird," or something between the "i" in "will" and the "u" in "bug"
- ö — pronounced like the "eu" in French "peu"
- ş — pronounced like the "sh" in "shall"
- ü — pronounced like the "u" in French "tu"

A circumflex over a vowel indicates a broadened pronunciation. Thus "Âli" was formerly written "Aali" by western Europeans.

Many Turkish common nouns are so close to their Anglicized forms as to create no difficulty either for pronunciation or comprehension, and the Turkish spelling is more accurate. Thus, though the eye of the English reader may at first be offended, "vezir" will be used for the English form "vizier," "ferman" for "firman," "sipahi" for "spahi," et cetera. The same is true of other common Turkish words, also close to the Anglicized form, which use one of the new Turkish letters not found in English—thus "kadi" for "cadi," "meclis" for "mejlis," "şeriat" for "sheriat." For such common words the Turkish spelling will be used as if it were already accepted in English (as no doubt in many cases it soon will be), without italics. Less common Turkish terms will be italicized. The plurals for the latter category of words, since they are treated as Turkish, should properly vary with

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the vowel form. But for convenience in reading, and to avoid complications, I have abandoned the Turkish plurals for an "'s"—thus "*âyan's*" instead of "*âyanlar*," "*kariye's*" instead of "*kariyeler*."

In the case of proper nouns, I have used "Istanbul" for "Constantinople," "Edirne" for "Adrianople," "İzmir" for "Smyrna," and so on, despite Churchill's haughty wartime dictum that "Istanbul" was a form for stupid people, and that "foreign names were made for Englishmen, not Englishmen for foreign names." In a study designed to treat Turks not as foreigners, but as central figures in their own historical development, it seems suitable to use the Turkish names at least for places within the borders of modern Turkey. Names of places outside modern Turkey will be put in the ordinary English form, with an occasional parenthetical equivalent for the Turkish or local form where this will help to locate the particular place on a map. For the names of people I have followed a similar principle. Thus "Âli Paşa" will appear for "Aali Pasha," "Sultan Abdülaziz" for "Sultan Abdul Aziz," "Cevdet Efendi" for "Djevdet Effendi," and so on. Armenian, Greek, and other names have been put in English rather than Turkish equivalents.

All dates given in the text are in Gregorian style, although Old Style (Julian) was in common use in the Ottoman Empire, running twelve days behind the Gregorian in the period here discussed. Years given in the bibliographical citations which are in the 1200's or 1300's are, almost without exception, Hicrî (Hegira) dates, with the "A.H." omitted. A very few are Malî (Turkish financial year) dates, which in the period here discussed were about one year in advance of the Hicrî date. The divergence fifty years later was about three years.

Titles in other than the major western languages are translated in the bibliography, but not in the footnotes.

Abbreviations used in the footnotes are:

ABCFM — Archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on deposit at Houghton Library, Harvard University

AAE — Correspondance Politique, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Paris

FO — Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London

HHS — Politisches Archiv, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna

SRA — Diplomatica Samlingen, Svenska Riksarkivet, Stockholm

USNA — Department of State Records, United States National Archives, Washington

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: DECLINE AND REFORM TO 1856

At three o'clock in the afternoon of February 18, 1856, a crowd of several thousands gathered at the Sublime Porte in İstanbul to hear the solemn reading of a *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, an imperial edict on the organizational reform of his empire addressed by Sultan Abdülmecid to his grand vezir Âli Paşa. Not only were the ministers of the Ottoman Empire and many Turkish notables present, but also the Greek and Armenian patriarchs, the grand rabbi, and other dignitaries of the various non-Muslim peoples of the empire. The edict concerned all the subjects of the sultan, Muslim or not.

In a sentence as complex as the question of reform itself, the sultan's edict began thus: "Wishing today to renew and enlarge yet more the new regulations instituted for the purpose of obtaining a state of affairs in conformity with the dignity of my empire and the position which it occupies among civilized nations, . . . I desire to increase well-being and prosperity, to obtain the happiness of all my subjects who, in my eyes, are all equal and are equally dear to me, and who are united among themselves by cordial bonds of patriotism, and to assure the means of making the prosperity of my empire grow from day to day." To these ends, Abdülmecid continued, he directed his grand vezir to elaborate and execute various projects of reorganization. The edict laid particular stress on the equality of all peoples of the empire—Muslims, Christians, and Jews—and singled out for specific mention a number of ways in which the equal rights of non-Muslims should be guaranteed. The *Hatt-ı Hümayun* thus heralded, in its own phrase, "the beginning of a new era."

But when, the reading of the edict finished, the customary invocation of God's blessing was offered by a preacher well known in the mosques of İstanbul, his prayer contained no mention at all of reforms, of non-Muslims, or of equality. "O God," he beseeched, "have mercy on the people of Muhammad. O God, preserve the people of Muhammad." A chill fell on the assemblage. The minister of war whispered in the ear of his neighbor that he felt like a man whose evening-long labors on a manuscript were ruined through careless

upsetting of the inkpot.¹ Printed copies of the edict were then distributed to those in attendance, and the momentous occasion was over.

Just a week later representatives of the European powers, the grand vezir Âli Paşa among them, gathered in Paris to draw up the treaty which ended the Crimean War. Russia had been defeated by a coalition of Britain, France, Piedmont, and the Ottoman Empire, with Austria as a nonbelligerent ally. Now, a victor, the Ottoman Empire was formally admitted to the concert of Europe by the treaty signed on March 30.² Her independence and integrity were guaranteed by the treaty. Further, article 9 took note of the Hatt-ı Hümayun: the powers "recognized the high value" of the edict which the sultan had communicated to them and declared that this communication gave them no right of intervention in the internal affairs of the empire. Finally, on April 15, 1856, the representatives of Britain, France, and Austria signed a tripartite treaty guaranteeing joint and several defense of Ottoman independence and integrity.³ The Turks, victorious in war and protected by three great powers, were thus given a respite to work out their own salvation.

But there were dangers ahead, symbolically foreshadowed at a huge banquet given by Sultan Abdülmedid to celebrate the treaty of Paris. As one of the guests described it: "A minute or two after the Sultan had retired we were startled by two frightful claps of thunder followed by a storm of wind and hail. The whole building seemed to shake, and in a moment the gas went out and we were in total darkness. The band dropped their instruments with a clash and fled. For some moments no one spoke, and then a thin, shrill voice was heard in French saying, 'It wants but the handwriting on the wall and the words "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" to make of this a second feast of Belshazzar.'"⁴

¹ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 1-12*, ed. by Cavid Baysun (Ankara, 1953), pp. 67-69, most of which is reproduced in Ahmet Refik, "Türkiyede ıslahat fermanı," *Tarih-i osmanî encümeni mecmuası* 14:81 (1340), 195-197. Descriptions of the ceremony also in F. Eichmann, *Die Reformen des Osmanischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1858), p. 240, and in Prokesch-Osten's report, HHS, XII/56, 21 February 1856.

² Treaty text in Gabriel Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris, 1897-1903), III, 70-79.

³ Text in Thomas E. Holland, *The European Concert in the Eastern Question* (Oxford, 1885), pp. 259-260.

⁴ Edmund Hornby, *Autobiography* (London, 1928), p. 83. Similar accounts in Lady Hornby, *Constantinople During the Crimean War* (London, 1863), pp. 407-410, and in C. S. de Gobineau, ed., *Correspondance entre le Comte de Gobineau et le Comte de Prokesch-Osten (1854-1876)* (Paris, 1933), p. 97.

In this somewhat ominous fashion the Ottoman Empire entered upon the second and crucial phase of its mid-nineteenth-century attempts at reorganization and westernization, a period known in Turkish history as the Tanzimat. During the succeeding two decades, when the western powers were occupied with the wars attendant upon the creation of Italy and Germany as modern nation-states, and when tsarist Russia was healing her Crimean wounds and attempting far-reaching internal reform, events in Europe seemed to confirm the respite accorded the Ottomans. But the great powers did not stick to their promise of nonintervention, nor did the three guarantors protect the Ottoman Empire when a crisis finally arose. And Ottoman efforts to reorganize and strengthen the empire by creating a genuine equality among all its subjects met many obstacles, among which the mentality evident in the prayer after the Hatt-ı Hümayun was not least in importance.

The fundamental problem confronting Ottoman statesmen was how to prevent their empire's being weighed in the balance and found wanting, how to postpone the time when its days would be numbered. All major projects which they undertook in the succeeding two decades of reform,⁵ up to and including the constitution of 1876, were aimed at preserving the empire. Whether the heterogeneous empire had a right to exist is a question that need not be argued here; obviously for the Ottoman statesmen it had. They were struggling to keep the empire together as a going administrative concern and as a territorial unit; looking for some centripetal force or form of organization, as also was the similarly heterogeneous Habsburg Empire in the same years; hoping to prevent the breaking away of further provinces through rebellion or through the diplomatic and military action of the great powers of Europe. To preserve the Ottoman heritage, the Tanzimat statesmen crushed rebellion wherever they

⁵ It is argued by Lewis V. Thomas in *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 51, that "reform" is incorrect as a term to apply to the measures of westernization adopted in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, since the word implies the conviction of westerners of those days that their ways were morally superior to Ottoman ways; hence the Ottomans should "reform." The argument has merit, since the word "reform" often was used with such implications. But it is a convenient term, more inclusive than "westernization," and, if understood in its basic sense of reform, reshape, may perhaps be used without qualms. The word *islahat* (sing., *islah*) was used by Turks in this same sense, as the equivalent of the French *réformes*, and applied to the measures of the Tanzimat period, whether western-influenced or not, including the Hatt-ı Hümayun of 1856 itself. *Islah* means "improving, reforming, putting defective things into more perfect condition."

could, played off one great power against another when possible, and instituted measures of domestic reorganization. Whether the task was hopeless from the start, or whether the statesmen tried too little and did it too late, are questions that must wait for an answer until the years 1856 to 1876 have been surveyed. But it was plain that no Ottoman statesman took office in order to preside over the liquidation of empire. The 1876 constitution, culmination of this period of reform, significantly proclaimed this objective of self-preservation in its first article: the empire "cannot be divided at any time whatsoever for any cause whatsoever."

Reforms were, therefore, undertaken to revitalize the empire and so to preserve it in a world increasingly ordered by European power and civilization. There was no aspect of Ottoman life that did not require change if this objective were to be attained. Advance was most obviously needed in military strength, to meet the challenge of Europe. But, to undergird this, economic progress was necessary; so also was improvement in the educational system, in the administration of justice, in the revamping of law to meet the needs of modern life, and in the organization and efficiency of public administration. These requirements for change were intertwined; each affected the other. One cannot, as many writers on nineteenth-century Turkey have done, isolate one requirement of reform as the sole key to progress and specify that all other advance depended on it alone. The finances of the central government, the corrupted method of tax collection, the system of land tenure, the manner in which justice was administered, have all been singled out in this fashion. The liberal-humanitarian writers of Europe in the last century frequently picked on the treatment of Christians in the empire as the key to reform, proclaiming that satisfaction of the desires of minorities was the central issue. But all such assertions were oversimplifications, though each pointed to an important problem. No more in Ottoman than in any other field of history is a monistic explanation either adequate or accurate. The causes for the difficult situation in which the Ottoman Empire found itself were many. The needs for reform were also many—military, economic, social, intellectual, legal, and political. The Ottoman statesmen undertook projects of reform touching all these areas in the twenty years after 1856. Sometimes their proclamations of reform measures were used tactically to ward off intervention on the part of the European powers. Sometimes the proclamations themselves were

hypocritical. But the basic drive behind the reform movement was not to throw dust in the eyes of Europe. Rather it was to revitalize the empire through measures of domestic reorganization which should include the adoption or adaptation of some western ideas and institutions in these several fields.

Although reforms in the various segments of Ottoman life were interdependent, and progress in each was necessary to insure progress in the others, it is nevertheless true that the government stood at the center of the reforming process and, therefore, that reform in governmental structure and in the efficiency of administration controlled to a large degree what might be achieved in the other fields. Of course, the improvement or reorganization of government itself depended on many other changes, such as educational reform, to produce better bureaucrats and a more reform-minded climate of opinion, or economic progress, to produce a larger national income and augmented revenues for the government. But in this cyclical process, wherein each change depended on other changes, the government itself was the planner and executive agent of reforms in all fields. It could not be otherwise, given the autocratic Ottoman tradition and the character of nineteenth-century Ottoman society. The decay of the old administrative system from the later sixteenth century onward, and its inadequacies in meeting the internal pressures on the structure of the empire thereafter, had been one of the primary reasons for Ottoman weakness. "The fish begins to stink at the head" was a proverb frequently quoted by Ottoman subjects in the nineteenth century. Reform also had to come from the head. Reform from the top down was characteristic of the Tanzimat period no less than of other periods in Turkish history, both earlier and later.⁶ The initiative came from the central government; it did not spring from the people. Since the government was the reforming institution, what was done to improve governmental structure and administrative practice deserves particular attention.

In the years from 1856 to 1876 the Tanzimat statesmen worked not only at the traditional task of rooting out administrative abuses, but also at the job of adapting western ideas which laid the basis for representative government and the ultimate secularization of govern-

⁶ Equally characteristic, of course, was reform from the outside in, which began with externals such as dress and military organization before it tackled fundamentals like education and agriculture.

ment. They spoke of the equality of all Ottoman subjects and tried to create something of a concept of common citizenship (*Osmanlılık*, or Ottomanism), initiated the rudiments of a representative system in provincial and in national councils, and finally put together in 1876 the first written constitution in Ottoman history. The trend in governmental reorganization was away from the classical Islamic concept that the status, rights, and duties of an individual were rooted in his membership in a religious community, be it Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, and toward the western secular concept that his status derived from his citizenship in the Ottoman Empire and from his allegiance to the government of that empire. But the constitution with its embryonic representative principle did not, as in western countries, spring from the pressures of an economically prosperous bourgeoisie demanding political rights. It came from the top down, and specifically from a few statesmen seeking answers to the problems of the day.

The government was also the agency which had to hold the peoples of the empire together, not only by maintenance of sufficient prestige to command their respect and allegiance, but by evolving an administrative system with enough flexibility of local government under central control to be workable. Therefore reforms were undertaken in the manner of provincial administration and in the structure of the non-Muslim communities; and at one point in this period a plan for a federalized empire was broached. These efforts were intended not only to produce more honest and efficient administration, but to prevent the breaking away of more provinces or the creation of further "twilight zones" of sovereignty such as Serbia and the Danubian principalities, Egypt and the Lebanon, already represented in varying degrees. No more for this question than for the others that faced the reformers was a fully satisfactory solution arrived at. But the efforts were important in themselves, and laid a base for future efforts.

Western writers have frequently dealt with the attempts at reforming Ottoman government, and with the reform measures instituted by that government, as if the only important force behind the Tanzimat were the diplomatic pressures exerted by the great powers. Such pressure was highly significant. The Ottoman statesmen were painfully aware of it. But the Tanzimat period cannot be considered simply as a phase of the Eastern Question, and examined from the outside looking in. The changes made within the empire cannot be

measured solely in terms of the amount of prodding from European powers. Indeed, the constant interference of Europe in Ottoman affairs often hampered reform and helped to render it ineffectual. And great power diplomacy had, of course, on several occasions led to the territorial diminution of the empire. Such intervention was never disinterested. There was more than a little truth in Fuad Paşa's acid jest to a western diplomat: "Our state is the strongest state. For you are trying to cause its collapse from the outside, and we from the inside, but still it does not collapse."⁷

But, important as European diplomacy was both in prompting and in hindering reform, the detail of great-power maneuvering will be slighted here; other writers have dealt with it extensively. Instead, the reform question will be examined as a domestic problem, on which the diplomatic pressure was but one of many influences. Among the others were Islamic tradition, the previous efforts at reform in the empire, the varying viewpoints of the most important Ottoman statesmen of the time, and a small but vocal public opinion which developed as contact with the West brought the telegraph, journalism, and the start of a new movement in literature. It is impossible to be scientifically precise about the climate of opinion in the Ottoman Empire of 1856 to 1876, but the successes and failures of the Tanzimat period cannot be understood without some reference to it. The term "public opinion" (*efkâr-ı umumiye*) was increasingly used by Turkish writers in these years, and this opinion was the product of converging and competing influences ranging from the oldest Muslim tradition to the latest Parisian secular thought. By 1876 this public opinion had to be reckoned with.

The following pages, then, do not attempt to reconstruct the entire history of the Ottoman Empire, but try to analyze the historical process of governmental reform, to outline the nature of reform instituted by government, from the Hatt-ı Hümayun of 1856 to the constitution of 1876, and to inquire into the influences and pressures which converged on the statesmen in İstanbul. Among the strongest influences was, as has been remarked, the legacy of reform efforts before 1856. A brief review of the necessity for such measures, and of their character, will clarify the situation as it existed when the Hatt-ı Hümayun of 1856 was proclaimed.



⁷ Abdurrahman Şeref, *Tarih müşahabeleri* (İstanbul, 1339), p. 104.

About the year 1300 the empire of the Ottoman sultans had sprung from humble origins in northwest Anatolia. At first it expanded slowly, but by the later fifteenth century it controlled the Balkan provinces of the former Byzantine Empire up to the Danube and in places beyond, as well as most of Anatolia. The territorial growth of the Ottoman state continued into the seventeenth century, even after the first signs of internal decay could be noticed. From his capital of Istanbul the sultan could survey one of the greatest empires of the day—great not only in lands, but in power, as compared to its neighbors—stretching from Budapest to Basra, and from Algiers to Armenia.

This achievement in empire-building had many causes, among which the weaknesses of neighboring states and pure good fortune were not inconsiderable. In the early days Ottoman expansion also owed much to the gazi spirit—the spirit of warriors conquering for the true Muslim faith. By the sixteenth century, however, when the empire attained its period of greatest grandeur even though it had by then lost some of its elementary vigor, the cement which held it together was not the gazi spirit, but the governmental system which had been built up over the previous two hundred years.

At the apex of the system was the sultan, an autocrat whose authority was limited only by the *şariat*, the Islamic law under which he as well as his subjects stood, by the innate conservatism and tradition-mindedness of his people, and by the threat of rebellion. The sultan had traditionally the prerogative of legislating, which he often did, since the religious law did not begin to meet the needs of a complex organization like the Ottoman state. In his hands the sultan held all the reins of government, and until the sixteenth century he attended personally to many details of its business. The efficiency of government depended on his character and ability. Fortunately the Ottoman dynasty had produced a series of ten sultans who until the middle of that century were relatively or conspicuously able men. The sons of sultans usually had experience as provincial governors and as commanders of troops before accession.

The civil and military officials, and the standing army, made up the Ruling Institution.⁸ All of them were personal slaves of the sultan. Their slavery was not at all a condition of peonage or penal servitude, but a legal fact designed to give the sultan complete control over his

⁸ A convenient descriptive term invented by Albert H. Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent* (Cambridge, Mass., 1913).

officials, including the power of life and death. Since under the religious law the sultan could have no such arbitrary power over his free-born Muslim subjects, his slave officials were born Christians who, through capture in war, purchase in the slave market, or the systematic requisition of boys from Christian families of the empire, were taken into the sultan's service. Through a careful selection process, followed by years of education and training in schools maintained in the imperial palaces, the cream of the crop were prepared to assume the burdens of various offices in the imperial household and central administration, in the government of provinces, and as commanders of various bodies of troops. They became Muslims, but remained slaves. The way was open to them for advance to the highest post of the empire—that of grand vezir. Slave recruits weeded out during the selection process underwent other training to emerge as members of the standing armed forces, chief among which was the corps of Janissaries. Sons of the members of the Ruling Institution could not, because they were free-born Muslims, enter the privileged slave hierarchy. Consequently the growth of a hereditary aristocracy of officials was prevented.

Other soldiers were provided when necessary through the system of land grants made by the sultans to their sipahis, or free-born Muslim cavalrymen. As the Ottoman armies advanced into the Christian areas, the state had taken title to most of the conquered land. This land was granted in fiefs of varying sizes to the sipahis, each of whom was obliged to rally to the standard of a provincial governor at need and provide a stipulated number of armed men. As salary, the cavalryman collected the tithe owed by peasants within his fief. Fiefs could be and often were granted to the sons of cavalrymen, so that the position sometimes became in effect hereditary in one family, but land title and the right of grant remained with the state. In addition to providing for troops, this system of land tenure gave the state sufficient control to prevent the rise of a permanent landed aristocracy with vested interests opposed to those of the central government; forestalled the growth of oversize personal estates; and gave to the peasantry a local lord who was unlikely to grind them down through exactions both because he was controlled by the state and because his long-range interests were linked to their continuing prosperity. The sipahis were not slaves. Some auxiliary naval forces were provided, to

supplement the standing navy, on a similar basis by local lords whose fiefs lay on the Aegean littoral.

Parallel to the Ruling Institution was the Muslim Institution,⁹ which was open to all free-born Muslims. Their training was in Islamic religion and law. This class of ulema, or learned men of Islam, provided candidates for such jobs as teachers in schools of all levels and preachers in the mosques, but in the state hierarchy its chief function was to staff the legal and judicial posts, from the lowest to the highest. One who advanced to the top of the judicial hierarchy might become the chief judge of Anatolia or Rumelia. At the apex of the hierarchy of juriconsults, or müftis, was the *seyhülislâm*, the müfti of İstanbul, who represented the highest legal and religious authority.

Both the Ruling Institution and the Muslim Institution were represented in the sultan's divan, his privy council. At its meetings the grand vezir, the commanders of the Janissaries and of the navy, the chancellor, the treasurer, and the two chief judges, often with other dignitaries in attendance, discussed affairs of state. Until the fifteenth century the sultan himself presided over the sessions of the divan. Later he listened from behind a screen.

Provincial administration was in the hands of members of the sultan's slave hierarchy, the sancak beys or governors, who themselves were subordinate to governors-general, originally two in number, although later there came to be more. Each governor was at the same time head of the civil administration of his province and commander of the troops stationed or levied there. He presided over a divan which in composition reflected the divan in İstanbul, each functionary in it a representative on a lower level of his chief in the capital. In the same administrative divisions of the empire were judges and müftis subordinate to those of the central government.

To this outline of Ottoman government one addition of considerable importance must be made, for the non-Muslim subjects of the empire were organized in semiautonomous bodies which in some ways replaced the direct authority of the sultan's government, even though the locus of ultimate authority was never in doubt. The principal groups of these non-Muslim subjects were Greek Orthodox, Gregorian Armenian, and Jewish. Although many conquered peoples, particularly in the earliest days of Ottoman expansion, had accepted Islam, many had not; and others, especially Jews fleeing from per-

⁹ This is also Lybyer's term.

secution in Christian Europe, had immigrated after the empire had nearly reached the limits of its expansion. In the tradition of Islam, the Turks were tolerant of non-Muslims who possessed recognized books of divine revelation—"people of the book" (*ehl-i kitab*), as they were called. People of the book were absorbed into the empire, and granted protection and toleration of their forms of worship, provided they accepted the domination of the Ottoman Turks and paid special taxes. Though they did not live in completely segregated or compact groups, but were scattered about the empire, for administrative convenience an organization of each group under its ecclesiastical heads was recognized by the Ottomans from the time of Mehmed the Conqueror. Each group constituted a millet within the empire; membership in the millet automatically followed lines of religious allegiance.¹⁰

Each non-Muslim millet was headed by a patriarch (or, in the case of the Jews, by a grand rabbi) who was confirmed in office by the Ottoman government. In addition to his spiritual powers and the supervision of his own ecclesiastical subordinates the patriarch had a fairly extensive civil authority over matters of internal millet administration. This authority rested on the assumption once current in the West, and still current in the nineteenth-century Near East, that law was personal rather than territorial in its basis and that religion rather than domicile or political allegiance determined the law under which an individual lived. Hence the chiefs of the millets controlled not only the clerical, ritual, and charitable affairs of their flocks, but also education and the regulation of matters of personal status like marriage, divorce, guardianship, and inheritance. The ecclesiastical hierarchy had jurisdiction over legal cases between members of the millet except in criminal matters, which the Ottoman government reserved for its own courts. Even some taxes due the sultan's government from the non-Muslims were collected through the millet organization, as well as the taxes imposed by the hierarchy on its own people for its own support. The patriarch was recognized by the Ottoman government

¹⁰ "Millet" by the second half of the nineteenth century began to be used by a few Turks to mean "nation," in the sense of the whole people, rather than to denote a specific religious group. Traditionally, however, the millet denoted a religious community such as those described above, and it continued throughout the Tanzimat period to have this primary meaning. For references on the minority millets and their development see below, chapter IV. The Muslim millet was, of course, under the direct rule of its own sultan and bureaucracy.

as the voice of his millet, and his decisions were backed by its authority; on his part, the patriarch found it advisable to listen to and cooperate with the Ottoman government which was the ultimate sanction for his civil authority, and with which his interests were usually closely allied.

This governmental framework served the Ottoman Empire well. But the empire never stood poised at a peak of development within a perfected framework. Its history, like the history of other states, is a series of ages of transition. If the Ottoman Empire achieved brilliance and grandeur in the sixteenth century under Süleyman the Lawgiver, it is also true that the seeds of Ottoman decline can be discerned in this age. Some irregularities in the administration which demanded correction were apparent even to Süleyman: for instance, confusion and corruption in the distribution of military fiefs by provincial governors led him to take back into his own hands the allocation of all sizable timars. But the weakening of the empire in relation to the rising power and culture of western Europe was not evident to Ottoman Turks of that day. Nor, indeed, was this weakening made manifest in any reduction of its territory. The failure of the Ottoman army before Vienna in 1529 was not disastrous; the empire continued to expand into the seventeenth century and began to wane in earnest only with the military defeats culminating in the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699. Nevertheless, during the seventeenth century a number of Ottoman statesmen became fully aware of some of the evils in the administration of empire which threatened to weaken the whole structure, and felt also the superior progress of Europe at least in military equipment and organization. But neither they nor their eighteenth-century successors were aware of the total explanation for the gradual weakening of the Ottoman state, which continued progressively down to the Tanzimat period both in relation to Europe and in relation to the golden age of the Ottoman system.

European superiority was becoming apparent on the battlefield, but this was only an outward result of the general intellectual, economic, and political development in the West in which the Ottoman dominions did not participate and which the Ottomans for long did not comprehend. The Islamic world experienced no period of renaissance and reformation. It saw no release of individual energies comparable to that in the West—no burst of technological invention, no general scientific and rational development in thought, no far-flung oceanic

voyages of discovery, no upsurge in business and industry. To employ the usual capsule terms of western history, the ages of humanism and of reason, the commercial revolution, the industrial revolution, and the agricultural revolution did not spread into the Ottoman dominions. This comparative disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire arose in part from the lack of intimate contact with western life and in part from innate scorn of things non-Muslim. This attitude in its turn came not only from the tradition-mindedness and conservatism which was perhaps more characteristic of the Near East than the West—though all peoples have throughout history shared these qualities—but also from traditional religious views and practices. Islam, which was not only a way of worship but a way of life, a total outlook, and the basis of the law, had ceased to develop and change as rapidly as the times required. Ottoman tradition and Islamic conservatism had their effect also on political organization. Whereas the strong, centralized national monarchy was becoming dominant in the West and over the seas, led more and more by a bourgeois class which produced new political ideas and demands, the sprawling and heterogeneous Ottoman Empire remained what it was, but therefore at an increasing disadvantage in competition of all sorts. “The Ottomans’ traditional methods and techniques, the total Ottoman synthesis of Faith, State, and Way, had become no longer good to hold its own against its foes.”¹¹

Though the Ottoman system of government remained what it was in outward structure down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, its workings became corrupted. The administration suffered at all levels, beginning significantly with the sultan himself. After Süleyman, the tenth in a line of able rulers, the vigor and general personal quality of the sultans was markedly less, though Osman II and Murad IV were brief seventeenth-century exceptions. After A.D. 1603, princes ceased to have practical experience in provincial government before accession to the throne. Instead, they were kept in luxurious but debilitating confinement in one of the imperial palaces, in private apartments known as the *kafes* (“lattice” or “cage”). Any prince who inherited the throne emerged from such confinement not only inexperienced, but often a mental case and with debauched tastes. Their urge to luxury and grandeur, which had shown itself even before the *kafes* became an institution, increased; the sultans became oriental

¹¹ Thomas, *United States and Turkey*, p. 49.

potentates, no longer leading their armies in battle, but interested in the hunt, the harem, or the bottle. Their lavish spending on themselves and their favorites led them to make inroads on the state treasury and to countenance bribery and simony. Often the sultans were strongly influenced by the women of their harem, especially the sultan-mothers or the mothers of princes ambitious for their sons; in the seventeenth century the empire was for a time ruled, in fact, by women of the harem.

The whole Ruling Institution became corrupted as well. The system was weakened as early as the sixteenth century by arbitrary promotion to the highest posts of imperial favorites who had not worked up through the ranks by merit. Venality also crept into the administration. The purchase and sale of public office both corrupted the officials involved and replaced merit with other less desirable criteria for appointment. The method of recruitment of slaves broke down and was eventually abandoned, so that the posts were filled by free-born Muslims with family connections and interests, which increased the possibilities of favoritism, faction, and intrigue. A rapid turnover of officeholders, accompanied by the giving and taking of bribes, resulted. The corruption of the bureaucracy had a greater effect since, from the fifteenth century on, the sultans ceased to preside in person over the divan and to coordinate state affairs; the job fell to the grand vezir and his subordinates, who ran the state from their offices in the Sublime Porte. The divan met infrequently, and mostly for ceremonial purposes. A parallel corruption enveloped the Muslim Institution, as kadis grew avaricious for fees and bribes. It became one of the familiar complaints among Turks that justice was bought and sold.

The Janissary corps, earlier the flower of the Ottoman armies, gradually became valueless in war and, instead, a danger to the state. Members of the corps became accustomed to largesse distributed on the accession of each new sultan, which constituted in effect the purchase of Janissary approval. They could exercise considerable power by the threat of rebellion, and were often hard to control. Those Janissaries stationed in the farther provinces became oppressive and highhanded, taking without payment what they wanted from the populations. Not only were the Janissaries becoming dangerous in their conduct, but the whole system of their organization fell to pieces. Once the rule against marriage while on active service was relaxed,

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Janissaries began to have family connections, and sons who were free-born Muslims rather than the sultan's slaves were accepted into the corps, followed by other Muslims. As the combat effectiveness of the corps declined, its size increased to unwieldy proportions. The pay ticket which each Janissary possessed became an object of commerce, like a stock certificate: there were numerous instances of important men who were not Janissaries holding many such certificates and receiving commensurate unearned pay. Large numbers of Janissaries became essentially artisans of various sorts in the cities, drawing military pay but otherwise leading a civilian life. On occasions when Janissary units were mustered in Istanbul to go on campaign, the column of men would mysteriously melt to half its size before it had gone far from the capital.

In like manner the system for providing sipahis from military fiefs became corrupted, with serious results not only for Ottoman military strength but also for the whole system of land tenure and for the peasantry at the base of the system. Many of the fiefs were allocated not to fighting men, but to imperial favorites, including women of the harem and officials of the bureaucracy, some of whom acquired plural holdings and enjoyed the income but produced no soldiers. "Sword fiefs" became "shoe money" for the women of the palace. Although such fiefs were still legally state-owned, they came to be treated more and more as outright personal property. At the same time both the state and fief holders began to use the system of tax farming, whereby the concession to collect taxes in a given area was sold to the highest bidder. The tax farmer then squeezed the peasantry to recoup his purchase price and to make a profit over and above the sum due the state for taxes. In many localities a landed aristocracy of *âyan*'s, or notables, grew up. These notables, in addition to securing quasi-permanent title to lands, arrogated to themselves a considerable measure of local political authority. Some became strong enough to defy the central government.

All these developments had serious consequences for the system of provincial administration. The provinces, now known as *eyalets*, into which the empire was divided in the later sixteenth century, were governed by *valis* who purchased the office and then set out through exactions from the inhabitants to indemnify themselves and to secure funds for periods of future unemployment. So long as they could hold office, many of the *valis* disregarded orders from Istanbul. This centrif-

ugal process was increased in the eighteenth century, especially in the farther provinces, by the rise of local landholders to governorships which they were able to make hereditary in their family and relatively independent of Istanbul. These *derebeyi*'s ("lords of the valley") were not infrequently less oppressive than short-term governors, since their interest was bound to the continuing prosperity of the peasantry within their domains, but their rise was disastrous for integrated imperial policy and the cohesion of empire.

The diversion of revenues to the pockets of landholders, officials, or spendthrift sultans naturally weakened the financial condition of the empire. So also did the series of unsuccessful wars from the seventeenth century on, which brought no booty but cost a great deal. So also did the necessity for meeting the pay tickets of Janissaries. A good deal of land also ceased to produce revenue for the state because it was illegally made into *vakıf*, or property in perpetual trust. The income from this property should properly have gone for pious and charitable works, but often accrued to the benefit of individuals only. Fieflands so illegally converted into *vakıf* escaped reassignment by the state. The influx of cheap American silver brought inflation. Financial distress led the government on several occasions to resort to debasement of the coinage; the short-term advantage was, however, wiped out by the renewed inflationary process thus induced.

The system of millet administration did not collapse, but was sapped by venality in the ecclesiastical hierarchies, especially the Greek, and by the financial squeezing of the people by the higher clergy for their own purposes.¹² Often the upper clergy of a minority millet and Ottoman officials were in league together in bleeding the people. More disastrous ultimately for the preservation of the Ottoman state than corruption within the millets was the simple fact that the continued existence of these distinct religious communities offered convenient opportunity to the great powers of Europe for agitation and intrigue among the minorities—for fifth-column activity in time of war and diplomatic intervention in time of peace. By the early nineteenth century the modern doctrine of nationalism began to seize the imagina-

¹² There is a running and presumably irresolvable argument between Greeks and Turks as to whether the Turks learned bribery and corruption from Byzantine and Greek Orthodox example, or whether the Greeks learned corruption from the Ottomans through example and through the hypocritical subservience toward which their subordinate role in the empire urged them.

tion of some minority millets and result in separatist movements in which the great powers also aided.

The picture of corruption and decay that has been sketched here, although truthful, is not quite true; otherwise the Ottoman Empire would have collapsed far sooner than it did. Several mitigating factors operating within the empire, as well as counterbalancing rivalries among the great powers on the outside, gave the Ottoman Empire enough strength to survive for three centuries after the first signs of internal decay appeared. First, there were a few sultans of comparative ability. Second, the administrative system, corrupted as it became, still included men of integrity and threw to the top every so often grand vezirs of remarkable ability, among whom members of the Köprülü family in the seventeenth century rank high. Third, the corrupted system seems to have produced some equilibriums of its own. Officials who exploited the populace and manipulated the sultan, and powerful cliques or individuals in the shadows behind the officials, had a vested interest in the system which made them seek to preserve the empire, not to destroy it;¹⁸ the weapon of confiscation could be used to wipe out the ill-gotten gains of pashas, though the funds thus recouped for the imperial treasury again trickled into illegal channels; and a sort of balance emerged—among officials of Palace and Porte, Janissaries who occasionally spoke as the voice of the people, and paternalistic *derebeyi's*—which prevented any one group from driving the empire to immediate ruin. Finally, well before the Tanzimat there were reformers and reform efforts. Many of these reform efforts came to nothing, but all served to provide a background for the reforms of the nineteenth century.



The background was in one way negative, for the tendency of the early reformers was simply to identify the elements of corruption in the administrative system and to advise a return to honesty and efficiency. They looked back to the golden age of the empire for their model. This tradition of backward-looking reform was still important in the nineteenth century as a countervailing force to the efforts of other reformers who wanted westernization; it can be noticed in the phraseology of the reform decree of Gülhane in 1839 and in the

¹⁸ This is the thesis of Walter L. Wright, Jr., *Ottoman Statecraft* (Princeton, 1935), pp. 56-60.

thinking of various statesmen. Among those who sounded the alarm, and insisted on high standards among the bureaucracy, was Ayni Ali who in 1607 wrote, at the command of the then grand vezir Kuyucu Murad Paşa, a fairly extensive review of the abuses in the administration, pointing out particularly corruption in the system of fief-holding.¹⁴ Some two decades later Mustafa Koçi Bey produced a broad investigation of abuses within the empire, together with detailed suggestions on reform.¹⁵ Kâtib Çelebî, usually known in the West as Hadji Khalifa, again a few years later examined provincial government and the financial and military situations in a brief treatise.¹⁶ Early in the eighteenth century Sarı Mehmed Paşa the Defterdar, or Treasurer, wrote a book of counsel for vezirs and governors which once more indicted the bureaucracy for abuses and recommended remedies.¹⁷ These men, and others who wrote in similar vein, knew what they were talking about. Usually they had held varied and important administrative positions, and could compare the corruption they saw about them with their idealized picture of the great age of Süleyman. Officials who were also poets likewise wrote devastating indictments of the bribery and general lack of morality prevalent in both the Ruling Institution and the Muslim Institution. Veysi, a judge of the early seventeenth century, spoke like an Old Testament prophet: "The great men do the purse adore"; the vezirs are "foes to Faith and State."¹⁸ Toward the end of the same century Yusuf Nabi painted an equally gloomy picture in a poem of counsel to his son, advising him that the bribery, corruption, and oppression involved in provincial governorships, as well as in the legal hierarchy, made the life of an official a constant nightmare.¹⁹

When in the eighteenth century the first glimmer of westernizing reform made its appearance, it was quite naturally concerned with the armed forces. The corruption and unruliness of the Janissaries turned the thoughts of a number of sultans to reform of this arm of the service. Murad IV as far back as the early seventeenth century had

¹⁴ Trans. in P. A. von Tischendorf, *Das Lehnswesen in den moslemischen Staaten insbesondere im osmanischen Reiche* (Leipzig, 1872), pp. 57-103.

¹⁵ Trans. by W. F. Behrnauer in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 15 (1861), 272-332.

¹⁶ Trans. by Behrnauer, *ibid.* 11 (1857), 111-132.

¹⁷ Trans. in Wright, *Ottoman Statecraft*, pp. 61-158.

¹⁸ His *kaside* is partially translated in E. J. W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, 1900-1909), III, 214-218.

¹⁹ Partial translation in *ibid.*, pp. 343-345.

curbed the Janissaries somewhat, and apparently harbored designs of abolishing the corps and building up a new regular army; but even his ruthless use of the old-fashioned reformer's weapons of death and confiscation was not equal to the task. To the obvious need for reform or abolition of the Janissary corps were added the equally obvious lessons learned from the increasing European military superiority in the century of warfare following the Ottoman retreat from the second siege of Vienna in 1683.²⁰ Sultans and grand vezirs turned to western military science for help. In the 1730's the French adventurer Bonneval, who presented himself to the sultan as an expert in many military lines, turned Turk and, as Ahmed Paşa, was employed to reorganize the Ottoman corps of bombardiers. His efforts produced only ephemeral results; they represent, however, one of the first instances of official sanction for any type of westernization in the Ottoman system.²¹ Three decades later Baron de Tott, a Hungarian formerly in French employ, served in the Ottoman Empire as instructor in artillery and as teacher in a school of mathematics for naval personnel.²² The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, concluding a disastrous war with Russia in 1774, drove home again the need for military reform, and under Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774-1789) the grand vezir Halil Hamid Paşa made renewed efforts at conscious westernization of artillery, sapper, and bombardier corps with the guidance of French specialists, and a school for army engineers was founded soon thereafter. French was taught in this school, along with scientific subjects. But none of these efforts at military reform attempted more than a thin veneer of westernization. None was informed by an understanding of the cultural background out of which western military superiority arose. Their importance was that they represented the thin edge of the wedge of westernized reform.

For the military reforms helped to increase the channels of communication with Europe and to swell the trickle of information about western ways. Such channels there had always been, through wars, diplomatic missions, Greeks and Armenians and Jews of the empire,

²⁰ A document of 1717 gives an early example of the realization of European superiority in some matters; Faik R. Unat, "Ahmet III. devrine ait bir ıslahat takriri," *Tarih vesikaları*, 1:2 (August 1941), 107-121, cited in Niyazi Berkes, "Historical Background of Turkish Secularism," in Richard N. Frye, ed., *Islam and the West* (The Hague, 1956), p. 49.

²¹ See Albert Vandal, *Le pacha Bonneval* (Paris, 1883); Osman Ergin, *Türkiye maarif tarihi* (İstanbul, 1939-1943), I, 44-50.

²² See François Baron de Tott, *Mémoires*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1785).

European travellers and traders, and European renegades who turned Muslim. As early as 1720 Yirmi Sekiz Çelebi Mehmed, sent on embassy to Paris and instructed to survey aspects of western manufacture and knowledge which would be applicable to the empire, had reported favorably on the West.²³ But in general even the educated men of the Ottoman Empire were little touched by European knowledge or example until the nineteenth century. The first press in the empire, for instance, was established in 1493 by Jews fled from Spain; Armenian and Greek presses followed during the next two centuries. But the first press in the empire to print books in Turkish was authorized by the Ottoman government only in 1726, and was established not by a Turk but by İbrâhim Müteferrika, a Magyar captive who turned Muslim. The *ferva* of authorization limited the output to scientific and historical works and dictionaries, since the ulema would not permit printing of works on theology or law.²⁴ This attitude was to remain typical of the large body of ulema who, until the demands of military science began to open the way for westernized education, were the chief educated class; but the ulema were defending their vested interests and most of them were vastly ignorant about their times and their world. By distinguishing between sacred and secular works, and in effect abdicating their authority to control the latter, the ulema protected their own peculiar sphere but made it easier for a new group, educated along secular lines, to arise.²⁵

The needs of military reform opened the way not only to the employment of foreign specialists, but to the founding of the naval and military engineering schools, to the translation and printing of western mathematical and other scientific works, to medical education required for the army, and then to similar undertakings in nonmilitary fields. Some Turks began to learn French, a language which opened up to them new vistas, either while on missions abroad or by study at home. Sometimes the western knowledge arrived by devious routes. Raif Mahmud Efendi was at the end of the eighteenth century a secretary in the Ottoman embassy in London. There, using somewhat

²³ E. Z. Karal in *Tanzimat*, 1 (İstanbul, 1940), 19; Berkes, "Historical Background," p. 50 and n.3.

²⁴ Abdülhak Adnan-Adivar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim* (İstanbul, 1943), pp. 146-148; Franz Babinger, *Stambuler Buchwesen im 18ten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 10ff; Avram Galanti Bodrumlu, *Türkler ve Yahudiler*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul, 1947), p. 100; Berkes, "Historical Background," pp. 50-51; T. Halasi-Kun, "İbrâhim Müteferrika," *İslâm ansiklopedisi*, v, 898-899.

²⁵ Berkes, "Historical Background," pp. 50-51.

outdated western sources, he wrote a geography in French which was translated into Turkish by a Greek in the Ottoman diplomatic service in Vienna and was printed in Turkish at the press established in Üsküdar under the direction of the recently founded military engineering school.²⁶ One of the best-educated men of his day, Hoca İshak Efendi, a Muslim of Jewish ancestry, was a teacher at the military engineering school and its second director, early in the nineteenth century. He employed his wide linguistic knowledge to utilize western sources for his writing, particularly in a four-volume work on the natural sciences and mathematics.²⁷ Some of the coming leaders in reform owed their westernizing outlook at least in part to their military education.

The beginnings of westernized military education and the corollary importation of knowledge from Europe were augmented in the time of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), during whose reign occurred some of the innovations mentioned above. The French Revolution, with its tremendous upheaval in political ideas as well as in the territorial status quo and European balance of power, also came in his reign to touch the Ottoman Empire. The most dramatic event was Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which again demonstrated the military superiority of Europe and provided French example and inspiration for the westernizing process which was soon thereafter begun in Egypt by Mehmed Ali. The vicissitudes of the revolutionary period brought to Istanbul a larger number of Frenchmen, who spread new ideas of liberty and provided military assistance to the Turks. Some of the reaction among Ottoman Turks was decidedly unfavorable, both to the French political doctrine of the right of revolution against kings and to the atmosphere of secularism and godlessness which came from eighteenth-century France. The foreign minister (*reis ül küttab*) in 1798 condemned events in France as the product of atheists like Voltaire and Rousseau, and defended religion and holy law as the only sound basis for state and society.²⁸ French influence in Turkey went up and down, and for a time reactionary sentiment triumphed; nevertheless, new

²⁶ *Tanzimat*, 1, 525; Adnan-Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim*, pp. 188-189.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197; Bodrumlu, *Türkler ve Yahudiler*, p. 130; *idem*, *Histoire des juifs d'Istanbul* (Istanbul, 1941), 1, 28.

²⁸ Atif Efendi's memorandum to the Divan, 1798, cited from an appendix in vol. VI of *Tarih-i Cevdet* by Adnan-Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim*, p. 192, and translated in part in Bernard Lewis, "The Impact of the French Revolution on Turkey," *Journal of World History*, 1:1 (July 1953), 121-122. Cf. Siddik S. Onar, *Idare hukukunun umumî esasları* (Istanbul, 1952), pp. 539-540, n.2, quoting the same memorandum.

and unconventional ideas spread among some of the younger Turks, even in the Porte and Palace. As the Ottoman historian of the period, a conservative opponent of the new ideas, wrote, the French "were able to insinuate Frankish customs in the hearts and endear their modes of thought to the minds of some people of weak mind and shallow faith."²⁹ At least a few Turks thus came to know the politically explosive principles embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.

Selim III was among the liberals. Although upset by the execution of Louis XVI, his impulse was in the direction of westernization, particularly in the military sphere. By all accounts he was a man of great enlightenment for his time and position; his vision went beyond the mere correction of abuses, with which he was, of course, vitally concerned, to a "New Deal" for the Ottoman state, expressed as the *nizam-i cedid*, or new order. Prior to his accession Selim had enjoyed more freedom from the *kafes* than the princes before him, and had been in correspondence with Louis XVI. His edicts from the start of his reign reveal his concern for reform. In recognition of the demands of the times he encouraged educational measures, especially the military schools, established regular Ottoman embassies in several European capitals, confiscated a number of fiefs whose holders provided no troops and used the proceeds to further his reform projects, and proposed to regularize appointments to provincial governorships and to abolish tax-farming. He favored establishing a consultative assembly (*meclis-i meşveret*) of leading officials. Such an assembly actually met under Selim's chairmanship at the start of his reign, to discuss reform measures.³⁰ He sought written recommendations on such measures from many of the leading officials. Selim's most courageous project, and the one which brought about his downfall, was the establishment of a new regular army in embryo, trained and dressed along European lines. But the forces of reaction, encouraged by a majority of the ulema, who feared innovation and French influence, and spear-headed by a revolt of the Janissaries, whose special position was obviously threatened, deposed him in 1807 and killed him in the fol-

²⁹ Lewis, "Impact of the French Revolution," p. 125, translating a passage from *Asim tarihi*; see also Adnan-Adivar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim*, p. 192.

³⁰ Recai G. Okandan, *Umumî amme hukukumuzun ana hatları* (İstanbul, 1948), I, 53-55 and n.1; Ahmet Rasim, *İstibdadın hakimiyeti milliyeye* (İstanbul, 1342), I, 33-36. Both are based on *Tarihi Cevdet*, IV, 289, the account of the assembly of 20 Şaban 1203.

lowing year. A number of the young westernizers, including graduates of the new military schools, also fell martyr to this reaction against Selim.

Mahmud II, who came to the throne in 1808, had himself escaped the fate of Selim III only by hiding on the palace roof. His situation at this point was precarious, since the ulema and Janissaries were strong potential opponents in the capital and his authority in the provinces was practically nonexistent. But Mahmud, as the last of the direct Osmanli line, was for the moment personally safe. During the year before his accession he had imbibed from Selim III some of the latter's zeal for reform, and therefore appeared to be cast in the role of avenger of Selim's death and continuer of his program. But Mahmud had to go slowly. His first and major efforts had to be directed simply to becoming master in his own house. In this he was hampered by a series of wars and revolts which sapped the remaining Ottoman strength. The Napoleonic wars had brought on a renewed Serbian rebellion and a war with Russia which lasted until 1812; the Wahhabi power had risen in Arabia, and Mahmud had to call on his Egyptian vassal Mehmed Ali to proceed against it; the Greek revolt broke out in 1821, bringing in its wake Anglo-French support for the Greeks and another Russo-Turkish war in 1828-1829; thereupon, while the conditions of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire were still being settled by the great powers, Mehmed Ali marched against Mahmud in 1832, threatened to approach Istanbul itself, and was bought off only by renewed intervention of the great powers, which left him in control of Syria until 1840. Russia, as her reward for services rendered on this occasion, exacted of Mahmud the treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi, which made the Ottoman Empire essentially a junior partner in alliance with Russia. In 1839 war again broke out between Mehmed Ali and Mahmud II; the sultan died just before details of the destruction of his army reached the capital, and also just before his fleet surrendered to the Egyptians without firing a shot. In view of the circumstances, it was remarkable that Mahmud II was able to accomplish anything in the way of reform. Yet the circumstances, as well as his own inclinations, pushed him toward reform which was a combination of the rooting out of abuses, repression of rival authority in the empire, and westernization.

All three of these aspects of reform were involved in Mahmud's master stroke—the abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826. Mah-

mud's original intention was not to exterminate the Janissaries, but to create a new westernized army into which members of the various Janissary messes would be incorporated piecemeal. Thus he would eliminate the Janissary corps as a threat to his own power, root out at the same time the traffic in pay certificates, and continue the westernization of the armed forces along lines attempted by Selim III and more successfully adopted by Mehmed Ali in Egypt during the preceding few years. Although Mahmud made careful preparations over several years, obtaining the pledged support of members of the ulema, of civil and military officials, and of a group of notables convened in the capital, a Janissary rebellion broke out on June 14, 1826, two days after a handful of officers outfitted in new European-style uniforms began to drill. The counterattack by loyal forces killed several thousand Janissaries. Others were hunted down, many more were exiled, and two days later the corps was formally abolished. New troops, the "Triumphant Soldiers of Muhammad," soon began to drill under the eye of the sultan, who asked for French engineer officers and German military musicians to supplement his instructors. It was years before the new army achieved military effectiveness, but at least the Janissaries were no longer an organized force in being to oppose further reform. The "auspicious event," as this carnage became known to the Turks, had seen to that.³¹ The new army kept the way open for the penetration of further western influence. A military academy was established in 1834, and some of its graduates were sent to European capitals for further study. New army instructors were obtained from Prussia, including the elder Moltke, who was then at the start of his famous military career.

Mahmud's arm also reached out into the provinces. Military expeditions brought such regions as Kurdistan and Iraq once more under the control of Istanbul. By a combination of diplomacy and force the might of the *derebeyi's* was largely crushed. The most famous rebel, Ali Paşa of Yanina, was killed, and his head displayed on a dish set out in the first court of the palace. Some *derebeyi's* were kept away from their lands and under the imperial eye by means of forced residence in various towns.³² Greece and Egypt were too much for Mah-

³¹ Basis for the above summary is Howard A. Reed, *The Destruction of the Janissaries by Mahmud II in June, 1826* (Princeton, unpublished dissertation, 1951).

³² Some examples of what happened to *derebeyi's* in Abdolonyme Ubcini, *La Turquie actuelle* (Paris, 1855), pp. 261-264; Frederick Millingen, *Wild Life Among the Koords* (London, 1870), pp. 56-58; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern*

mud to handle, and with Serbia an arrangement of semiautonomy was reached. But in most of the provinces, which were slightly rearranged in size and number, the governors now appointed paid more heed to Istanbul than had their predecessors. The power of life and death was formally taken away from these valis. Mahmud himself made trips of inspection in some provinces. At least two of these tours were devoted in part to an investigation of the treatment of his Christian subjects.³³ Mahmud attempted no general westernization in the methods of provincial government, but his concern for just administration for the minorities was apparent in his occasional expressions about the equality of all his subjects. Muslims and non-Muslims, he admonished various provincial notables, should be treated alike.³⁴

In other matters, often superficial and external, Mahmud copied the West. The fez, a red headdress of Moroccan origin, was made compulsory for all officials except the ulema in place of the turban; so also was the stambouline, a black frock coat, which with the fez became the uniform of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Mahmud founded a medical school where strong western influences prevailed in the subject matter, in the staff of teachers, and in the language of instruction, which was French; this school, unlike its predecessors, had a long life. Small groups of students, medical as well as military, were sporadically sent to study in Paris, London, and Vienna from 1834 on.³⁵ Mahmud had a census taken, abolished the remaining military fiefs, created a quarantine system, increased the sending of regular diplomatic missions abroad, and founded the first official newspaper, the *Moniteur Ottomane*, which was soon followed by its counterpart in Turkish, the *Takvim-i vekayi*. The latter paper represents the start of Turkish journalism, which grew rapidly in importance in the next half century.

The fez, the stambouline, and the official gazette, in which new

Asia Minor (London, 1881), pp. 175-176; Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople* (London, 1836), I, 394.

³³ Helmuth von Moltke, *Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei*, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1877), pp. 124-144. (Moltke accompanied Mahmud on an inspection tour in 1837.) See also Felix Kanitz, *Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan* (Leipzig, 1875-1879), I, 84.

³⁴ See the various statements recorded in Harold Temperley, *England and the Near East: The Crimea* (London, 1936), pp. 40-41.

³⁵ Ergin, *Maarif tarihi*, II, 278-279, 297, 306. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, 1961), dates the first student mission abroad as 1827. These were four slave boys educated in Husrev Paşa's household. Cf. I. A. Gövsa, *Türk meşhurları ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul, n.d.), p. 125, s.v. "Ethem Paşa."

regulations and appointments were now printed, were the outward signs of a reformed and slowly westernized bureaucracy which sprang essentially from the work of Mahmud II. Some of the traditional positions, among them palace sinecures, were abolished. The hierarchy of civilian officials was reclassified.⁸⁶ Mahmud announced that no longer would there be arbitrary confiscation of the estates of deceased officials. He tried to discourage bribery and to pay salaries regularly. Toward the end of his reign he changed the titles of some of his ministers to conform to European usages, creating ministries of foreign affairs, of the interior, and of the treasury. These and other ministers composed the ministerial council (*meclis-i has*, "privy council"), which was intended to resemble a European cabinet more than the old divan. Each minister was responsible for the administration of his department. The council, however, did not take office as a unit, since the sultan could reshuffle ministers at will without necessarily affecting the position of the grand vezir, who presided over the ministerial council. The title of grand vezir (*sadr-ı âzam* or *vezir-i âzam*) was itself abolished briefly in favor of "prime minister" (*baş vekil*), but the old title was restored in 1839.⁸⁷ Early in 1838 Mahmud established also the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*meclis-i vâlâ-yı ahkâm-ı adliye*, usually called in the West "Grand Council of Justice"), which was charged with the thorough discussion and preparation of new regulations.⁸⁸ It was this council which, going through a series of transformations in the next thirty years, was to be the first organ of central government to embody the representative principle by including selected individuals from the non-Muslim minorities. It was this council also which emerged in 1868 as the Council of State (*şûra-yı devlet*), quite on the European model of the times.

One of Mahmud II's innovations, born of the practical problem of carrying on increased diplomatic business with the western powers, had results far beyond what might at the moment have been foreseen. This was the establishment of the *tercüme odası*, or translation bureau, in the department which became the ministry of foreign affairs. For

⁸⁶ Changes as of 1834 are listed in Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (Pest, 1827-1835), X, 695-712.

⁸⁷ Abdurrahman Şeref, *Tarih müşahabeleri*, pp. 264-266, on this and two similar changes in title later in the century.

⁸⁸ The Supreme Council first sat in the palace. Mahmud created also a council at the Porte, to deliberate on administrative policy (*Dar-ı şûra-yı Babîâli*); this was, however, less important for the future.

centuries the imperial divan had had an interpreter, who in the course of time acquired assistants. These interpreters had generally been Christians, or Christian converts to Islam, since few Turks knew any western language, and in the eighteenth century the office of chief interpreter had become in effect a monopoly of a few of the prominent Phanariote Greek families of the capital. But Greeks were generally unwelcome in official positions after the Greek revolt of 1821; hence the establishment of the *tercüme odası*, where the routine of work was supplemented by training in French, history, arithmetic, and other subjects. This office, an arrangement of administrative convenience, soon became the nursery for some of the most prominent Ottoman officials of the nineteenth century. From it emerged young Ottoman bureaucrats who rose to important posts both in the foreign ministry and in other departments; some became grand vezirs. Two secretaries taken from the *tercüme odası* helped to establish the first telegraph system in the Ottoman Empire in the 1850's; two other alumni of the same bureau were among the original instructors in a school set up in 1859 to train provincial administrators. Among the alumni of the translation office were Âli Paşa, Fuad Paşa, Ahmed Vefik Paşa, Münif Paşa, Mehmed Raşid Paşa, Safvet Paşa, and Namık Kemal Bey. In the translation office they learned or perfected their French. The diplomatic affairs with which they dealt put them in touch with European developments, but the language itself was even more of an open sesame to western ideas. A good many of the *tercüme odası* employees had additional experience in the diplomatic service in European capitals. In the translation bureau itself westerners were also employed—the great English orientalist Redhouse was for a time its head; a Prussian or Austrian renegade, Emin Efendi, taught European languages in it and was also librarian of the foreign ministry. "Frank influence and thrift" were said to prevail there.³⁹ Some Ottoman Christians were also employed there, probably fewer Greeks and more Armenians, and some Jews.⁴⁰ The *tercüme odası* offered an in-

³⁹ ABCFM, Armenian Mission VIII, #81, 8 April 1859.

⁴⁰ The author knows of no detailed study of the *tercüme odası* and its effect on Ottoman reform. It is mentioned in the biographies of many statesmen. For bits of information see Ergin, *Maarif tarihi*, I, 52, 56-60; II, 499, 518-519, 533; III, 900-902; Mustafa Nihat, *Metinlerle Türk muasır edebiyatı tarihi* (İstanbul, 1934), p. 8; Ahmed H. Tanpınar, *Ondokuzuncu asır Türk edebiyatı tarihi* (İstanbul, 1942), pp. 66, 98; Sommerville Story, ed., *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey* (London, 1920), p. 21; Andreas D. Mordtmann, *Stambul und das moderne Türkentum* (Leipzig, 1877-1878), I, 129-131, 141, 177, 179; Murad Efendi (Franz von Werner), *Türk-*

teresting parallel in the civil administration to the westernized professional schools in the military establishment. In each case European pressures, military and diplomatic, resulted in new institutions which encouraged the study of French and opened up new channels for the transmission of western ideas, with important results for the future. A few years after the *tercüme odası* was founded the old practice of providing a teacher of Persian and Arabic for the secretaries at the Sublime Porte was discontinued.⁴¹

It has sometimes been asserted that Mahmud II was interested in creating a constitution for his empire, and that during his reign a plan for two-chamber parliamentary government was drawn up.⁴² But no scheme for a western-style constitution could have prospered then, and it seems quite unlikely that Mahmud II would have considered this a serious possibility. References to constitutional ideas in his reign probably arise from the fact that the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances which he established was a deliberative body and was later to include members to represent the non-Muslim minorities.⁴³

The true significance of Mahmud's reign for the development of reform and westernization in the Ottoman Empire lies in a number of beginnings which opened up possibilities for the future, rather than in reforms effectively achieved by 1839. Many of Mahmud's efforts were comparatively ineffectual. He failed, in reality, to abolish bribery and confiscation and to pay salaries regularly. His new army and new schools were rudimentary. There is also justice in the charge that he began at the wrong end, with externals like the enforced changes in dress, though he may have realized that this was psychological preparation for more fundamental changes, as did Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with his hat reform a century later. Ibrahim Paşa, the able son of

ische Skizzen (Leipzig, 1877), II, 72; Abdolonyme Ubicini and Pavet de Courteille, *Etat présent de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris, 1876), p. 87; *Tanzimat*, I, 448; Walsh, *Residence*, II, 33-34.

⁴¹ Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Babiâli," *İslâm ansiklopedisi*, II, 177.

⁴² Benoît Brunswik, *La réforme et les garanties* (Paris, 1877), p. 21, asserts without proof that the constitutional idea was born in 1834. Gad Franco, *Développements constitutionnels en Turquie* (Paris, 1925), pp. 12-13, refers to unnamed "writers" as his authority, and says "he is assured" that a copy of the constitutional project was in one of the İstanbul libraries, though he could not find it.

⁴³ At the start of his reign Mahmud entered into a contract with an assembly of provincial notables, putting limits on the central government, but this was soon disregarded: Okandan, *Umumî âmme hukukumuz*, I, 56-58. This was no constitution, but at least one authority regards it as the start of the principle of the state under law: Siddik S. Onar, "Les transformations de la structure administrative et juridique de la Turquie," *Revue internationale des sciences administratives*, IV (1955), 771.

Mehmed Ali of Egypt, was severe in his judgment of Mahmud. "The Porte have taken civilization by the wrong side;—it is not by giving epaulettes and tight trousers to a nation that you begin the task of regeneration;—instead of beginning by their dress . . . they should endeavor to enlighten the minds of their people."⁴⁴ Innate popular conservatism was aroused by measures such as these that defied tradition. The dervish who seized the reins of Mahmud's horse and shouted: "Infidel sultan, God will demand an accounting for your blasphemy. You are destroying Islam and drawing down upon us all the curse of the Prophet," symbolized the opposition.⁴⁵ In a sense, Mahmud's reforms antagonized many of his people just as Peter the Great by his innovations had "cleft the soul of Muscovy." Mahmud's arbitrary methods, like Peter's, had a similar effect.

The channels for the penetration of western ideas had, nevertheless, been kept open and enlarged. Further, Mahmud's desire to ensure equal treatment for his subjects of whatever creed paved the way for the official proclamation of the doctrine of Ottoman equality in the years 1839 and after. "I distinguish among my subjects," Mahmud is reported to have said, "Muslims in the mosque, Christians in the church, Jews in the synagogue, but there is no difference among them in any other way."⁴⁶

More significant than these beginnings in constructive achievement were Mahmud's works of destruction, in which he was more immediately effective. By exterminating the Janissaries and by crushing the

⁴⁴ Memorandum of Alexander Pisani's report of interview with Ibrahim, 10 March 1833 (*sic*), enclosed in Canning to Palmerston, #12, 7 March 1832 (*sic*), FO 78/209, as cited in Frank E. Bailey, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), p. 172, n.153. The dates here are obviously garbled. Moltke mocked not only the western externals, but their hybrid nature in the 1830's: "The most unfortunate creation was that of an army on the European model with Russian jackets, French regulations, Belgian weapons, Turkish caps, Hungarian saddles, English swords, and instructors from all nations. . . ." Moltke, *Briefe*, p. 418.

⁴⁵ Ahmed Rasim, *İstibdattan hakimiyeti milliyeye*, I, 179, cited in Okandan, *Umumi âme hukukumuz*, pp. 61-62; cf. A. de la Jonquière, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris, 1881), pp. 481-482.

⁴⁶ Abdurrahman Şeref, *Tarih musahabeleri*, p. 65; cf. Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara, 1954), p. 100. Reed, *Destruction of the Janissaries*, p. 247, finds the seeds of this doctrine of equality in the 1826 decree abolishing the Janissaries, in which Mahmud preached brotherhood to his Muslim subjects alone. The ferman exhorts: "Let all the congregation of the Muslim people, and the small and great officials of Islam and the ulema, and members of other military formations, and all the common folk be as one body. Let them look upon each other as brethren in the faith. . . ." But this may be no more than a reemphasis of the doctrine of brotherhood of the faithful and the equality of all believers pronounced by the Prophet in the seventh century.

power of the *derebeyi*'s he had contributed much to the preservation of unity and central control in the empire—a primary objective of all the reformers. But by the same token Mahmud had removed two of the real checks on the arbitrary exercise of authority by the central government.⁴⁷ The old equilibrium, corrupt though it had been, was upset. Power now lay with the Palace and the Porte, and the possibilities of direct oppression of the people by the central government were thereby increased. The power of the central government could be for good as well as evil; how it would be exercised now depended on the character of the sultans and the officials. When the sultan was strong, or the bureaucracy feeble, he would now run the government and find support among cliques of officials. Thus Mahmud II's deeds prepared the way for the disastrous periods of personal rule by Abdülaziz after 1871 and by Abdülhamid II after 1878. When, on the other hand, the bureaucracy produced strong men who could control weak or indifferent sultans, or could curb arbitrary sultans, officialdom was supreme. This was generally the case from the time of Mahmud's death in 1839 to 1871, and also during the year 1876. Significantly, the Supreme Council established by Mahmud moved, after his death, from the Palace to the Porte. The modernized bureaucracy which Mahmud began to create assumed a leading role in the Tanzimat period.

There was, of course, no sharp break with the past; changes in the bureaucracy came slowly. It still represented, as it had in the glorious days of the Ruling Institution as well as during its decline, a ruling class, which was, however, an aristocracy of office rather than of blood. The tendency grew for sons of officials to follow their fathers' calling, but birth was in itself no guarantee of official position, and the ruling group was replenished by additions from below. Officialdom was, however, sharply set off against the mass of the peasantry by position, by pride in position and scorn of the common man, and by education.

Education meant for the bureaucrats of the middle nineteenth century essentially the ability to read and write. Those who had mastered these arts were commonly entitled "efendi." Reading and writing were no mean achievements, considering the difficulty of the language and the calligraphic system, and especially the complexity of the official

⁴⁷ Mahmud had also begun to curb some of the autonomy of the ulema, weakening though not destroying their influence: see Bernard Lewis in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., I, 837-838 and 972-973, s.vv. "Baladiyya" and "Bâb-i mashîkhat."

style, which was loaded with Arabic and Persian terminology and often sought elegance of expression at the expense of clarity. The efendi's education, after his early boyhood days in the harem were over, began with his learning the elements of reading and writing in primary (and, after the 1840's, secondary) school, together with a smattering of other subjects. In his early teens he then became a *kâtib*, or secretary, in one of the government offices, where he continued to learn on the job. The best educated of the efendis were essentially self-educated; they absorbed knowledge from their own reading and experience and from discussions in some of the intellectual salons of Istanbul. After Selim III, and particularly after the reforms of Mahmud II, more and more of the efendis began to learn French and to adopt various western customs. At the very end of Mahmud's reign, in 1838, a school designed specifically to train employees for government offices, the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*, was founded. Here French was taught, as well as geography, mathematics, and other subjects.⁴⁸

What passed for westernization was, however, usually no more than skin-deep. By mid-century the efendi of Istanbul was a curious mixture of East and West. He wore the stambouline and the fez. His French might be quite indifferent. Some of the efendis picked up western ways from contact with the Levantines of Pera (Beyoğlu), the most Europeanized quarter of the capital. Others had actual experience in the West. In both cases the best of the efendis acquired new ideas without losing character or ability. The new ideas ranged from western literary tastes through concepts of new economic development to thoughts of limiting the sultan's powers. Other efendis, however, acquired only a veneer of phrases, manners, and vices. Kıbrıslı Mehmed Paşa, who had spent several years in Paris and London and was three times grand vezir, was said by his wife to have acquired only a veneer of knowledge over a mass of ignorance, like "the greater number of those who have been sent to Europe to be educated."⁴⁹ Some returned from the West as reformers, while others were rendered only disillusioned and cynical by the contrasts they observed. The *alafranga* efendi, the westernized efendi, was often a contemptible person, sometimes a Levantine in outlook if not in blood because of the unasimilated elements of East and West in his training. At his worst, the

⁴⁸ Ergin, *Maarif tarihi*, II, 330-341.

⁴⁹ Melek Hanum, *Thirty Years in the Harem* (London, 1872), pp. 277-278. Melek was a Levantine, and was divorced by Kıbrıslı Mehmed Paşa, so perhaps she was unduly bitter.

alafraŋga efendi appeared thus: "The same black frock coat, black trousers, generally unbuttoned where European ideas would most rigorously exact buttoning, the same padded underclothes, shiny boots, and slight red cap, the same shuffling gait and lack-lustre eye, characterize every man of the tribe."⁵⁰ Turks of the old school often despised him. "I would rather see my son a really good Christian and an honest man," said one pasha, "than a Constantinople Turk *alla Franca* and a Pasha."⁵¹ Cevdet Paşa, one of the most learned and intelligent of the ulema, referred sarcastically to the "*alafraŋga çelebiler*," the "westernized gentlemen."⁵² Turks who knew Europe and French quite well were also critical of the common run of Ottoman bureaucrat as the uneducated product of a bad school system.⁵³ Yet these were the officials on whom the progress of westernized reform depended.

Some of the officials were competent and industrious, whatever their degree of westernization. But the majority were not, and many looked only for sinecures, of which there were never enough to go around. It was estimated that half the people in İstanbul lived off the state in some way. Many, both in İstanbul and in the provincial capitals, became unsalaried hangers-on of pashas, hoping that position or graft would come their way. The crowd of relatives and parasites in the anterooms of every high official was one of the great curses of Ottoman administration, leading to favoritism, inefficiency, and bribery. Mahmud had been unable to exterminate bribery, which was still often necessary to secure a post and led to the traditional extortion or embezzlement then necessary to pay back debts and care for an uncertain future. It is hard to condemn the giving and taking of gifts on purely moral grounds, since the practice had entered so deeply into Ottoman custom.⁵⁴ It was, nevertheless, a tremendous obstacle to good

⁵⁰ William G. Palgrave, *Essays on Eastern Questions* (London, 1872), p. 14.

⁵¹ G. G. B. St. Clair and C. A. Brophy, *Twelve Years' Study of the Eastern Question in Bulgaria* (London, 1877), p. 310. St. Clair was a Turcophil who would be happy to report and endorse the sentiment.

⁵² Cevdet Paşa, *Texâkir*, p. 68; cf. Fatma Aliye, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve zamani* (İstanbul, 1332), p. 84.

⁵³ See Ziya Paşa's strictures in *Hürriyet*, #5 (7 rebiülâhîr 1285), reproduced in İhsan Sungu, "Tanzimat ve Yeni Osmanlılar," *Tanzimat*, 1, 840-41; also Süleyman Paşa, *Hiss-i inkilâb* (İstanbul, 1326), pp. 3-4, where he condemns officials of the 1870's as so ignorant as not to know arithmetic, geography, or the three kingdoms of nature as taught in primary and secondary schools.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Hellwald, *Der Islam* (Augsburg, 1877), p. 37, makes the interesting comment that the United States and Turkey were on the same plane as regards pur-

government. Officials were caught in the toils of the system. "I have no inducement to be honest," said the governor of Diyarbekir. "If I attempt to rule justly all of the other pashas will combine against me and I shall soon be turned out of my place, and unless I take bribes I shall be too poor to purchase another."⁵⁵ So the higher officials in general remained open to monetary argument and surrounded by parasites and servants who were eavesdroppers, retailers of information to rival officials and foreign embassies, and the means of approach to favor-seekers who crossed their palms.⁵⁶

At the center of Ottoman officialdom stood the Sublime Porte (*Babiâli*). Although by the nineteenth century this term was commonly used to designate the whole Ottoman government, it referred more particularly to the building which in mid-century housed the offices of the grand vezir, the ministries of foreign affairs and of the interior, and the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances and its successor councils. The great brick building, finished in yellow and rose plaster, had been constructed anew after a disastrous fire in 1839. From that date until the death of Âli Paşa in 1871 it was the effective center of government, dominant over the sultans and the Palace, controlled by the bureaucracy which Mahmud II had begun to create. Most of the offices in the Porte now bore European labels, but the confusion in the bureaus was still oriental. Offices and corridors

chase of government office; Hornby, for ten years a judge in the British consular court in Istanbul, found Canadians just as rabid for *bahşiş* as Turks: *Autobiography*, p. 90.

⁵⁵ ABCFM, Assyrian Mission #61, 15 August 1859.

⁵⁶ On the Ottoman bureaucracy from Mahmud's time to 1876 there are many scattered observations: Frederick Millingen (Osman-Seify Bey), *La Turquie sous le règne d'Abdul Aziz, 1862-1867* (Paris, 1868), pp. 255-257; Melek Hanum, *Thirty Years*, pp. 93, 278-283, 374-375; Mordtmann, *Stambul*, I, 131-137, 196-206, and II, 242; Orhan F. Köprülü, "Efendi," *İslâm ansiklopedisi*, IV, 132-133; Murad, *Türkische Skizzen*, I, 26, and II, 42-52, 62-79; Henry J. Van Lennep, *Travels in Little-Known Parts of Asia Minor* (London, 1870), I, 5, 223, and II, 29-30; Hermann Vambéry, *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1875), pp. 80-85; Hermann Vambéry, *Sittenbilder aus dem Morgenlande* (Berlin, 1876), pp. 196-203; Nassau W. Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece* (London, 1859), pp. 121, 143-144; Abdolonyme Ubicini, *La Turquie actuelle* (Paris, 1855), pp. 189-208; Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism* (London, 1950), p. 75. Thomas, *United States and Turkey*, pp. 46-47, describes the traditional Ottoman ruling class. Ahmed Midhat, *Üss-i inkilâb* (Istanbul, 1294-1295), I, 97-99, describes officialdom and hangers-on in the provinces. Gibb, *Ottoman Poetry*, V, 42-52, reproduces Ziya Bey's own story of his youth and training; Fatma Aliye, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa*, gives an account of the formal and extracurricular education of one of the ulema who later became a civil official, together with a description, on pp. 82-85, of Istanbul officialdom and its financial embarrassments just before the Crimean War; Ergin, *Maarif tarihi*, I, 51-55, and II, 315-321, on the general education of officials.